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**THESIS**

**THE SPREAD OF ISLAMIC EXTREMISM IN THE  
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

by

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December 2011

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**THE SPREAD OF ISLAMIC EXTREMISM IN THE  
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

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requirements for the degree of

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis identifies and discusses the spread of Islamic extremism as a potential threat to the Republic of Macedonia. It examines how Islamic extremism spread within the Republic of Macedonia and what policies could reverse this trend.

The main research findings include the following. Major political, economic, and legal changes in Macedonia have provided fertile ground for nontraditional Islamic ideologies. Although adherents to radical Islamic ideologies in Macedonia have used NGOs and charities as mobilizing structures, they were not able to create their own organization. For most Muslims in Macedonia, critiques and visions of contemporary radical Islamic ideologies are problematic. Findings also suggest that Muslims in Macedonia are most vulnerable to individual recruitment; the attempts of local Islamic extremists to mobilize a greater number of followers for collective action were unsuccessful. In Macedonia, Islamic extremist ideologies are not a reaction to secularism and modernism, nor do they defend religion. Thus, their activities in Macedonia can be categorized as forms of potential or marginal fundamentalism. This thesis suggests that nurturing a culture of questioning and debating may counter radical Islamic ideologies. Other policy recommendations for counterterrorism measures include fighting organized crime and application of social network analysis concepts.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AHF	Al Haramain Islamic Foundation
AIO	Active Islamic Youth (Aktivna Islamska Omladina)
ANA	Albanian National Army
DPA	Democratic Party of Albanians
DUI	Democratic Union for Integration
EIJ	Egyptian Islamic Jihad
EU	European Union
FIS	Islamic Salvation Front
GIA	Islamic Armed Group
HUM	Harkat-ul-Mujahedeen
IIRO	International Humanitarian Islamic Organization
IJU	Islamic Jihad Union
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
IVZ	Islamic Religious Community (Islamska Verska Zaednica)
MYF	Muslim Youth Forum
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NLA	National Liberation Army
RIHS	Revival of Islamic Heritage Society
SNA	Social Networks Analysis
TWRA	Third World Relief Agency
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
UK	United Kingdom

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this thesis is to identify and discuss a possible threat to the Republic of Macedonia: the spread of Islamic extremism. Specifically, this thesis will examine the following: how Islamic extremism has spread within the Republic of Macedonia; the significance of this threat; and what policies could reverse this trend. Vulnerabilities to extremist ideology within the Republic of Macedonia's population could potentially lead to the creation of terrorist cells and affiliates; understanding how this happens is essential to the development of counterterrorist measures. Terrorism is a global phenomenon, and therefore addressing the potential terrorist threats in a small country such as the Republic of Macedonia can positively impact worldwide security.

### **A. RESEARCH QUESTION**

The Republic of Macedonia is a small, landlocked, multinational European country located in the heart of the Balkans. Macedonia's population is about 2.2 million, and most of its inhabitants are Macedonians. Minorities are represented by Albanians, Turks, Rhomas, Serbs, Vlachs, and others. The country's population is religiously divided mainly between Orthodox Christians and Muslims. Macedonians, Serbs, and Vlachs are Orthodox Christians. Albanians, Turks, Rhomas, and descendants of Macedonians who converted to Islam during the time of Ottoman Empire are Muslims.

Following the decision to break away from the Yugoslav Federation, the Republic of Macedonia became independent in 1991. The country's short history of independence has been complicated. Macedonia was not directly involved and affected by the wars that spread in other republics of Yugoslav Federation. However, in 2001, armed conflict broke between Albanian minority militant group and security forces. Nowadays the country is facing another potential security threat.

In 2005, at the hearing of the Committee on International Relations House of Representatives, Mr. Lorenzo Vidino addressed Islamic extremism in Europe. He explained that the terrorist threat in the Balkans is not that big because the numbers of individuals carrying activities are few dozen and the Islamist have failed to radicalize

Bosnian population. However, Mr. Claude Moniquet expressed his concerns with the presence of an ideological center in Macedonia, which seemed to be involved in extremist activities. In addition, both of them agreed that if something goes wrong in the Balkans in the future it could be a new territory for the jihadists in Europe.<sup>1</sup>

In an article published by the Advanced Research and Assessment Group in 2008, Kenneth Morrison discusses the issue of Wahhabism in the Balkans which has shifted from the margins to the mainstream, becoming key political-security concern; incidents involving Wahhabi groups in Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia show the movement is no longer isolated within the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina; the proliferation of Wahhabism presents a challenge for inter-ethnic and intra-Muslim relations in the Balkans.<sup>2</sup>

Is the Republic of Macedonia becoming a breeding ground for Islamic extremists? The purpose of this thesis is to answer why, how and to what extent Islamic extremism is spreading in the Republic of Macedonia. First it will address the phenomena of Islamic extremism in general and its spread on a global scale. Second, this thesis will analyze specifically the spread and implication of Islamic extremism in the Republic of Macedonia. Finally, this thesis will consider and propose actions to reverse the spread of Islamic extremism in this country.

## **B. PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The primary purpose of this research is to describe how nontraditional Islamic ideologies are spread in the Republic of Macedonia. The thesis will identify which foreign Islamic ideologies are present and then it will explore how each one spread in the Republic of Macedonia. In addition, the thesis will evaluate to what degree those ideologies pose a threat to the country.

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<sup>1</sup> Lorenzo Vidino and Claude Moniquet, Statement to the House of Representatives, “*Islamic Extremism in Europe*,” Hearing, April 27, 2005, [http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/intlrel/hfa20917.000/hfa20917\\_0f.htm](http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/intlrel/hfa20917.000/hfa20917_0f.htm) (accessed October 6, 2011), 44.

<sup>2</sup> Kenneth Morrison. “*Wahhabism in the Balkans*,” Advanced Research and Assessment Group, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, Shrivenham, England, February 2008, <http://www.da.mod.uk/colleges/arag/document-listings/balkan/08%2806%29KM.pdf/view> (accessed October, 21, 2011).

To understand the necessary conditions under which terrorism occurs, theories based on sociopolitical grievances are often utilized. These theories essentially state that people have grievances and they seek out an ideology to solve their problems. However, this theory only addresses the question of why terrorist groups grow or decline in response to grievances.

These arguments do not adequately or specifically explain the surge of Islamic terrorism. Particularly, in the case of Macedonia, it is assumed that the grievances of minorities were appropriately addressed under the signed Ohrid Framework Agreement of 2001. Under this agreement, the Macedonian government pledged to improve the rights of the Albanian population, including making Albanian the country's second official language. The agreement also increased the presence of ethnic Albanians in government, police and military positions. Most important, under the Ohrid Agreement, the Macedonian government agreed to a new model of decentralization. Although these changes met grievances from the Albanian population, the traditional form of Islam in the country is considered to be moderate when compared to other existing Islamic ideologies. Therefore, we need to look beyond grievance-based theories and instead focus how ideologies are transmitted and adopted.

### **C. IMPORTANCE**

Understanding a country's present and future security threats are one of the most vital questions posed to state officials, the national security community and the general public. Most of the time, threats are obvious and easily recognized, but sometimes the picture is ambiguous. The spread of Islamic extremism among the Muslim population is an increasing worldwide concern. The Republic of Macedonia, being a multinational country with Muslim minority, is not immune to this issue. If the Republic of Macedonia recognizes the potential threat of Islamic extremism, then the country can react appropriately to ensure a secure environment for further development.

### **D. LITERATURE REVIEW**

There are several theories addressing the origins of terrorism.

One theory, which is addressed by both Gabriel Sheffer in *The Roots of Terrorism*<sup>3</sup> and Mohammed M. Hafez in *Why Muslims Rebel*,<sup>4</sup> attributes the origin of terrorism to sociopolitical grievances. According to this theory, the masses can be alienated by internal and external factors, and in attempt to solve the issue they often use violence.

In the work *Instability and Opportunity: The Origins of Terrorism in Weak and Failed States*,<sup>5</sup> Erica Chenoweth represents a theory of permissive environments. This theory explains that weak, ineffective and incapable states deeply affect the origins of terrorism.

According to the Social Movement theory, developed by Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, the emergence and spread of ideologies in societies are explained by political opportunities, mobilizing structures and framing processes.<sup>6</sup>

Fundamentalism theory is articulated by Almond, Appleby, and Sivan. According to this theory, fundamentalist movements are reactions to secularism, seeking a religious alternative.<sup>7</sup>

In his book *Terror in the Mind of God*, Mark Juergensmeyer develops the Cosmic War theory. He argues that religious ideologies play significant role in motivating violence. According to Juergensmeyer, religious extremist groups perceive secularism as insufficient and justify their violence in the idea of cosmic war.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Gabriel Sheffer, "Diasporas and Terrorism," in *The Roots of Terrorism*, ed. Louise Richardson, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 118–129.

<sup>4</sup> Mohammed M. Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel* (Colorado, Lynne Rienner Publisher, 2003), 27.

<sup>5</sup> Erica Chenoweth, "Instability and Opportunity: The Origins of Terrorism in Weak and Failed States," in *The Making of a Terrorist: Recruitment, Training, and Root Causes, Volume III: Root Causes*, ed. James J. F. Forest (London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2006), 17.

<sup>6</sup> Doug McAdam, et al., "Introduction: Opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes-toward a synthetic, comparative perspective on social movements," *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*, Doug McAdam et al., New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

<sup>7</sup> Gabriel A. Almond, R. Scott Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan, "Fundamentalisms: Genus and Species," *Strong Religion: The Rise of Fundamentalism Around the World*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003, 90.

<sup>8</sup> Mark Juergensmeyer, "Religion as a Cause of Terrorism," in *the Roots of Terrorism*, ed. Louise Richardson (New York: Routledge, 2006), 139–141.

## **E. METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES**

This thesis is a single, descriptive case study of the Republic of Macedonia. The research will focus on developments and conditions in the country since gaining its independence in 1991. The country's history leading up current events is recounted. These events are then explained and evaluated. Since the aim of this research is to explain and evaluate the phenomenon of Islamic extremism in the country, and others have not fully described this problem, the research will be descriptively rich. In addition, the research will take into account the historical developments of various Islamic movements, groups, networks and organizations around the world. The conclusion of this thesis draws inductive conclusions from the case study. This thesis will not create or test a new theory, but rather will describe the presence of Islamic extremism in Macedonia.

Due to the nature of the topic and the scope of the research, the thesis utilizes a wide spectrum of existing information related to Islamic extremism. Sources of literature include books, journals, and academic articles. Local newspapers, televised news programs, and the online sources will also be utilized and analyzed; these sources are necessary for a complete understanding of the situation in the country. The aspect of cautions, sensitive and impartial approach in gathering information is acknowledged.

## **F. THESIS OVERVIEW**

Chapter I provides a brief historical background of the Republic of Macedonia and explains that the presence of Islamic extremism is a security threat in the country. This chapter introduces several theories regarding terrorism, the rise of religious violence, and the emergence of extremist movements. The purpose, scope and research question of this thesis is outlined, as well as the methodology, resources, and the significance of this research.

Chapter II further details regarding terrorism motivated by religious and social dynamics of extremist movements. First, the social movement theory is used to analyze the individual recruitment, emergence of the extremist movements and the spread of movements. Later this analysis is applied to the case of Islamic extremism in the Republic of Macedonia and serves as tool in defining the threat they posed to the country.

Second, this chapter explains “fundamentalism theory” and applies it as an analytical tool for explaining the ideological and organizational characteristics of Islamic extremist in Macedonia.

Chapter III provides a working definition of ideology and explores Islamic extremist ideologies. First, the chapter defines ideology as set of ideas related to explanation of problems in the world, identification of who is responsible for the problems, and vision how to fix the problems. Next, it lists common characteristics of extremist ideologies irrespective to their doctrinal beliefs. This chapter identifies Islamism, Wahhabism, and Salafism, and shows how they are connected to Islamic extremist ideologies, which are radically anti-secular and anti-western. Wahhabism is one of the most ultraconservative forms of Islam that wives the world in sharp divisions between Muslims and non-Muslim, belief and unbelief, and the realm of Islam and warfare. Salafism advocates that Muslims have to return to bases of pure Islam and understand and practice the faith as it was by the prophet and his followers. Finally, the chapter provides comparative analysis of these three Islamic extremist ideologies.

Chapter IV discusses in more detail the spread of Islamic extremist ideologies among Muslim population in Macedonia. Radical Islamic ideologies were not present in the country until early 1990s. Their infiltration started with exploitation of internal divisions within Islamic Community in Macedonia. Next, the presence of Islamic foreign fighters in local conflicts in the Balkans and nongovernmental and humanitarian organizations played important role in promotion of Islamic extremist ideologies among local Muslim population. Finally, this chapter explores the presence of Islamic extremist ideologies among ethnically different and distinct Muslim groups in Macedonia.

The thesis concludes with Chapter V, which argues that Islamic extremists have found mainly nominal support among the Muslim population in Macedonia, whose majority follows the traditional form of Islam. However, small radical groups do pose a security threat for Macedonia; foreign support and funding enable the spread and persistence of Islamic extremist ideologies in the country. This chapter concludes with several policy recommendations for dealing with the threat of Islamic extremism.

## **II. RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Theories related to the rise of religious violence were developed in the 20th century. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the causal arguments of these theories and analyze the permissiveness of Macedonia to the spread of Islamic extremism. First, this chapter will discuss some of the theories developed to explain religiously motivated violence in general, and then apply their causal arguments to explain the spread of Islamic extremist ideologies in Macedonia.

### **B. SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY**

Social Movement theory has been primarily developed by McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald. Drawing from theoretical and empirical work of various scientists in relation to the emergence and development of social movements, these authors find three broad sets of factors: the political opportunities and constraints confronting the movement, the forms of organization available to insurgents, and the collective process of interpretation, attribution, and social construction that mediate between opportunity and action. Authors refer to these factors with shorthand designations of political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes.<sup>9</sup>

Under political opportunities the authors are convinced that social movements are shaped by broader set of political constraints and opportunities unique to the national context in which they are embedded. This means that, in analyzing the threat of the spread of Islamic extremism in Macedonia, the country's political system needs to be taken in account.

By mobilizing structures authors mean of collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action. This means that in the analysis of the spread of Islamic extremism in Macedonia, in search for mobilizing

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<sup>9</sup> Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "Introduction: Opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes--toward a synthetic, comparative perspective on social movements," *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 2.

structures we need to look for formal organizational manifestations of the mobilization processes, and for various informal grassroots settings. Particularly, attention should be given to the role played by local Muslim institutions as the Islamic Religious Community (Islamska Verska Zaednica, IVZ), universities, NGOs, charities, clubs, forum, libraries, etc.

Authors define framing processes as “conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action.”<sup>10</sup> This means that a combination of political opportunities and mobilizing structures can provide potential for action but in absence of framing processes social movements will be insufficient for collective action. In other words, framing processes are used by the people who feel aggravated about some aspect of their lives, and believe that by acting collectively they can redress the problem. In analyzing the spread of Islamic extremism in Macedonia, perceptions held by local Muslims will be taken into account.

The influence of religion upon social movements is analyzed by Christian Smith in his work “Disruptive Religion.” The author argues that religion has been neglected in the studies of social movements. According to Smith, religious believers and organizations possess a variety of assets that are useful for promoting social movements. In addition, the sacred transcendence of religions has the dual potential to both challenge as well as legitimize a social order. According to Smith, “All actors and sectors of a society in which religion is operative may potentially be evaluated and condemned by the sacredly-grounded normative standards of that religion.”<sup>11</sup>

Analyzing the social movements and networks, Mario Diani and Doug McAdam go beyond structural analysis to explain the dynamics of social movements. First, the authors acknowledge the importance of structural studies in overturning the failed psychological concept of social movements.

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<sup>10</sup> McAdam, et al., “Introduction: Opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes--toward a synthetic, comparative perspective on social movements,” 6.

<sup>11</sup> Christian Smith, “Introduction: Correcting a Curious Neglect, or Bringing Religion Back In,” *Disruptive Religion: The force of Faith in Social Movement Action*, New York: Routledge, 1996, 7.

According to McAdam, “social movements are loosely coordinated, sustained struggles to promote or resist change that rely at least in part on unconventional tactics, and unconventional forms of collective action,”<sup>12</sup> and understanding how movements first develop and spread is very important, particularly in the case of Islamic fundamentalism, because this phenomena continues to happen. First, the author argues that psychological perspective on social movements developed until 1970s is untenable and the structural research of social movements with the establishment of consistent empirical relationships in the origins and spread of social movements is not sufficient. McAdam argues that in order to better understand the origins and spread of social movements, analysts should go beyond the structural analysis and identify the underlying dynamic social processes between structure and action.

The dynamic between structure and action deals with individual recruitment. Contrary to traditional beliefs that marginalized, isolated individuals are the cause of social movements, McAdam finds that the integrated members of a community are most at risk to be drawn into the struggle. Individuals tend to be recruited through pre-existing ties to somebody already in a movement. In addition, the author argues that the likelihood of successful recruitment is dramatically increased when three mechanisms accumulate sequentially. The individual is a target of a recruitment effort; the recruitment effort involves an activity questioning the identity of the individual being recruited (“as a good Muslim you must...”); finally, the individual must meet support or opposition from the important members of the movement and community.<sup>13</sup>

Social movements almost always develop within established social settings, existing organizations, and stable networks. However, existing organizations do not routinely birth social movements. Rather, they typically constrain radical actions.

According to McAdam, it is necessary to find the specific part of existing organizations that became the source of initial mobilization, and discover the social

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<sup>12</sup> Doug McAdam, *Social Movements and Conflict*, presented at *Understanding Terrorist Networks and Organizations*, NPS, April 5–7, 2005, 1.

<sup>13</sup> Doug McAdam and Mario Diani, *Social movements and Networks*, *Beyond Structural Analysis: Toward a More Dynamic Understanding of Social Movements*, Oxford University Press, 288.

processes that transform them into these types of sources. The goal of this method termed “Social Appropriations” is to show how routine collective identities, cultural and organizational practices are appropriated in the service of the new line of action. When this perspective is applied to the case of Islamic fundamentalism, particular mosques, Quran study groups and particular cleric networks serve as basic vehicles for the emergent actions of radical Islam. In addition, networks forged within localized struggles, during previous jihad campaigns, bring people from different parts of the world together, and thus diffuse networks with the capability to spread their activities beyond a single campaign. It is not sufficient to identify what structures look like; the ideology, that activates the structure, must also be identified.<sup>14</sup>

Another dynamic that McAdam discusses is the process by which social movements spread. McAdam argues that if social movements spread only along established lines of inter-action and communication (relational diffusion), they would remain mostly localized. Social movements spread in two ways: non-relational diffusion and brokerage. Non-relational diffusion is the spread of social movements through means, other than established lines, such as media. Brokerage is the spread of social movements through pro-active efforts of outside groups and individuals.<sup>15</sup> McAdam concludes that “the ideal structure for insuring the maximum spread of a movement is dense networks of local primary ties, deep networks of trust, private networks that are then linked together through an extensive set of weak bridging ties, provided in most cases by brokers.”<sup>16</sup>

Social movement theory implies that some of the Muslim population in Macedonia might adopt nontraditional, radical Islamic ideologies due to changes of the political system, and mobilize and engage in collective action through existing networks.

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<sup>14</sup> McAdam and Diani, *Social movements and Networks*, 291.

<sup>15</sup> McAdam and Diani, *Social movements and Networks*, 294.

<sup>16</sup> McAdam, “Social Movements and Conflict,” 10.

## **1. Political Opportunities**

The political system in Republic of Macedonia is essentially a parliamentary representative democratic republic. It provides opportunities for participation in the political life to everyone who accepts democratic values. Muslims in Macedonia, represented by various political parties, have always been part of the political affairs in the country.

Despite the rights guaranteed by the constitution, tensions among ethnic minority groups are present in Macedonian society. Causes for such tensions can be identified in the inherited mistrust and prejudices among ethnic groups. Tensions often arise between the majority and minority, but also between two or more minority groups. Moreover, the disintegration of the Yugoslav Federation in early 1990s, the fall of socialism as a political system, and most importantly the spread of wars and conflicts in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia represent tectonic political, legal, and economic changes in the region. These conditions were exploited by various challengers, such as the vanguard Islamic extremists who promoted their extremist ideologies.

## **2. Mobilizing Structures**

The religious life of most Muslims in Macedonia has always been the responsibility of an officially recognized, and well established, Islamic religious community. Promoters of radical Islamic ideologies, seeking mobilized structures, are using these established lines of communication for their purposes. These activities are most visible as “mosque wars” and “top down” approaches struggles for the control of religion, and property owned by IVZ. In addition, numerous non-government organizations and charities often serve as established structures for the development of Islamic extremist ideologies. However, adherents to radical Islamic ideologies in Macedonia have not been able to create their own organizational structure and thus depend on the support of external factors.

### **3. Framing Processes**

Framing processes have been among the most challenging obstacles for adherents of Islamic extremist ideologies in Macedonia. Rather than ideological innovators, they have been followers and promoters of Sunni Islamic radical ideology and concepts developed by Ibn Taymiyah, Hassan al Banna, Sayyid Abdul a'la Mawdudi, and contemporary ideologues Sayyid Qutb and members of al-Qaeda. In addition, the acceptance of their critiques of the existing order, visions and means for achieving better future, for most Muslims in Macedonia seems to be problematic. Framing processes of local adherents of radical Islamic ideology, playing the role of promoters, will never be their exclusive property.

### **4. Individual Recruitment**

Social movement theory explains that individual recruitment is the first dynamic process between the structure and actions of Islamic extremists. Local Muslims in Macedonia have had many opportunities to meet and build close relationships with affiliates of terrorist organizations. Some of them fought together in local wars and conflicts, while others were sent abroad in Arab countries as students of Islam. Local Muslims in Macedonia are very vulnerable because it would be relatively easy to be persuaded that, as good Muslims whose identities are questioned, they have to join the “struggle” and adopt more radical ideologies. Positive or negative influence from others is probably the most critical mechanism in the individual recruitment of local Muslims. In Macedonia the relative absence of negative influence attempts was the biggest challenge. Muslim families in Macedonia are socially very conservative and family members are rarely aloud to express their own opinions. Until recently, even the representatives of IVZ were hesitant to confront the existence of groups affiliated with radical Islamic ideologies. In addition, members of families send to work as laborers have had numerous opportunities to meet Islamic extremist in Western European countries.

## **5. Emergent Mobilization**

Local Wahhabi adherents in Macedonia have used well established Islamic organization, such as IVZ to promote their ideology and propagate collective action. This was also case with several charitable and nongovernmental organizations.

However, existing organizations in Macedonia constrain radical actions. After several violent incidents, Official representatives of IVZ decided to openly confront Wahhabi adherents. As a consequence, Wahhabi adherents were unable to transform several mosques into centers for their activities. Although informal networks and personal contacts among local Wahhabi groups certainly exist, they will not be able to attract and mobilize greater number of followers as long as they do not establish their own organization. Thus, it is more likely that efforts of local Wahhabis to attract new members remain only in the realm of individual recruitment.

## **6. Movement Spread**

The spread of Wahhabi ideology in Macedonia would remain localized if communication occurred only along established lines of communication, through relational diffusion. This is the case because local Wahhabi adherents, mainly ethnic Albanians, are willing to appropriate the assets of official organization of IVZ. They have successfully spread their activities only in several mosques in Skopje.

However, in order to spread their ideology, local Wahhabi adherents now communicate through the Internet and other, non-established forms of communication. The Internet and media in Macedonia are used to promote anti-Western attitude and fundamentalist Islamic teachings. Brokerage is also present in Macedonia. This is most obvious in the activities of Tablighi Jamma'at, primarily present in areas inhabited by Macedonian Muslims. In the past, these areas were relatively disconnected from happenings in the Muslim world.

Active involvement of Tablighi Jamma'at has considerably changed the situation in these areas. Even though both processes of relational diffusion and brokerage are obviously present in Macedonia, local Wahhabi adherents have not been able to attain the

collective action of Muslim population. Rather, their activities have led to increased tensions between Muslims in different ethnic and language groups.

### **C. FUNDAMENTALISM THEORY**

Gabriel A. Almond, R. Scott Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan define fundamentalism as movements that “originate in reaction to secularization and the marginalization of religion, and they strive to create a religious alternative to secular structures and institutions.”<sup>17</sup> Their work describes five ideological and four organizational characteristics. To be considered fundamentalist, a movement must react and defend the religious content from erosion. Only after this necessary ideological characteristic—reaction to the marginalization of religion—is present in the movement, can the additional characteristics be classified as defining, since it must manifest a sufficient number of these characteristics.

By close examination of case studies, the authors name three types of religious extremism: Abrahamic, syncretic, and potential fundamentalism. Abrahamic fundamentalism is associated with Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. These religions share similar religious traditions and a common heritage; they resemble each other ideologically and organizationally. When movements are inspired less by religious considerations than by actual fundamentalism, and ethocultural and ethnonational features take precedence over religion, they are categorized as “syncretic fundamental.” Some revivalist movements have superficial resemblances to fundamentalism, and because they do not react against secularism and modernism, they are categorized as potential-marginal fundamentalism.<sup>18</sup>

#### **1. Ideological Characteristics**

Fundamentalism theory implies that Islamic religious movements in Macedonia would be considered as fundamentalist, first and foremost, if they were reaction to the secularization and marginalization of their religion. In regard to this ideological

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<sup>17</sup> Gabriel A. Almond, R. Scott Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan, “Fundamentalisms: Genus and Species,” *Strong Religion: The Rise of Fundamentalism around the World*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003, 90.

<sup>18</sup> Almond, Appleby, and Sivan, “Fundamentalisms: Genus and Species,” 105–114.

characteristic, the situation in Macedonia is very ambiguous. Most critiques come from senior representatives of IVZ. On several occasions they have blamed the government of Macedonia for neglecting the religion of Islam and for unequal treatment compared to other religions.

However, it is inappropriate to categorize these critiques as reaction to secularism. IVZ is interested in as appearing to be a politically active and relevant institution seeking to obtain assets in the process of restitution. On the other hand, Wahhabi groups in Macedonia operate in secretly, but publicly glorify the values of democratic societies. They often maintain close links with members of political parties. In both cases, it is more likely that critiques are aimed at ethno-cultural and property issues, rather than being reactive towards secularism and modernism, even less defending religion.

*a. Selectivity*

Selectivity is a characteristic of fundamentalism manifested by modernity and the selection of traditional aspects that clearly distinguish fundamentalism from the mainstream.<sup>19</sup> In Macedonia, Muslim adherents of Islamic extremist ideology certainly distinguish themselves from the mainstream Muslim community. Being followers of Wahhabism and Salafism they advocate strict adherence to the oneness of God and reject interpretations of the scripture. However, local Wahhabists and Salafists in Macedonia are not jihadis, but rather what Wiktorowicz<sup>20</sup> calls “politicos” or “purists.” The selectivity of Wahhabis in Macedonia is most visibly demonstrated by their violent acts towards other Muslims. In addition, the aspect of modernity is clearly present among local adherents of Wahhabism. They utilize technological innovations such as the Internet, computer technologies and media in order to spread radical Islamic ideology.

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<sup>19</sup> Almond, Appleby, and Sivan, “Fundamentalisms: Genus and Species,” 95.

<sup>20</sup> Quintan Wiktorowicz, “Anatomy of the Salafi Movement,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 29 (2006): 207–239.

**b. Moral Manichaeism**

A dualistic worldview among Wahhabis in Macedonia is present to a low degree. It is characterized by division of the good and evil, darkness and light, a contaminated world and a pure world.<sup>21</sup> For Wahhabis, the sinful world is composed, first and foremost, by Sufi believers, and then by the representatives of traditional Islam. In addition, they have hesitated to publicly present the West as contaminated.

**c. Absolutism and Inerrancy**

Absolutism and inerrancy as ideological characteristic of fundamentalist movements represent the divine origin and true and accurate sources of religion. At the same time other analog religious sources are treated as wrong, and the inerrancy can vary in different degrees.<sup>22</sup>

Adherents to Wahhabi ideology in Macedonia have manifested low absolutism and inerrancy. They consider The Qu’ran (recitations) to be the only accurate religious source, but they have not been able to develop new and original interpretations of the holy book. They have never been ideological innovators and Hanafi school of Islamic law prevails among Muslims in Macedonia.

**d. Millennialism and Messianism**

Millennialism and messianism, which concerns the Day of Judgment, the triumph over evil, and the arrival of savior, is in all Abrahamic religions. Islamic fundamentalists explore these characteristics in their interpretations.<sup>23</sup> However, this ideological characteristic has been manifested to a low degree among Wahhabi adherents in Macedonia. They have not been able to stage these issues more than they are in traditional Islam.

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<sup>21</sup> Almond et al., “Fundamentalisms: Genus and Species,” 96.

<sup>22</sup> Almond et al., “Fundamentalisms: Genus and Species,” 96.

<sup>23</sup> Almond et al., “Fundamentalisms: Genus and Species,” 97.

## **2. Organizational Characteristics**

### ***a. Elect Membership***

Distinctions between the elected, chosen, faithful inner group and a periphery of sympathizers are present among Islamic extremists in Macedonia. Although able to achieve some level of solidarity and cohesion, Wahhabi adherents in Macedonia are mainly interested in material rewards.

### ***b. Sharp Boundaries***

There is a physical and visual separation between the saved and the sinful. In general, dividing walls and a distinctive dress code clearly illustrate the boundaries within Islamic fundamentalists. Traditionally in Macedonia, Muslim women wear scarf that covers the hair. Although men and women in Macedonia have recently begun wearing long beards and wearing niqab, they do so because they receive money and not to separate themselves from others according to their religious believes.

### ***c. Authoritarian Organization***

The presence of a leader-follower relationship illustrated in body language and rituals represent the organizational characteristic of authoritarian organization. This organizational characteristic in the case of Macedonia is present to a low degree. Certainly there are individuals willing to act as leaders but characteristic also indicates the decline in the interest of joining the movement and mobilization problems. These individuals have not been elected or chosen but rather represent self-proclaimed leaders.

### ***d. Behavior Requirements***

Behavior requirements as organizational characteristics of fundamentalist movements show the presence of detailed prescriptions of proper dress code and appearance on one hand and on another hand the roles of sinful behavior related to drinking, sexuality and appropriate speech. Similar to other organizational characteristics of fundamentalism movements, in general, this characteristic is considered to be highly present in the case of Islamic fundamentalists. However, in Macedonia, it appears that traditional Islamic behavior and appearance of Muslims prevails and this characteristic is

present to a low degree. In particular, it seems that young and educated Muslims in Macedonia prefer to follow western-style fashion trends and do not pay big attention in regard to the sinful behavior prescribed by their religion.

#### **D. “COSMIC WAR” THEORY**

Mark Juergensmeyer argues that religious ideas have an important role in religiously motivated violence. Juergensmeyer discusses the common ideological components of religious extremist groups. Particularly, he explores perceived oppression of secular state perceived by these groups, who he believes, justify violence with “cosmic war.”<sup>24</sup>

Cosmic war is “dichotomous opposition on absolute scale:”<sup>25</sup> the perceived enemy has to be completely destroyed, and the struggle must be uncompromising. “The very existence of the opponent is a threat, and until the enemy is either crushed or contained, one’s own existence cannot be secure.”<sup>26</sup> Religious struggles have Manichaeian characteristic by dividing the world into fight between good and evil.

According to Juergensmeyer there are two not contradictory approaches to explaining religious violence. The first approach concerns the extreme characteristics of religion that lead to violence; the second concerns real-life violent conflicts which attempt to be validated religiously.

When addressing conditions connect the cosmic war with actual acts of violence, Juergensmeyer explains “the cosmic struggle is understood to be occurring in this world rather than in a mythical setting; believers identify personally with the struggle; and the struggle is at a point of crisis in which individual actions can make all the difference.”<sup>27</sup> There are three conditions for confrontations to be characterized as cosmic war: the

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<sup>24</sup> Mark Juergensmeyer, “Religion as a Cause of Terrorism,” in *the Roots of Terrorism*, ed. Louse Richardson (New York: Routledge, 2006), 139–141.

<sup>25</sup> Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2003), 152.

<sup>26</sup> Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*, 152.

<sup>27</sup> Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*, 164.

struggle is perceived as a defense of basic identity and dignity, losing the struggle would be unthinkable, and the struggle cannot be won in real time or in real terms.<sup>28</sup>

If the struggle is seen as a cultural war with spiritual implications, personal humiliations often lead to attempts to recover personal dignity and cultural pride. The struggle may be taken beyond human conception and viewed on transhistorical plane. If goals are unachievable, they will be defined as fulfillment of holy order. In hopeless moments, “sacred strength” is the only resource available; grand scenarios of cosmic war are needed.

In these cases the use of violence is legitimized and minor skirmishes are elevated to colossal proportions.<sup>29</sup>

Cosmic war theory is not applicable in the case of Macedonia. Tensions among ethnic groups in the country exist, but they have not been in defense of entire cultures. Furthermore, the scale of violent incidents in Macedonia is very small and does not represent the “sacred struggle” of Muslims in the country. Finally, the situation in the country is not perceived to be hopeless and the perception of oppression is absent.

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<sup>28</sup> Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*, 165.

<sup>29</sup> Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*, 165.

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### III. IDEOLOGY

#### A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter is a search for the most appropriate definition of ideology. Because the phenomenon of international terrorism is a functional issue,<sup>30</sup> this research draws on literature related to the functional aspects of ideology as a set of ideas that mobilize and shape human behavior. According to Iain MacKenzie, ideologies are powerful because they combine critiques of an existing order and a vision for a better system: “Along with a map of reality comes a picture of an ideal society. An Ideology, then, provides both an account of existing social and political relations and a blueprint of how these relations ought to be organized.”<sup>31</sup>

Andrew Heywood argues that ideologies are important because they combine together the worlds of action and thought. He defines ideology as:

A more or less coherent set of ideas that provides the basis for organized political action, weather this is intended to preserve, modify or overthrow the existing system of power. All ideologies therefore, have following features:

- They offer an account of existing order, usually in the form of a “world view.”
- They advance a model of a desired future, a vision of the “good society.”
- They explain how political change can and should be broth about—how to get from (a) to (b).<sup>32</sup>

In short, ideologies tend to explain what is wrong in the world and identify where the responsibility for the existing problems lies. Finally, they are a call to action.

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<sup>30</sup> David Tucker, *Skirmishes at the Edge of Empire: The United States and International Terrorism* (Westport, CT, Praeger Publishers: 1997) 110.

<sup>31</sup> Iain MacKenzie, “The Arena of Ideology,” in Robert Eccleshall, Vincent Georghegan, Richard Jay, Michael Kenny, Iain MacKenzie, and Rick Wilford, eds., *Political Ideologies: An Introduction, Second Edition* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 1.

<sup>32</sup> Heywood, *Political ideologies: An Introduction*, 12.

## B. EXTREMIST IDEOLOGIES

Irrespective of their specific doctrinal beliefs, extremist ideologies are recognized by certain common characteristics. According to scholars, extremism is distinct phenomenon characterized by manicheanism, monism, authoritarianism or totalitarianism, collectivism, utopianism, hyper-moralism and/or puritanism, conspiracy mongering, and a penchant for demonizing and dehumanizing designated enemies.<sup>33</sup>

- Manicheanism is the dualistic concept of good and evil, which encourages a sharp division of the world into good and evil.
- Monism is the opposite of pluralism. For extremists, different views are unacceptable.
- Hyper-moralism justifies violence with the intention of creating a better world.
- Utopian agendas cannot be obtained in the real world. Extremists become frustrated and attempt to eliminate everybody who stands in their way; obsession eclipses reality.
- Collectivist ideologies do not recognize individual rights.
- Authoritarian and totalitarian groups control the behavior of their adherents by attempting to influence the way their adherents think.
- Extremists dehumanize and demonize their enemies.
- Extremist ideologies promote paranoia: the view that the enemy is everywhere. Violence is justified with the need to stop and destroy the enemy. This characteristic also explains the tendency of conspiratorial thinking.

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<sup>33</sup> John George and Laird Wilcox, *American Extremists: Militias, Supremacists, Klansmen, Communists, and Others*, Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1996, 54–62; Gian Mario Bravo, *L'estremismo in Italia*, Rome: Riuniti, 1982, 7–18; and Neil J. Smelser, *the Faces of Terrorism: Social and Psychological Dimensions*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007, 58–80.

## C. ISLAMIC EXTREMIST IDEOLOGIES

### 1. Islamism

Jeffrey M. Bale defines Islamism as “A radically anti secular and anti-western Political current of contemporary Islamic thought with both revolutionary and revivalist characteristics.”<sup>34</sup> He explains that principal characteristics of Islamism: rejection of Western secular values, resistance to all forms of “infidel” influence over the Muslim world, hostility towards less committed and militant Muslims (*takfir*), and an insistence establishing an Islamic order governed by a rigid application of the *shari’a*.

Bale details several misconceptions regarding Islamism. One misconception is the conflation of Islam, one of the world’s most common religions, with Islamism, a radical modern Islamic political ideology. The existing allegation is that negative characteristics of Islamism are intrinsic to Islam itself. Bale argues that although it is true that Islamism and its jihadist variant derive from specific interpretations of Islam, these particular interpretations are not the only possible, much less the most authentic or widely shared.<sup>35</sup>

Another misconception is the tendency to cover up Islam and apologize for Islamism on assertions that Islam is a “religion of peace,” or in other words that Islamism has nothing to do with Islam. Bale refutes these claims: Islam is a missionary monotheistic religion and, due to its pattern of historical growth, has been more prone to adopt hostile and belligerent attitudes towards non-believers. He claims that Islamism is inconceivable without reference to Islam because it is a radical ideology explicitly based on a strict and puritanical interpretation of Islamic doctrine.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Jeffrey M. Bale, “Islamism,” in *Encyclopedia of Bioterrorism Defense*, ed. Richard F. Pilch and Raymond A Zilinskas (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley and Sons, 2005), 296.

<sup>35</sup> Bale, “Islamism and Totalitarianism,” 74.

<sup>36</sup> Bale, “Islamism and Totalitarianism,” 75–77.

Another misconception is that there are moderate and radical forms of Islamism, that Islamism is essentially a new type of “democratic movement from below,” Islamism can be seen as an Islamic form of “liberation theology,” and that “Islamic threat” does not really exist or it has been exaggerated.

Bale argues that even Islamists who reject violence as a tactic of achieving their goals do not have moderate goals. Islamist opposition towards authoritarian regimes occurs primarily because those states are considered “apostate” or “un-Islamic.” Historical records show that no Islamist movement has ever “liberated” anyone. Jihadist terrorist attacks have afflicted many countries in the world, and escalation is ongoing.<sup>37</sup>

According to Bale, Islamism has often been falsely equated with Muslim fundamentalism, Muslim traditionalism, and political Islam.<sup>38</sup>

Fundamentalism is best explained as an attempt by religious movements to return to uncorrupted fundamental elements of their own religious traditions. In the Islamic context, this generally means a strict adherence to Qur’anic injunction and the example set by the Prophet Muhammad. However, in different geographical and historical areas there are different forms of fundamentalism without any political agenda. Thus Islamism can be categorized as one particular subset of activist Islamic fundamentalism.

Islamism should not be confused with Muslim traditionalism. Many Muslim scholars, who define themselves as traditionalists, consider Islamism to be prone to violent sectarian movements that produce disunity (*fitna*) within the Muslim community (*umma*). Moreover, despite the demands of a restoration of Islamic faith, Islamism is a relatively recent political variant of Islamic thought, and should not be confused with earlier Islamic reform movements.

Islamism does not refer to all types of political movements in the Muslim world. Political Islam includes all doctrines which aim to politicize Islam, or vice versa. Islamism is only one of many doctrinal currents that fall under a broader category, along

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<sup>37</sup> Bale, “Islamism and Totalitarianism,” 77–79.

<sup>38</sup> Bale, “Islamism,” 296.

with Moderate Reformist Islam and Liberal Islam. In fact, within the political Islam spectrum, Islamism occupies a position near the far right end.

Moreover, there are several distinct ideological currents within Islamism. Hassan al-Banna, the founder of Muslim Brotherhood, argued that Egyptian and Muslim society in general was in state of crisis because it adopted Western secular ideologies and did not follow the right path of the faith. His revival began as a critique of Muslim leadership which failed to lead the community towards its true faith and identity: Islam.<sup>39</sup> Banna's organization infiltrated the state apparatus, engaged it in proselytizing, and provided social services in order to limit the exposure of masses to secular Western values.<sup>40</sup>

The South Asian Islamic ideologue Sayyid Abu al-A'la Mawdudi argued that Western culture and ideas were corrupt. He reinterpreted the term *jahiliyyah* to describe the ignorance of the world before the revelation of the Qur'an.<sup>41</sup> Although he portrayed his movement as a revolutionary party, he was more concerned with the nature of the future Islamic state rather than the methods of seizing power.<sup>42</sup>

The Egyptian Sayyid Qutb blamed the decline of Islam on Muslim leadership, which he accused of bending to the will of political authorities and compromising the teaching of Islam. He named governments that embrace secularism as *jahilil* because the right to govern over other humans was reserved for God, not for humans.<sup>43</sup> According to Qutb, because modern Muslim societies were corrupt and spiritually bankrupt, they had to be destroyed and replaced by a true Islamic state and society.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> John L. Esposito, *Islamic Threat: Myth of reality?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 121; Brynjar Lia, *The Society of Muslim Brothers in Egypt* (Ithaca, NY: Ithaca Press, 1998) 55–60.

<sup>40</sup> Bale, "Islamism," 297.

<sup>41</sup> Charles J. Adams, "Mawdudi and the Islamic State," in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 101.

<sup>42</sup> Bale, "Islamism," 297.

<sup>43</sup> William E. Shepard, "Sayyid Qutb's Doctrine of Jahiliyya," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35 (2003): 526–528.

<sup>44</sup> Bale, "Islamism," 297.

Even more radical was the Egyptian Muhammad' Abd al-Salam al-Faraj, who insisted that armed jihad is the sixth pillar of Islam. He introduced the process of *takfir* by which less militarized Muslims are marked as targets for violence.

Finally, Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri further transformed Islamic strategy by insisting that the target of their jihad should be the United States rather than corrupt Muslim governments.<sup>45</sup>

## 2. Wahhabism

Wahhabi Islam, the official form of Islam in Saudi Arabia, is one of the most ultraconservative forms of Islam. Its name originates from Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1791), a scholar of Islamic law and theology. Disappointed by the decline and moral negligence of his society, he denounced many popular beliefs and practices as un-Islamic idolatry. He rejected the imitations of past scholarships and regarded the medieval law of religious scholars (*ulama*) as imperfect and unsound. Abd al-Wahhab called for an interpretation of Islam that will return to the “fundamentals” of Islam found in the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad.

A religious-political movement was formed when Abd al-Wahhab joined with Muhammad Ibn Saud. As a local tribal chief, Ibn Saud used Wahhabism in order to legitimize his jihad for subduing and uniting the tribes of Arabia, which were converted to the puritanical version of Islam. Wahhabi's extreme theology saw the world in sharp divisions: Muslims and non-Muslim, believers and non-believers, Islam and warfare. Thus, all Muslims who did not agree with his theology were regarded as unbelievers and were fought and killed in the name of Islam. God's unity (*tawhid*) was central to their theology, and they self-designated themselves as “Unitarians” (*muwahiddun*).

By the early twentieth century, Abdulaziz Ibn Saud united the tribes of Arabia, recaptured Riyadh from Muhammad Ali of Egypt, restored the Saudi kingdom, and spread Wahhabism. Using the Wahhabi interpretation of Islam as the official basis for state and society, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia declared itself as an Islamic state by

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<sup>45</sup> Bale, “Islamism,” 298.

melding political and religious settings. The Saudis exported their ultraconservative version of Wahhabi Islam to the Muslim communities and other countries by aiding development, commissioning imams and religious scholars, funding and distributing religious tracts, and building mosques, libraries, and other institutions. Some the wealth from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf also provided financial support to extremist groups who followed the militant brand of Islam.<sup>46</sup>

According to Schwartz, Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the founder of Wahhabism, found his main inspiration in Ibn Taymiyyah. In the 13th century, the Mongol's conquest of Arab dominions, especially Baghdad, was perceived by its inhabitants as a sign of the "end time." It was Ibn Taymiyyah, a Hanbali scholar, who rebelled against the Islamized Mongol rulers. He argued that the political state and the religious scholars need to function as a single entity, and that Muslims who did not live under *Shariah* are the worst of all evils. He declared total war on Sufism and Shi'ism. By encouraging *jihad* as a mean of dividing Muslims he returned to the mentality of the Khawarij.<sup>47</sup>

Fundamentalists in Islam are known as the *Khawarij*: members who emerged from the ranks of Ali's supporters during his conflict with Umayyad. Since the followers of Ali desired an egalitarian Islam inclusive of differences, the Khawarij aimed at dictatorship. Thus, Kawarij presaged the Wahhabi phenomenon that emerged in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and gained huge influence over the ummah, owing to the emergence of the Saudi state and the discovery of oil in the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>48</sup>

In his early adulthood, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab traveled all around the Ottoman Empire. One of his later goals was to liquidate it. Similarly like Taymiyyah, al-Wahhab perceived that the Muslim caliphate was in crisis; and particularly, the defeat at the Battle of Vienna was viewed as the "end time." Wahhab's preached that the ritual is superior to intent, that reverence for the dead is not permitted, and that when addressing God there

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<sup>46</sup> John L. Esposito, *What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam* (New York, New York, Oxford University Press, 2002), 49–52.

<sup>47</sup> Stephen Schwartz, *The Two Faces of Islam* (New York, Doubleday Random House, Inc., 2002), 54–56.

<sup>48</sup> Schwartz, *The Two Faces of Islam*, 35.

can be no intercessory prayer by means of Prophet or saints. He condemned unbelievers, those who did not participate in all prayers; he ordered that mosques should be free of all decorations; he demanded that Muslims should not shave or trim their beards; and he hated celebrations of the Prophet's birthday. In addition, al-Wahhab in his call for "reform," ordered that graves of Muslim saints be dug up and scattered, despised music as a sin, and burned many books believing that the Quran is sufficient for human needs.

It should be noted that in efforts to stop the Wahhabi's bloodshed in Arabia, the Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II appointed Muhammad Ali Pasha as governor of Egypt. Ali Pasha was Albanian born and sympathized with the Bektashi dervishes. He successfully liberated Mecca and Medina from Wahhabi dictatorship and latter conquered the Wahhabi capital, Dariyah.<sup>49</sup>

Orthodox Sunni Muslims believe that they are the true owners of pure Islam, and today are represented by four authentic schools of Islamic jurisprudence.

The *Hanafi* school of jurisprudence, created by Abu Hanifah, is considered the most tolerant of differences in opinion. It is also the most influential school of thought in the Muslim world.

In the generations that followed Abu Hanifah, three other schools emerged. The *Malikis*, named after Malik Ibn Anas, center their practices in Medina. The *Shafi'is*, whose founder is Muhamad ibn-al-Shafii, based their thinking on the Hadith as well as the use of analogy. The *Hanbalis* are considered to be the pioneers of fundamentalist theology in Islam; the mentor, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, stressed the use of authentic *Hadith* in preference to analogy. The *Shariah*, or Islamic law, is the sum of all these schools of thought.<sup>50</sup>

Wahhabis differentiate themselves from orthodox Sunni Muslims. They call themselves Salafis, meaning that they follow the Prophet's Companions, the Companion's followers, and the follower's followers. The ideological founders of

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<sup>49</sup> Schwartz, *The Two Faces of Islam*, 69–72.

<sup>50</sup> Schwartz, *The Two Faces of Islam*, 41.

Wahhabism are Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayim al- Jawziyya, who introduced the concepts of *shirk* (polytheism), *kufir* (unbelief in God), *ridda* (apostasy), and *bida'* (innovations).

Wahhabis perceive Sunni Muslims to have been living for centuries in the state of *jahiliyya* (ignorance) because they moved from the way of *al-salaf*. Wahhabis even accused Muslims living under the Ottoman caliphate of *kufir* (unbelief) because they have been living under political systems not known to *al-salaf*. Wahhabis also differentiate themselves from other salafis by their unorthodox understanding of assigning human attributes to Allah. As a result, all Wahhabis are considered to be salafists, but not all salafists are Wahhabis. Moreover, Wahhabis have labeled all Shia as *rafida* (rejectionists) because of their lack of faith. Thus, the most prominent feature of Wahhabism has been *takfir* (excommunication).

Wahhabism started as a theological reform movement of revolutionary jihad. This movement's goal was to urge (da'wa) people to restore the *tawhid* (ones of God, or monotheism) and disregard other practices. However, in 1929 Wahhabism was forcefully changed to a conservative religious movement whose goal was to uphold the loyalty of the royal Saudi family.

The recent spread of Wahhabism was enabled by Ibn Baz. As a Saudi mufti and government scholar, he was in position to lead and develop policies for spreading Wahhabi believes. Under his leadership, the majority of Saudi clergy remained loyal to the royal family and its policies, despite considering democracy to be in contrast to their religion and monotheism. However, opposition movements, unsatisfied with the policies of the royal family, started seeking to overthrow the regime in Saudi Arabia, and submitted a memo demanding a system reformation. Most of their opposition was arrested, but Muhammad al-Mas'ari found refuge in London and established a Salafist organization. Later, the group split in three different wings, one of which belonged to Osama Bin Laden.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Ahmad Moussalli, "Wahhabism, Salafism, and Islamism: Who is the Enemy?" A Conflict Forum Monograph, American University of Beirut, January 2009, 4–10.

### 3. Salafism

The basic concept of Salafism is *al-salaf al-salih* (the pious predecessors) which aims to explain the true interpretations and practices of Islam, or to reject the theologies of Islamic schools of jurisprudence. Adherents of Salafism advocate that Muslims return to bases of pure Islam and practice their faith as it was intended by the prophet and his followers. Salafists abandon and criticize any form of polytheism (*shirk*), innovations (*bid'a*), and superstition (*khurafa*). According to salafists, all problems and conflicts in the world have resulted from a failure to follow religious beliefs and practices purely.<sup>52</sup>

Following the doctrine of *al-wala' wa al-bara'*, Salafists choose to live in small, tight-knit, isolated communities in order to avoid any corrupting innovations from the world of infidels. Jews and Christians are considered a threat to Islam. In order to visually distinguish themselves as Muslims, Salafists wear specific clothing and grow long beards.<sup>53</sup>

Unlike Wahhabis, Salafists are by nature apolitical. Following *tawhid* (oneness of God), they reject Islamic schools of jurisprudence, *ijma'* (consensus), *qiyas* (analogical deduction), and independent legal reasoning. Unlike Islamists, Salafists seek to eliminate the political meaning of *tawhid* and instead focus on religious missionary work. They also do not acknowledge the doctrine of *bay'a* (oath of alliance) and do not promise loyalty to any leader.

Thus, salafists argue that party politics are a manifestation of polytheism. They strongly reject any politics. Salafists also reject the reestablishment of caliphate because it is political and would cause conflict among Muslims.<sup>54</sup> At the same time, Salafists' involvement in politics is advocate of the strict application of *al-sharia* law. According to Salafists, the sharia is the only law to which Muslims should submit. Thus, unlike Islamist, they reject democracy, and any other ideology.

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<sup>52</sup> Moussalli, "Wahhabism, Salafism, and Islamism: Who is the Enemy?" 12.

<sup>53</sup> Moussalli, "Wahhabism, Salafism, and Islamism: Who is the Enemy?" 13.

<sup>54</sup> Moussalli, "Wahhabism, Salafism, and Islamism: Who is the Enemy?" 15.

Salafists view the jihad specifically. Unlike radical Islamists, who wage jihad against Muslim rulers, Salafists jihad is a defensive war against non-Muslims. According to Salafists, in order to wage jihad, Muslims need the approval of a legitimate imam. In this sense, Salafists' view of jihad is collective and defensive. However, Salafists argue that jihad can be waged without approval if the ruler has strayed from the path of pure Islam. Thus, although salafism is apolitical in nature it provides a base for political jihadi action when the concept of *tawhid* is violated. Finally, Salafists feel under constant threat from external enemies, particularly Jews and Christians.<sup>55</sup>

Unlike Islamists, who argue that submission to shari'a law requires establishment of an Islamic state, Salafists believe the Islamic state is unnecessary. However, Salafists condone jihad as an Islamic effort to build an ideal society free from Western influence and control. In consequence, many Salafists have become part of radical Islam, and many neo-salafist radical groups have been formed. The main doctrine of these neo-salafist jihadist groups is the rejection of Western democracy and man-made laws (in favor of the shari'a law).<sup>56</sup>

#### **D. MUSLIMS AND THE VIOLENCE IN THE BALKANS**

The Balkans, particularly the region of "Yugoslavia," is one of the most ethnically, linguistic, and religiously complex regions in the world. Two opposed schools of thought have been developed by scholars to explain this region's historical role. The first perspective regards the region as center of competition between civilizations, while the second regards it as transit area between different cultures.

Islam was introduced to the Balkans by the Ottomans, who ruled the region for five centuries. Different religions coexisted because Muslims regarded others with tolerance. Demoted as *Demis* or "protected residents," non-Muslim entities were obligated to pay taxes to Ottomans. To avoid taxes, many converted to Islam and were assimilated into the Ottoman system.

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<sup>55</sup> Moussalli, "Wahhabism, Salafism, and Islamism: Who is the Enemy?" 18.

<sup>56</sup> Moussalli, "Wahhabism, Salafism, and Islamism: Who is the Enemy?" 21.

In order for Ottomans to fulfill the needs of their military and security, they deported the local population and settled their own people. The Ottomans were convinced that the minorities would not rebel if they were surrounded by a Muslim population. After the First Balkan War, Ottomans were defeated and banished from the Balkans.<sup>57</sup>

It should be noted that during World War II, the confrontation between Muslims in the Balkans and their adversaries created an opportunity for the infiltration of radical Islamic influence. Thanks to Hajj Amin al Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem who collaborated with the Nazis during the war, Muslims in the Balkans were recruited to fight on the side of German SS Divisions. The first Muslim division to be established in Bosnia, known as SS Division No.13, was called “Handzar” meaning a spear or a dagger. Later, the Waffen-SS 21<sup>st</sup> Division was formed from the “Muslim Albanian nucleus” and named Skender-beg. Finally, in mid-1944, the Waffen-23<sup>rd</sup> Division named “Kama” was formed.<sup>58</sup>

The Balkans became a major attraction for Islamic militancy after Yugoslavia dissolved, creating an outbreak of ethnic conflicts. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, foreign jihadis were organized into the El Mujahid division, which was attached to the Bosnian army. In Albania, terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda, the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), the Islamic Armed Group (GIA), and Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) infiltrated the country and used charities to raise and distribute funds. In relation to the war in Kosovo, a conference of Islamic organizations resolved to regard the Muslim Albanians struggles for independence as a Jihad. According to various sources, during the conflict in Macedonia, the ranks of the National Liberation Army (NLA) included approximately 150 Mujahidin from Albania, Bosnia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Afghanistan, all of whom participated in the fighting.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Shaul Shay, *Islamic Terror and the Balkans*, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2006), 21.

<sup>58</sup> Shay, *Islamic Terror and the Balkans*, 26–35.

<sup>59</sup> Shay, *Islamic Terror and the Balkans*, 114.

## IV. SPREAD OF ISLAMIC EXTREMISM IN MACEDONIA

### A. WAHHABISM/SALAFISM

According to Schwartz, after the early Wahhabi movements were developed Arabia was conquest by the Wahhabi-Saudi, and later permanent jihad was developed in Afghanistan. For Wahhabi clerics, it was time to assist bin Laden, and extend the Wahabi “jihad” abroad. “Since then, every country where Muslims are found has witnessed a sharpening struggle between Wahhabis and traditionalists.”<sup>60</sup>

The Wahhabi conquest of Balkan Islam is very complicated. An Islamic religious community has been present in the region since the time of Ottoman Empire, unlike other parts of Europe. The involvement of Saudi Arabia and Gulf states in the Balkans begin in the 1990s, when the dissolution of Yugoslavia was inevitable and wars broke out in Bosnia and Kosovo. During these wars, mujahedin actively participated, but the Wahhabi largely influenced Balkans, even once fighting had ended.

The media and international experts have primarily paid attention to the rise of Islamic extremism in the Macedonian’s capital. Most Muslim ethnicity in this area is Albanian. Disputes between Albanians have been more volatile than in other parts of the country. The long standing dispute within IVZ is caused by the penetration of foreign-funded Wahhabis who are challenging the legitimate leadership of IVZ for political and economic gain. They have gained control of several mosques in the capital.

In September 2010, the head of IVZ, Reis-ul-Ulema Hadzi Sulejman Efendi Rexhepi, publicly requested help from authorities of political Albanians political parties and the international community in dealing with radical groups the Wahhabis and called for measures to stop the spread of radical Islam in the Macedonia.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Schwartz, *The Two Faces of Islam*, 183.

<sup>61</sup> “ИВЗ бара Власта да се Справи со Вахабитите,” (IVZ requires the Government to deal with Wahhabis), *Utrinski Vesnik*, September 21, 2010, <http://www.utrinski.com.mk/?ItemID=1C03292BF7F419409EEBB63526468F44> (accessed September 8, 2011).

However, police sources and local Muslims in Macedonia attest that problems date back to the mid-1990s. At that time, according to Deliso, Saudi Arabia and other foreign sponsors exploited internal divisions within the IVZ. Representatives of the Islamic community were regarded as old-fashioned, Communist-trained clerics who were more interested in bureaucracy and ownership than in religion. In addition, radicals took roots in the country by exploiting the weaknesses of the recently independent Macedonian state.<sup>62</sup>

These assertions were confirmed by international terrorist experts. According to Claude Monique, al Qaeda-inspired/related fundamentalist cells, present in the capital of Macedonia, were preaching an extreme form of Saudi-inspired Wahhabi Islam. Monique claimed that the mufti Zenun Berisha maintained close ties with al Qaeda affiliates and shared goals of establishing terror camps and cells. These fundamentalist cells created fear among local Muslims who witnessed violence directed against members of the Islamic community.<sup>63</sup>

### **1. Intolerance toward “Other” Muslims**

One of the widespread impacts of Wahhabi presence is the rejections of tolerance among Muslims, including the refusal to recognize the traditions of Sufis and Shi’as. The Bektashi Sufi order, present in Macedonia, was a major variant that emerged after the collapse of Yasawi’s order in the 12th century. This order gained great influence under the Ottomans. Their mentor is Hajji Bektash Wali, a Turkish poet born in Iran. One of the famous Bektashi complexes, dating back to the 18th century, known as Harabati Tekke is located in Tetovo, Macedonia. Several incidents relating to the Bektasi order have occurred in Macedonia.

In April 2006, unknown offenders entered the yard of Harabati Tekke in Tetovo and ripped down the picture of Bektasi leader, Haji Bektashi Dede Reshad Bard. The image of his head was torn out of the picture. The leader of Tetovo Bektashi community,

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<sup>62</sup> Deliso, *the Coming Balkan Caliphate*, 79.

<sup>63</sup> Center for Strategic and International Studies, “Fundamentalist Cells Preaching Wahhabi Islam in Macedonian Capital,” *Transnational Threats Updates*, Vol.2, No. 13, December 2004, [http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/ttu\\_0412.pdf](http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/ttu_0412.pdf) (accessed October 6, 20011).

Baba Edmond Brahimai, claimed that there are no existing disputes between his community and representatives of IVZ in Macedonia.<sup>64</sup>

However, in December 2010, fire broke in the Harabati Tekke, 30 square meters of carving on the 300 years old ceiling were burned, and the leader of Bekatshi community changed his rhetoric. He claimed that the fire was created by the “other side,” referring to members of IVZ. According to Haji Baba Edmond Brahimai, while they were using the object since 1993, there were refused attempts at bribery with facilities, houses and cars. In addition, he claimed that in 2002, members of IVZ entered the complex and usurped it.<sup>65</sup>

Those incidents were not merely executed by regular members of IVZ; they were acts of local Wahhabi adherents. Indeed, according to Stephen Schwartz, in 2002, a group of local Wahhabis (including some from Arab countries), forcefully threatened the use of weapons and took over the Hrabati Tekke, which is the most known religious object in Tetovo. They took over the guest house and dubbed it a mosque, covered the windows of the central building with black paper, and cut down several ancient trees. According to Schwartz, this confrontation was initiated from diametrically different interpretations and practices of Islam.<sup>66</sup> In addition, the Center for Islamic Pluralism views these actions as the open aggression of Wahhabi Islamists: a serious terrorist threat to the entire region, and an offensive act of cultural and religious vandalism.

Expressing concerns the Center has sent this e-mail to the U.S. Embassy and the President of the Republic of Macedonia: “We strenuously protest the Wahhabi invasion of the Harabati Tekke in Tetovo and call on the U.S. diplomatic authorities in Skopje, who monitor terrorist threats in the Balkans, to pressure the Macedonian government for

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<sup>64</sup> “Непознати Лица Искинале Слика на Бектешкиот Поглавар,” (Unfamiliar faces ripped picture Bekteshi head), *Dnevnik online*, 12 April 2006, <http://www.dnevnik.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=BD87E33F7BC077409BC71067E76C9F0C> (accessed September 20, 2011).

<sup>65</sup> “Пожар ја запали дилемата за сопственоста на текето,” (Fire burned the dilemma of tekke ownership), *Utrinski Vesnik*, 13 December 2010, <http://www.utrinski.com.mk/?ItemID=DB5C249F62EBC74F80F0F6B85AB6DE07> (accessed September 20, 2011).

<sup>66</sup> Stephen Schwartz, “The Balkan front,” *Weekly Standard*, No.10 (2007). <http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/013/612zecct.asp?page=2>, (accessed September 20, 2011)

the immediate removal of the Wahhabis from the Harabati Tekke, by legal force if necessary, and protect the tekke from further interference.”<sup>67</sup>

Another characteristic is a refusal to recognize Sufi and Shi’a orders, which excludes them from discussions. In 2006, the IVZ boycotted the New Year’s reception, traditionally organized by the Commission for Relations with Religious Communities, in the name of the Prime Minister. The head of IVZ was revolted by the presence of the representative of Bektashi religious community, Dervish Abdulmutalin Beqiri. According to the secretary of IVZ, Afrim Tahiri, the IVZ does not recognize the uniqueness of Bektasi community and believe they unlawfully occupied the property of IVZ in Tetovo.<sup>68</sup> However, in 2010, the IVZ signed an agreement and recognized the Bektashi order in the city of Kicevo. It appears that the disputes between the IVZ and the Bektashi order in Tetovo are motivated by the claims of property.

## **2. Conflict in 2001**

During the conflict in Macedonia, the presence of mujahidin groups was registered in all regions affected with the crisis.

According to sources of the Ministry of Interior, in the period of 2001–2002 around five hundred mujahidin, independently or within Albanian National Army (ANA) terrorist group, were participating in the fights. In the region of Kumanovo, members of the “Imran Elezi” mujahidin unit, with around one hundred fighters, were stationed in the villages of Slupcane, Matejce, Vaksince, Otlja and Lipkovo. In the region of Skopje, mujahidin fighters were taking part in the armed conflicts of villages of Tanushevci, Brest, Malino maalo, and Arachinovo. The mujahidin group was also stationed in the Skopje suburb of Gazi Baba in August 2001, where five members of the terrorist group were executed with their leader “Teli,” who was not a Macedonian citizen, and another five were arrested by the Macedonian police units. Finally in the region of Tetovo,

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<sup>67</sup> Center for Islamic Liberalism, “Urgent Call for Protest Against Wahhabi Aggression in Macedonia,” March 11, 2008 <http://www.islamicpluralism.org/427/urgent-call-for-protest-against-wahhabi-aggression> (accessed October 7, 2011).

<sup>68</sup> “Бекташите ја избркаа ИВЗ,” (Bektashi chased out ICM), *Vecer*, 29 December 2006, <http://www.vecer.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=0381824CEB7BAB469D7B6AA5D4EF4E00> (accessed September 20, 2011).

mujahedin groups were stationed in villages of Bozovce, Vejce, Gajre and Poroj. According to some additional information, in February 2001, two wings of the mujahedin organization were formed in Macedonia. The military wing was commanded by Muhamed Hadafan Gamili and the political wing was led by Sheik Ahmed Ali Sedan.<sup>69</sup>

Moreover, after the signing of the Ohrid Agreement, several groups of ANA were still present in Macedonia. Although the existence of the organization was denied and negated by politicians and analysts in October 2001, around one hundred mujahidin were stationed in the village of Lipkovo: forty in the village of Otlja, and around thirty in Matejce. Around fifty mujahedin were stationed, among them from Arab countries, in Tetovo village of Orashje. In January 2002, a group of around twenty mujahedin entered the country from Kosovo and it was stationed in the village of Bogovinje.

The presence of active fundamentalists in Macedonia brought the attention of experts on terrorism and raised concerns of wider international community. The reaction came in 2004 when French terrorism experts of the European Strategic Intelligence and Security Center revealed that up to one hundred fundamentalists linked to terrorist organizations were operating in Macedonia. In addition, Monique claimed that al-Qaeda had financial links with local crime and accused Zenun Berisha, the chief mufti at that time, of supporting radical Islam and appointing fundamentalists to positions in mosques and the administration of the Islamic Community of Macedonia (IVZ).<sup>70</sup>

### **3. Public Protest**

Beside incidents occurring in IVZ mosques and offices, adherents to the Wahhabi movement did not hesitate to be active in public. In 2006 street demonstrations were organized in Skopje and Tetovo as an expression condemning the publishing of cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad. It was the first symbolic promotion of their presence in the public.

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<sup>69</sup> D. Vujicic, "Bin Ladin's Camp in Kosovo," Military Photos Forum, 16 March 2004, <http://www.militaryphotos.net/forums/archive/index.php/t-8098.html> (accessed October 14, 2011).

<sup>70</sup> Christopher Deliso, "Fissures in Balkan Islam," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 16 February 2006, <http://www.wrn.org/articles/20443/?&place=balkans&section=islam> (accessed September 21, 2011).

According to newspapers in Macedonia, protests in Skopje begin after the Friday prayer in front of the Yaya Pasha mosque. Later, the crowd numbered 1,000 people. While walking on the streets, they chanted “Allah is great,” wore black headscarves and waved black and green flags with Arabic inscriptions. Protests were aimed at the Danish consulate and the newspapers “Vreme” and “Vest.” In Tetovo, a crowd of 800 gathered in front of the Painted mosque. Most of these protestors were young students.”<sup>71</sup>

The two main political parties, DPA and DUI, distanced themselves from the protest, but took the opportunity to accuse each other organizing the protest. According to Menduh Taci, the leader of DPA, the protests were organized by Zenun Berisha. Political analyst Mersel Bijali also said that these demonstrations were a “manipulation of children by certain structures who are not satisfied by the elections in IVZ.”<sup>72</sup> Representatives of IVZ also condemned the publications of the cartoons, but called Muslims to walk away from provocation.

Although no one officially claimed to be the organizer of the protests, because they took place in Skopje and Tetovo, they were an expression of Albanian Muslims. Other Muslim representatives in Macedonia did not participate in the protests. The gathering of protesters began in front of a mosque under control of the Wahhabi wing, possible involvement from the Wahhabi movement was presumed. Finally, most of the protestors were Albanian Muslims youth, indicating that indeed they were chosen because they were easily manipulated. Islamic extremists prefer to target schools and colleges because young peoples’ curiosity makes them susceptible to extremist arguments, and they are also a less demanding audience.

#### **4. Palestinian Question**

In the past, Muslims in Macedonia have mainly been indifferent toward the Palestine-Israel issue. However, in recent years, they began expressing their

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<sup>71</sup> “Протести во Скопје и Тетово поради карикатурите со Мухамед,” (Protests in Skopje and Tetovo because Muhammad Cartoons), *Utrinski vesnik*, 16 October 2006, <http://star.utrinski.com.mk/?pBroj=2003&stID=61993&pR=2> (accessed September 20, 2011).

<sup>72</sup> “Организатори-незадоволниците од изборот во ИВЗ,” (Organizers-Unsatisfied With the Elections in ICM), *Vecer*, 6 September 2006, <http://star.vecer.com.mk/tekst.asp?tid=23888> (accessed September 20, 2011).

dissatisfaction with the situation. In January 2009, several NGOs held a press conference and presented their common position regarding the violence in Gaza. They asked the international community to stop the violence committed toward Palestinians.<sup>73</sup> In addition, in June 2010, the Israeli Navy seized a humanitarian convoy of ships heading to Gaza, revealing three Macedonian citizens among the humanitarian workers. A Turkish Islamic charity Izeta Shahin, which denied connections with Hamas or any other radical group, organized the convoy. Upon their arrival at the airport, Sami Emin, Yasmin Rechevi, and Sead Hasipi were welcomed as heroes by large crowd waving Palestinian, Turkish and Albanian flags.<sup>74</sup> These were the first visible expressions of sympathy towards Palestinians, and negative stance toward Israel.

## 5. Armed Groups

Although neither transnational nor indigenous terrorist organizations exist in Macedonia, there are armed groups and individuals. In recent years, several armed incidents raised suspicions of the links between former members of NLA and individuals affiliated with alienated Islamic extremists.

In 2007, when special police units raided Brodec in the North-West part of the country, it was discovered that the armed group of local Albanians was prepared for a long, armed struggle. Along with a vast quantity of ammunition and weapons (including mortars, machine guns, rifles and snipers), the police found pamphlets, documents and other mujahedeen propaganda material.<sup>75</sup>

In January 2008, one police officer was killed, and two policemen were wounded during an armed attack by a car moving alongside the police vehicle. An investigation

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<sup>73</sup> “Против насилиството во Газа,” (Against violence in Gaza), *Islamic Center*, 10 January 2009, [http://www.islamski-centar.org/web/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=121:nasilstvopalestina&catid=37:vesti&Itemid=82](http://www.islamski-centar.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=121:nasilstvopalestina&catid=37:vesti&Itemid=82) (accessed October 24, 2011).

<sup>74</sup> “Македонските хуманитарци се вратија дома,” (Macedonian aid workers have returned home), *Utrinski Vesnik*, 6 June 2010, <http://daily.mk/cluster3/bd08eeec71c5422d008780ad37727ec1/263872> (accessed October 12, 2011).

<sup>75</sup> “Бандата го изеде и волот на селскиот кмет,” (The gang ate the ox of village’s serf), 10 November 2007, <http://www.vecer.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=CF9070A5E5C4954ABF8D1A8D4E3761F9> (accessed October 11, 2011).

revealed that the attack was committed by three people who had been members of NLA in 2001: a president of a political party, a former MP, and a policeman.<sup>76</sup> A similar incident occurred in November 2008, when another police officer was killed and two others were wounded. According to information in the media, revenge was a possible motive.<sup>77</sup>

Although these armed incidents were local, some militant Islamic extremists present in the country were ready to participate in global jihad. In April 2010, a local newspaper, citing information from “World Net Daily” and the G-2 independent research agency, published an article informing that Saudi Arabia princesses were pouring millions of British pounds into Islamist organizations in the Balkans, including Macedonia, in order to spread hatred towards the West and recruit fighters for jihad.<sup>78</sup>

This information was confirmed later from other sources. According to a local newspaper, in November 2010, around fifty volunteers preparing to participate in the war in Afghanistan were being supervised by security agencies in Macedonia.<sup>79</sup>

## **6. Top-Down Approach of Islamic Extremists**

As elsewhere in the Balkans, the presence of Wahhabi groups was followed by an internal struggle for control of religion and property owned by IVZ. In Macedonia, this was most obvious during 2004–2006, when struggles for power within the Islamic community raised the public concerns about violent infiltrations by Islamic extremists.

Disputes started in 2004 when a group of muftis accused the head of IVZ, Arif Emini, of approving the fraudulent election of Zenun Berisha for Skopje mufti. The

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<sup>76</sup> “Бајрами по убиството на Марковски си одел на работа во MBP,” (Bairami after the Murder of Markovski was still going to work in MI), *Time.mk* <http://www.time.mk/cluster/c5e66f59ef/bajrami-po-ubistvoto-na-markovski-si-odel-na-rabota-vo-mvr.html> (accessed October 12, 2011).

<sup>77</sup> “Убиен полицаец во Македонија,” (Police officer killed in Macedonia), *Time.mk*, BBC Macedonian.com, 26 November 2008, <http://www.time.mk/read/09de0ad331/1f53341b16/index.html> (accessed October 12, 2011).

<sup>78</sup> “Ворлд Нет Дејли: Исламски доброволци од Македонија за Авганистан,” (World Net Daily: Islamic volunteers from Macedonia go to Afghanistan), *Nova Makedonija*, 1 April 2010, <http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=41101025568&id=9&prilog=0&setIzdanie=21949> (accessed October 22, 2011).

<sup>79</sup> “Македонија не е исклучена од терористички закани,” (Macedonia is not excluded from terrorist threats,” *Vecer*, 30 March 2010, <http://www.vecer.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=3D2168840D5E13408E4D685458980E52> (accessed October 12, 2011).

drama continued in 2005 when supporters of Zenun Berisha kidnapped and beat five imams in the village of Kondovo. In an interview, one of the kidnapped imams, Shaban Ahmeti, said:

The people who attacked us on Saturday night, are definitely representatives of radical Islam, or as we call them Wahhabis, who don't choose any means or ways in achieving their goals. They are ready to use physical force, to intimidate with the use of weapons, and even kill, only to fulfill their plans. Shukri Aliu and Metin who were part of the group that attacked us, repeatedly interrupted the cabinet of the head of IVZ with Kalashnikovs, and did the same when violently, with shootings, stopped the work of the Assembly of the Islamic Community in Kondovo.<sup>80</sup>

According to the representatives of IVZ, the leader of the kidnapers, Shukri Aliu, is a self-professed imam who studied in an Arab country, but no one knew exactly what he studied or where in Arabia he did so. Aliu was allegedly arrested in his attempt to enter the country with a great quantity of dynamite.<sup>81</sup>

## 7. The “Mosque War”

The conflict between Wahhabis and traditional Muslims in Macedonia became a “mosque war.” The tipping point of the struggle between Wahhabis and the IZV was an incident at the Isa Beg mosque, in September 2010. During the Friday prayer, a mufti named Ibrahim Shabani, the secretary of IVZ Afrim Tahiri, and the spokesman Skender Buzaku were forcefully expelled from the mosque by a group of people led by Ramadan Ramadani, suspended imam. It was the first direct confrontation between Muslim believers.<sup>82</sup> After this incident, it was publicly announced that several mosques were not under the control of IVZ. Many well-known mosques in the Skopje capital, such as Yahya Pasha, Sultan Murat, Hatundzik, and Aladja were under control of radical Islam.

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<sup>80</sup> International Crisis Group, “Македонија: Тетеравење кон Европа,” (Macedonia: Scrambling toward Europe), Report for Europe, No.41, Skopje/Brussels, January 12, 2006, [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/europe/b041\\_macedonia\\_wobbling\\_toward\\_europe\\_mk.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/europe/b041_macedonia_wobbling_toward_europe_mk.pdf) (accessed October 12, 2011).

<sup>81</sup> Deliso, *The Coming Balkan Caliphate*, 83.

<sup>82</sup> “ДПА: Рамадан Рамадани и други банди тепаат и бркаат оци,” (DPA: Ramadan Ramadani and other gangs beat and chase imams), *Nova Makedonia*, 1 July 2010, <http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=71101014598&id=9&prilog=0&setIzdanie=22022> (accessed October 12, 2011).

According to representatives of IVZ, Ramadan Ramadani was involved in violent struggles for power in the offices of the Islamic community. Later, he was suspended as a lecturer for the Isa Bay mosque when it was discovered that he had only attended secondary theological school.<sup>83</sup> In addition, Ramadan Ramadani was arrested in Kosovo by U.S. forces in 2005.<sup>84</sup>

## 8. NGOs

Islamic extremists exploit democratic societies. They are willing to take advantage of all the benefits offered in democracies for their advantage and their cause. This is also the case in Macedonia.

Recently, it was revealed that NGOs were involved in unlawful financial activities. According to the representatives of IVZ, during an Islamic religious holiday in August 2011, some NGOs were collecting donations in the name of humanity. The names of NGOs involved are unknown. However, The IVZ warned them by sending a letter explaining that by law, collecting *zakat* (almsgiving or charitable giving) is the sole responsibility of the IVZ. In order to solve the problem, the IVZ expressed readiness to press charges against NGOs and seek justice in court. It remains unknown how much money was collected and how it was spent.<sup>85</sup>

### a. *Kalaya Shkup*

In September 2010, unregistered NGO “Kalaya Shkup” invited Shefket Krasniqi, a controversial imam from Pristina, Kosovo, to hold a religious lecture in celebration of the month of Ramadan. The event was organized by the Municipality of Chair, but neither the IVZ nor the Commission of Religious Communities issued a permit for religious lecture or public religious teaching. According to IVZ, Haji Jakup

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<sup>83</sup> “Вахабитите се множат во џамиите,” (Wahhabis are Multiplying in Mosques), *Utrinski Vesnik*, 3 August 2010, Interview with Ibrahim Shabani mufti <http://www.utrinski.com.mk/?ItemID=5D52BCDAE37D7F41819A43711502881C> (accessed October 12, 2011).

<sup>84</sup> Deloso, *the Coming Balkan Caliphate*, 83.

<sup>85</sup> “Невладини организации се омрсиле во постот,” (NGOs misusing the fast), *Kanal 5 Televizija*, News, Macedonia, 30 August 2011, <http://www.kanal5.com.mk/default.aspx?mId=37&egId=13&eventId=79524> (accessed September 30, 2011).

Selimovski, the number of new NGOs has increased during the last few years; dealing with religious activities is disguised as humanitarian assistance. The identities and headquarters of “Kalaya Shkup” activists are unknown. Sefket Krasniqi sparked a controversy when he publicly stated that Mother Teresa, a native from Skopje area, “belongs in the middle of Hell because she did not believe in Allah, the prophet and the Qur’an ... Even if she believed in God her belief was incomplete, with deficiencies. God does not accept such worship.” According to German news agencies, Krasniqi is radical follower of Wahhabi ideology. Not surprisingly, some Macedonian Muslims, adherents to the wing of Ramadan Ramadani, consider him to be famous theology professor who lectures on Islam.<sup>86</sup>

**b. Muslim Youth Forum (MYF)--Forumi Rinor Islam**

The Muslim Youth Forum (MYF) was formed in Skopje in 2000. Its leader is Sherifi Rufat. Branches are present in Kumanovo, Tetovo, Kicevo, Struga, Prilep, and Gostivar. The mission of MYF is “Promotion and cultivation of Islamic and universal human values, protection of young people from deviations and raising and training them.”<sup>87</sup> Although the activities of this organization generally remain in the domain of political Islam, it recently attracted greater public attention. The presence of Hani Ramadan, as guest speaker at a conference organized by MYF in Tetovo in August 2011, raised concerns of Islamic radicalism. Tariq Ramadan, a well-known Islamic scholar and Hani Ramadan’s brother, displeased the European public with a statement suggesting adulterers should be stoned. Moreover, the Ramadan brothers have been pursued by the Swiss authorities for their radical religious ideas.<sup>88</sup> Additional concerns were expressed by representatives of the IZV, who believe that the involvement of NGOs

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<sup>86</sup> “ИВЗ: Нерегистрирани НВО ни носат радикални исламити,” (ICM: Unregistered NGOs are inviting radical Islamists), *Nova Makedonija*, September 7, 2010 <http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=971095344&id=9&prilog=0&setIzdanie=22078>, (accessed September 29, 2011).

<sup>87</sup> Forumi Rinor Islam, <http://www.fri.org.mk/fri/AboutUs.aspx> (accessed October 13, 2011).

<sup>88</sup> “Радикални Исламити гостувале во Тетово,” (Radical Islamist were Guests in Tetovo), *Dnevnik online*, 22 August 2011, <http://daily.mk/cluster3/a5c47b3bfe62efd7934473f87afd1f82/874234> (accessed October 13, 2011).

in organizing religious lectures, meetings, and fundraising activities represents an obvious interference in religious affairs, which is the responsibility of IVZ.<sup>89</sup>

**c. Active Islamic Youth (AIO)**

The Active Islamic Youth was created after the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The creators are local Muslims who fought together with foreign Islamic fighters in the El-Mujahid unit. The main goal of this organization is to promote fundamentalist Islamic teachings and awaken religious sentiments among local Muslims. After September 11, 2001, it was revealed that AIO was funded by the Al Haramain Foundation and associated with al- Qaeda. Although the funds of AIO were frozen in 2002, its members are still active.<sup>90</sup>

Members and affiliates of the Active Islamic Youth are present in other parts of the Balkans such as Skopje, Tetovo, Gostivar, Struga, and Kumanovo. Although its membership is well established in both of the universities in Tetovo, their activities are mainly focused in Skopje and Kumanovo's Brest, Lojane and Slupcane villages.<sup>91</sup> According to recent information, members of AIO in Macedonia coordinated the transfer of a considerable amount of money to Kosovo. In addition, members of AIO maintained close links with members of Islamic Jihad Union (IJU).<sup>92</sup>

Other Islamic radical movements, groups, and NGOs include "Student Club," whose president is Kurtishi Fatmir from the village of Arachinovo, and "El-Mujahedeen" formed in 2006 in the village Batinci, by Samilj Demirovic.

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<sup>89</sup> "Исламските радикали се поприсутни," (Islamic Radicals more and more present), *Dnevnik online*, 23 August 2011, <http://www.dnevnik.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=D5B1682E49A74E4394F154FD7A2FA0DA> (accessed October 13, 2011).

<sup>90</sup> Ena Latin, "Souspicious Islamic Missionaries: Active Islamic Youth" *Southeast European Times*, 30 Jun 2003, <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/mk/features/setimes/articles/2003/06/030630-ENA-001> (accessed October 13, 2011).

<sup>91</sup> Venco Donev, "Невладини Организации или нешто повеќе," (NGOs or something more), *Makedonsko Sonce*, No. 673, 25 May 2007, [http://www.makedonskosonce.com/broevis/2007/sonce673.pdf/12\\_14\\_nvo.pdf](http://www.makedonskosonce.com/broevis/2007/sonce673.pdf/12_14_nvo.pdf) (accessed October 13, 2011).

<sup>92</sup> "Macedonia: A/S O'Brien Visit Highlights Terrorism," U.S. Embassy Diplomatic Cables from Wiki Leaks, Reference ID: 07SKOPJE695, created August 22, 2007, released August 30, 2011, <http://dazzlepod.com/cable/07SKOPJE695/> (accessed October 13, 2011).

*d. “Wake Up”—“Razbudi se”*

The “Wake Up” NGO was established in Skopje, in 2006. Its leader is Artan Grubi, a former translator for the Hague Tribunal who was later an advisor in the Holland embassy in Macedonia. The organization’s mission is the promotion of education. According to some analysts, the purpose of this non-profit organization is to examine the conditions necessary to establish a new political party. However, “Wake Up” organized a public protest against archeological exploration of the “Kale” citadel in 2007, suggesting that Albanian archeologists should participate in the event in order to prevent Macedonian archeologists from destroying the roots of the citadel.<sup>93</sup> Members of this organization, dissatisfied with the construction of a church–museum at the fortress, injured two police officers and six others in February 2011. Although this incident was not a religious issue, it raised concerns of inflaming religious intolerance between Macedonians and Albanians.

## **9. Charities**

Islamic charities and relief offices arrived in the Balkans, along with the conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo, and were welcomed due to their benevolent causes. However, it was discovered that many of these organizations and charities funded the spread of Wahhabi theology and terrorism. The Balkans were used as a logistical base and recruiting ground.<sup>94</sup> Recently, Islamic charities have been investigated for their alleged Islamic extremism and money laundering. Large amounts of money, mainly from Saudi Arabia, have been transferred to Macedonia for the construction of a myriad of mosques, which are used to recruit jihad volunteers and spread Wahhabi ideology, hatred of the West.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Donev, “NGOs or Something More,” [http://www.makedonskosonce.com/broevis/2007/sonce673.pdf/12\\_14\\_nvo.pdf](http://www.makedonskosonce.com/broevis/2007/sonce673.pdf/12_14_nvo.pdf), (accessed October 16, 2011).

<sup>94</sup> Loretta Napoleoni, “Sleeping with The Enemy,” The House of Saud-Follow The Money, [http://www.conspiracycafe.net/forum/index.php?/topic/26459-the-house-of-saud-follow-the-money/page\\_\\_hl\\_loretta\\_napoleoni\\_fromsearch\\_1](http://www.conspiracycafe.net/forum/index.php?/topic/26459-the-house-of-saud-follow-the-money/page__hl_loretta_napoleoni_fromsearch_1) (accessed October 10, 2011).

<sup>95</sup> Bojan Pancevski, “Saudis Fund Balkan Muslims Spreading Hate of the West,” *The Sunday Times*, 28 March 2010, <http://www.jihadwatch.org/2010/03/saudis-spending-millions-to-spread-jihad-hatred-of-west-among-balkan-muslims.html> (accessed October 14, 2011).

Authorities in Macedonia have been suspicious of Islamic charities since 1990. According to some sources, numerous Tirana-based Islamic charities were seeking permission to set up shop in Macedonia in 1996. However, charities like the IIRO and the Saudi High Commission were not welcomed by security and intelligence officials. The true goals of these charities were known to the Macedonian intelligence agencies, which continually created obstacles to prevent those charities from completing their registration. Realizing that their registration would not be allowed, charities returned to Tirana and later made inroads through funding the IVZ leaders in Tetovo and the madrassah in Kondovo.<sup>96</sup> Moreover, Islamic charities were able to spread their activities in Macedonia.

**a. *International Humanitarian Islamic Organization (IIRO)***

The international Islamic Relief Organization of Saudi Arabia (al-Ighata al-Islamiya al-'alamiya) is a Wahhabi organization created in 1978 as a relief department of the Muslim World League. After a decree was issued by the royal family of Saudi Arabia in 1979, IIRO opened its offices abroad.

In early 1990, IIRO established offices in the Balkans. Under the name of “Igasas” (a local pronunciation of al-Ighatha), the IIRO funds an Islamic Council of Eastern Europe, which was chaired by the leader of the Yugoslavian Muslim community, Jakup Selimoski. Intending to defend the rights of Muslim minorities in Yugoslavia, the secretary-general of the Council, a Sudanese activist of National Islamic Front named Fatih al-Hassanain, founded the TWRA (Third World Relief Agency) in Vienna. Between 1992 and 1995, IIRO and other Islamic NGOs supplied \$350 million worth of arms and mercenaries. Consequently, in March 1995, the government of Macedonia closed the Skopje IIRO office and expelled its members from the country.<sup>97</sup> During the Kosovo crisis in 1999, around three thousand refugees from Kosovo were accommodated in Macedonia. IIRO actively supported Kosovo refugees during the Kosovo crisis (1999–

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<sup>96</sup> Deliso, *The Coming Balkan Caliphate*, 81.

<sup>97</sup> Aid Watch, NGO directory, IIRO/IROSAs, <http://www.observatoire-humanitaire.org/fusion.php?l=GB&id=81> (accessed October 9, 2011).

2000). The IIRO collected and provided around \$2 million for the people of Kosovo.<sup>98</sup> It is unknown how much of these funds were diverged to Macedonia, and for what purposes. In 2003, it was confirmed that IIRO actively supported the worldwide activities of al-Qaeda.<sup>99</sup> However, IIRO reopened its office in Tetovo, north-west Macedonia.

**b. *Al Haramain Islamic Foundation (AHF)***

The al Haramain Islamic Foundation, also known as Mu'assasat Al-Haramain al-Khayriyya (Charitable Establishment of the two Holy Mosques), is based in Jedda. It is considered one of Saudi Arabia's most active charities working to spread Islamic fundamentalism. Al Haramain funded Wahhabi missionaries and built Wahhabi mosques all around the Balkans.<sup>100</sup> Additionally, al Haramain funded the *mujahidin* unit in Zenica; while in Macedonia this charity office raised funds through trafficking narcotics and prostitutes.<sup>101</sup> Al Haramain was also involved in the Kosovo crisis. Representatives of this charity organization, while alleging to support the refugees in Macedonia, persuaded UNMIK to sign a memorandum of understanding in 2002.<sup>102</sup> In 2008, the U.S. Department of the Treasury designated AHF and its international branches to support al-Qaeda and its wide range of terrorist organizations. However, despite the efforts of the international community, AHF leaders have reconciled their operations.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> 1999, News Story, "Saudi Arabia assesses its aid to Kosovar refugees," The Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC, Archives, June 4, 1999, <http://www.saudiembassy.net/archive/1999/news/page230.aspx> (accessed October 10, 2011).

<sup>99</sup> Public Hearing, National Commission on terrorist Attacks upon the United States, July 9, 2003, Archives, <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/hearings/hearing3.htm> (accessed October 14, 2011).

<sup>100</sup> Victor Comras, "Al Qaeda Finances and Funding to Affiliated Groups," Center for Contemporary Conflict, Strategic insights, Volume IV, Issue 1 (January 2005), <http://www.nps.edu/Academics/centers/ccc/publications/OnlineJournal/2005/Jan/comrasJan05.pdf> (accessed October 10, 2011).

<sup>101</sup> Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 133.

<sup>102</sup> Tom Burghardt, "Telecom Immunity: Playing the "9/11 Card"...Again," Center for research on Globalization, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=8486> (accessed October 10, 2011).

<sup>103</sup> U.S. Department of Treasury, Press Center, "Treasury Designates Al Haramain Islamic foundation," June 19, 2008, <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/hp1043.aspx> (accessed October 14, 2011).

*c. Bamiresia*

Bamiresia is a Macedonian based Islamic charity headed by Bekir Halimi, an ethnic Albanian imam trained in Syria. It was established in 1997 in Skopje and later became active in almost all major cities inhabited by Muslims, including Tetovo, Struga, Debar, Kicevo, Gostivar, and Kumanovo.

In recent years, the Bamiresia charity has been under investigation for terrorist links and money laundering, but the police have failed to provide sufficient evidence. In an interview with a journalist from *The Sunday Times*, Halimi refused to name the sources of funding, and rejected any links to criminal activity. He also expressed his opinion that his organization is entitled to funds from Saudi Arabia.<sup>104</sup>

However, recent information confirms suspicious activities of Bemiresia, which concerned Macedonian security officials and diplomats. During 2006, this organization was heavily involved in money laundering. The main sources of Besimirea's funding are al-Waqf al-Islamia NGO from Saudi Arabia, and Revival of Islamic Heritage Society (RIHS) based in Kuwait.

In order to avoid exposure, Halimi was advised to register his organization as an official branch of the International Humanitarian Islamic Organization in Macedonia, or to rename and reorganize the organization.<sup>105</sup> Both RIHS's and al-Waqf al-Islamia's offices in some Balkan countries were penetrated by extremist members of Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) and al-Qaeda.<sup>106</sup>

## **10. The Internet and Promotion of Islamic extremism and Jihad**

Globalization and technological innovations has led to international connectivity and interdependence. Today, the Internet is one of the most common and efficient

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<sup>104</sup> "Saudis Fund Balkan Muslims spreading hate of the West," *The Sunday Times*, March 28, 2010, [http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/middle\\_east/article7078771.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/middle_east/article7078771.ece) (accessed October 11, 2011).

<sup>105</sup> "Macedonia: A/S O'Brien Visit Highlights Terrorism," U.S. Embassy Diplomatic Cables from Wiki Leaks, Reference ID: 07SKOPJE695, created August 22, 2007, released August 30, 2011, <http://dazzlepod.com/cable/07SKOPJE695/> (accessed October 13, 2011).

<sup>106</sup> 1996 CIA Report on NGO's With Terror Links, <http://www.iraqtimeline.com/1996/ciareport.html>, (accessed October 16, 2011).

methods of sharing information. Islamic extremists have also used this to reach a global audience. In Macedonia, the Internet was used to promote jihad and radical Islamic ideology.

**a. DVDs and Literature**

Ten years ago, it was shocking news to find that DVDs of Chechen jihad secretly circulated in some mosques. In recent years, however, it is not unusual to find similar DVDs, depicting mujahidin killing Americans, sold freely in Skopje and Tetovo markets and mosque bookstores. According to Deliso, although Islamic extremists are comfortable distributing propaganda, they are cautious and operate patiently.

While interviewing a young Albanian in Skopje, Deliso discovered that local Islamic charities offer good paying jobs making daily trips to Kosovo to pick up DVDs and CDs. According to Deliso's witness DVDs were imported discreetly in order to avoid suspicions from border officials. Deliso observed that it is common to see bearded Wahhabis offering Saudi literature on the main shopping street of Struga, a tourist town on Lake Ohrid.<sup>107</sup>

**b. Video**

There are many songs posted on the Internet about Bin Laden and al-Qaeda, often in Arabic language. However, in August 2010 an online music video devoted to Osama bin Laden was registered and aired for the first time, in Albanian language, on an Islamic forum. The short video shows a group of men celebrating al-Qaeda's war against the West, they sing "Oh Osama, annihilate the American army. Oh Osama, raise the Muslims honor. I September 2001 you conquered a power. We all pray for you." The author and poster of this video are unknown. Representatives from IVZ were aware of the video, and expressed their belief that it was created by Wahhabi groups controlling several Skopje mosques.<sup>108</sup> Irrespective of the author, the video is promotes

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<sup>107</sup> Deliso, *the Coming Balkan Caliphate*, 160.

<sup>108</sup> "Вахабити испеале песна за Бин Ладен," (Wahhabis sang song for Bin Laden), *Utrinski vesnik*, 17 August 2010, <http://www.utrinski.com.mk/?ItemID=F4BA54A29417CB44AC2CE5BE90A989C1>, (accessed September 29, 2011).

jihad and glorifies Bin Laden and al-Qaeda. The language of the video clearly identifies that Albanians are the intended audience; the video aims to recruit Albanian Muslims for the jihad.

*c. Monotheism.com—Monoteizam.com*

Monotheism.com is a website that promotes anti-Western attitude and anti-democratic ideologies, as well as fundamentalist Islamic teachings. Similar to other Islamic extremists websites, negative sentiments are expressed towards Westerners and particularly toward Americans. Recently, the website posted a video clip titled “Democracy and Taguti in 21<sup>st</sup> century” depicting American soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, amidst suffering children and women. Pictures of war atrocities are edited to an Arabic song, subtitled in Macedonian, in which God’s help is required in the struggle with the infidels (according to their perspective.) The video starts with a post of “Da’va Tawhid Labunista,” which refers to call for missionary work on the oneness of God in a village in south west part of Macedonia inhabited by Macedonian Muslims, called “Torbeshi.”

The same website is filled with videos and articles critiquing democracy. While democracy is frequently described as a made-up faith of *kafir* (unbelievers) in which gods are creators and followers are slaves, these videos advocate the law of Allah, Islam, and the Qur’an. Videos depicting allegiances between Western and Muslim figures are critiqued for their promotion of democracy.

One of the website’s functions is to offer Islamic teachings and literature advocating Islamic fundamentalist ideology. Numerous articles promote and glorify the teachings of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. Articles, such as “Refutation of Sufi infidel misconceptions” and “Refutation of Shia’s infidel ideologies,” explicitly promote intolerance towards Sufi and Shi’a traditions. The website calls for denial, hatred, hostility and excommunication against the “unfaithful,” even when the unfaithful are fathers, sons, brothers, and relatives. Several hundred members participate in the site’s online forum.

The site is hosted in England, but the founders, moderators and financiers are unknown. However, the primary target audience is clear, due to the site's Macedonian language: the "Torbeshi" population in Macedonia, who are viewed and targeted as a source of sympathizers, new members, and support. The website does not offer conceptual or ideological innovations of contemporary Islamic radical ideology. Rather, the content is taken from other websites, forums, and online sources of *jahiliyya*, *shirk*, etc. These sources are then adapted for Macedonian Muslims. This website confirms the cross-national characteristic of Islamic extremist ideology.

## **B. TABLIGHI JAMA'AT**

In 1926, the Tablighi Jama'at (the "Society for Spreading Faith") was founded in Mewat, India by Maulana Muhammad Ilyas, an Islamic scholar and teacher. The movement arose as a counteraction to Hindus in India attempting to convert Muslims to Hinduism. Islamic education was perceived to be incapable of facing the challenge, so Islamic missionaries were sent to Muslim villages and instill Islamic values. However, due to its past political pacifism, the movement was able to expand its membership beyond the Indian subcontinent. While most of its members still live in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia, the movement is present in parts of Europe, such as the UK, France and Spain. Theologically, most of Tablighi Jama'at scholars and leaders are associated with Deobandi school of Sunni Islam, which originated in South Asia. Although this school of Islamic law has much in common with Wahhabi style, its doctrine is more flexible and accepts Islamic approaches such as Sufism.<sup>109</sup>

Although Tablighi Jama'at teaches that the reformation of societies can be achieved apolitically through a personal renewal of spirituality, the movement has been connected to worldwide terrorist activities. According to John Walker Lindh, the "American Taliban" existed in the mujahedin training camp because of Tablighi Jama'at missionaries. Richard Reid, the would-be shoe bomber, visited the Tablighi mosque frequently; Zacarias Moussaoui, the "20<sup>th</sup> hijacker" in the 9/11 plot was a regular

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<sup>109</sup> Muslim Networks and Movements in Western Europe, Pew Research Center, The Pew Forum on religion and Public life, September, 2010, 44. <http://pewforum.org/Muslim/Muslim-Networks-and-Movements-in-Western-Europe.aspx> (accessed august 21, 2011).

worshiper at the Tablighi mosque in Paris; the July 7 London bombers worshiped at the headquarters of Tblighi Jama'at in Dewsbury, and their leader lived close the mosque. Moreover, the movement through its intimate ties with high officials of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) provided to mujahidin in Afghanistan wherever needed during the 1980s anti-Soviet jihad. Tablighi Jama'at by supplying around five thousand fighters was closely affiliated with Harkat-ul-Mujahedeen (HUM). Later, HUM jihadis fought in Chechnya, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Tajikistan, Burma, Kashmir, and the Philippines.<sup>110</sup>

Tablighi Jamaat in Macedonia was formed in 1994. Its leader is Ismail Seyfula from Skopje. Branches of the movement are located in Tetovo, Struga, Resen, Debar, Kicevo, Prilep, Gostivar, Kumanovo, Veles, and Valandovo.

Members of Tablighi Jammatt probably passed through Macedonia for the first time in 1997, on their way to Greece. No activity from this group was visible until 2005, when a group of five Pakistani nationals and British-born Pakistanis arrived at Skopje International Airport. Welcomed by local Islamic leaders, this group traveled to villages populated by the "Torbeshi."<sup>111</sup> The term "Torbesh" is a pejorative term referring to Macedonians who converted to Islam.

Two distinguishing characteristics of Tblighi Jama'at are the lack of centralized control and working within the system. Administrative control over Tablighis activities and membership is almost impossible due to its large number of followers and part-time members. This means that Tablighi missionaries operate uniquely, separate from the methods, intentions and inclinations of local Muslim leaders. However, over the time the movement has shown willingness to cooperate with local political institutions and respect local laws.<sup>112</sup>

The Pew Forum on Religion and public life identify the Tablighi Jama'at as "Small groups of missionary preachers travel together and reach out to Muslims of all

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<sup>110</sup> Christopher Deliso, *The Coming Balkan Caliphate: The Threat of radical Islam to Europe and the West*, (Praeger Security International, Westport, CO, 2007), 74.

<sup>111</sup> Deliso, *the Coming Balkan Caliphate*, 75.

<sup>112</sup> Pew Research Center, "Muslim Networks and Movements in Western Europe," 47.

social strata to remind them of the core principles of Islam, encouraging them to attend mosque prayers and listen to sermons.”<sup>113</sup> However, Tablighi leader was quoted saying:

We must leave our houses, our businesses, our families, for a short period of time, and follow the path of Allah and practise the ways of the prophet, going from mosque to mosque. Then [the behaviour] will become second nature to us. We shall go to India and Pakistan for four months to follow these [Islamic] ways.

This is very similar to what happened in Macedonia. According to residents of the village of Labunishta, small groups of local “Torbeshi” men spend several months in Pakistan and Afghanistan while their families live very comfortably at home, even when unemployed.<sup>114</sup>

Secretive, isolated men with long beards, and wives veiled in black from head to toe have raised suspicions of funding. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates funded Muslim youth in Macedonia, allowing them to participate in missionary activities, study in foreign countries, and publish Islamic literature. When a young Albanian Muslim entered a university in Saudi Arabia, Wahhabis offered him an apartment, plus two hundred euros per month, for spreading their customs in Macedonia. A young journalist, and his family, investigating the Wahhabi’s funding were threatened.<sup>115</sup>

The presence of secretive, foreign Islamic groups in Macedonia has attracted attentions from local and foreign intelligence agencies. According to Deliso, Italian, French and American secret services were conducting intelligence operations. It was discovered that in early 2005, up to one hundred local and foreign Islamists were present around villages in the forests of Jablanica mountain. Nationals from Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Jordan, Egypt and Morocco were among them. Later, it was discovered that at

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<sup>113</sup> Pew Research Center, “Muslim Networks and Movements in Western Europe,” 47.

<sup>114</sup> Christopher Deliso, “Fissures in Balkan Islam,” Christian Science Monitor, February 14, 2006, <http://newsgroups.derkeiler.com/Archive/Soc/soc.culture.yugoslavia/2006-02/msg00043.html> (accessed August 22, 2011).

<sup>115</sup> Deliso, “Fissures in Balkan Islam.”

least three “summer homes” and one physical training course were constructed in nearly impenetrable mountain range where young people were educated about “real” Islam.<sup>116</sup>

According to Macedonian intelligence officials, groups of ten to twenty Malaysian nationals made regular visits for several years to areas populated with Muslims. Posing as tourists, they brought money to villagers with long beards and veiled women. They also offered instructions and directions. Local believers are being asked to follow conservative norms and customs, boycott products from the U.S. and West Europe, and instead promote Arab products. Arabs from France, and jihadist Pakistanis expelled from Britain also make frequent trips to Macedonia. Villages like Oktisi and Labunista are remote enough to remain active without being monitored.<sup>117</sup>

### C. GULEN MOVEMENT

The Gulen movement emerged in the late 1960s in the city of Izmir, Turkey. The founder of the movement, Fethullah Gulen, argues that in modern world social and political reforms can be achieved by educational programs that combine modern scientific knowledge with extracurricular focus on conservative religious values. The movement built hundreds of schools around the world, primarily in Germany, to pursue its agenda.

Followers of the movement call these schools as “Gulen-inspired” educational institutions because most of them are funded by Turkish business leaders who follow Gulen’s teachings. Classes are taught in the language of the host country, and do not include religious topics. However, teachers are, without exception, affiliated with the movement; activities in dormitories and community centers are overtly religious. These schools have a reputation providing quality education, which makes them popular even with secular families.

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<sup>116</sup> Deliso, *the Coming Balkan Caliphate*, 77.

<sup>117</sup> “Malaysian, EU-Rejected Islamist Penetrate Macedonia,” Balkan analysis Research Service, <http://www.balkananalysis.com/blog/2005/09/28/malaysian-eu-rejected-islamists-penetrate-macedonia/> (accessed September 8, 2011).

Members of the Gulen movement own newspapers, television stations, international news agencies and websites. The extent to which these media sources serve the movement's goals and target Turkish diasporas, varies. This movement also promotes its activities through conferences, seminars, and trips abroad. Because of its distinctively Turkish character and commitment to assimilating Muslims into modern societies, the Gulen movement does not generally establish ties with other Muslim organizations.

However, the Gulen movement does not allow access to information about its operations and facilities. This secrecy has raised concerns and suspicions. In addition, the movement's rapid expansion has led to scrutiny.<sup>118</sup>

According to a former student of Gulen school, in Macedonia, students considered to be "the brightest and most interested" participated in extracurricular lessons concerning radical Islam. In Struga and Gostivar schools, these activities take place after school hours, in small, specially selected groups. Introduced by the teacher as secret initiates, groups would praise fundamentalism. It is unclear whether these activities are part of the school's institutional curriculum, or whether they are a local deviation. In both cases, these situations offer insight into how even "moderate Islam" can be used to mask more radical activities.<sup>119</sup>

#### **D. ALBANIANS**

Macedonia's major Muslim minority are Albanians. According a 2002 census, they represent approximately 25 percent of the total population. They primarily live in the northwest parts of the country bordering Albania and Kosovo. Although Albanians in the region are divided between three different religions, ethnic Albanians in Macedonia are almost exclusively Muslim. This religious affiliation played an important role in their national development. Albanians have distinct language, culture and kinship. The Albanians in Macedonia are GEGs, who comprise the larger of two subgroups (the other is comprised of Tosks). Although the GEG's tribal structure disappeared, a patriarchal

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<sup>118</sup> Pew Research Center, *Muslim Networks and Movements in Western Europe*, 13–18.

<sup>119</sup> Deliso, *the Coming Balkan Caliphate*, 109.

system is still present among Albanians in Macedonia.<sup>120</sup> This group of Albanians is more socially conservative than their relatives in Albania and Kosovo; some of their customs date back to the time of the Ottomans. It can be concluded that Islam remains marginal in the narrative and actions of the Albanian national movement.

The relationship between Macedonians and the ethnic Albanians are challenging. Albanians boycotted the referendum on Macedonian independence, as well as the census in 1991. This raised a question of loyalty, despite other Albanian participation in Macedonian politics, even holding positions in parliament. When an unofficial referendum on the creation of an autonomous sector was held in 1993, Albanians decided to pursue their cultural and political rights through democratic means. Tensions between Albanians and Macedonians increased after the establishment of the Albanian-language University in Tetovo. Prominent Albanians were arrested and charged with preparing an uprising, and removed Albanian flags from the municipality buildings in Tetovo and Gostivar.

Tensions peaked in late 2000, when Albanian guerrilla forces attacked Macedonian police and security forces. Fights started in small villages on the Kosovo border and spread to Tetovo, Kumanovo and Skopje. The National Liberation Army (NLA, or UCK in Albanian), whose leader was Ali Ahmeti, claimed responsibility for the attacks. The newly formed nationalist Albanian political party, the National Democratic Party, joined the efforts of NLA, although it claimed that no link exists between them. President Boris Trajkovski initiated a dialog between all Macedonian political parties in order to produce a political solution. These talks were problematic, even under the mediation of EU and U.S. diplomats. Hostilities eventually ceased after the Ohrid agreement was signed in Skopje on August 13, 2001. However, a rebel group called the Albanian National Army (ANA) splintered from the NLA and continued attacks to fulfill their goal of a “greater Albania.”<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Aydin Babuna, “The Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia: Ethnic Identity Superseding Religion,” Nationality Papers, Vol.28, No1, 2000, Carrax Publishing, <http://freewebs.com/ovsiste/ALBANIAN%20IDENTITY.pdf> (accessed October 5, 2011).

<sup>121</sup> Julie Kim, “Macedonia: Country Background and Recent Conflict,” CRS Report for Congress, November 7, 2001, <http://www.fas.org/man/crs/RL30900.pdf> (accessed on October 4, 2011).

## **E. TURKS**

Turks in the Republic of Macedonia are the third largest ethnic group in the country. In 2002, Turks constituted approximately four percent of the total population, and around twelve percent of Muslims living in Macedonia. The majority of Turks live in the western area of Macedonia.<sup>122</sup> It should be noted that in 1953, after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, many Turks emigrated to Turkey. For Turks in Macedonia the link between Islam and national identity has been historically conditioned with the developments of political and religious activities in Turkey. In Macedonia, this community successfully maintains good relations with other Muslim populations and is integrated in state institutions.

Represented by the Democratic Party of Turks, Turks have always participated in Macedonian politics. In general, the party advocates the values of a secular state and equality. Turks actively promote and defend Turkish language, culture, and Muslim faith in Macedonia. Turkey's historical legacy, coming from the Ottoman past, also affects social and political life in Macedonia. Turkish governments, NGOs, charities, schools, and international developmental agencies have been sensitive to the legacy of the Ottoman legacy, and how its past is viewed. In recent years, the religiously inspired Gulen movement has become active in the country. In the mid-1990s a Turkish newspaper "Zaman" began publishing, and was later translated into Albanian language as well. Moreover, this movement supports private "Yahya Kemal" schools in Skopje, Gostivar, and Struga. Although most of the school's attendants are Turks, these schools are also available for children of Muslim elites from other nationalities.

## **F. MACEDONIAN MUSLIMS**

"Torbeshi" are the Macedonian Muslim minority that settled in the western part of the country. There are many arguments regarding why they converted to Islam. However, it is evident that they are culturally distinct from Orthodox Christians in Macedonia, and linguistically distinct from Albanians and Turks. An exact number of Macedonian

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<sup>122</sup> Republic of Macedonia State statistical Office, Skopje, May 2005, [http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/kniga\\_13.pdf](http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/kniga_13.pdf) (accessed October 6, 2011), 34.

Muslims is unknown because, in the past, many identified themselves as Turks, and some have been assimilated into Albanian culture. Thus, “Torbeshi” have always sought to avoid trouble with their neighbors.

Traditionally, like other rural populations in Macedonia, Torbeshi send male family members to work as laborers in Europe in order to subsidize their families back home. In recent decades, great numbers of Macedonian Muslims emigrated to Western Europe and North America; however they are often willing to return to their villages during the summer and marry local women.

Recently, disputes regarding Macedonian Muslim identity peaked when three MPs declared themselves as “Torbeshi” and asked to be treated as an ethnic minority. In addition, they wanted the Preamble of the Constitution to be changed, and “Torbeshi” included as separate ethnic minority. Anger and disagreement came from the Association of Macedonians with Islamic religion. According to the president of the Association, Ismail Boida, the term “Torbesh” comes from the sequence of numbers four and five (in Turkish *dort* and *bes*) and refers to four or five men who converted to Islam, not to an ethnicity or nation. He argued that there is a distinction between religion and nation.<sup>123</sup>

Despite recent disputes, Macedonian Muslims identify themselves first and foremost as Muslims. They have always lived conservatively, and even today, drinking alcohol, nightlife, and photographs are frowned upon. Nevertheless, the number of bearded Wahhabis in their villages has increased over the years. Funds from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates are used by rich youth groups for missionary work, publishing Islamic literature, and studying abroad. Adherents are also paid to dress and act in accordance with Wahhabi tradition.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> “Не се трудете да не преименувате во Торбешии,” (Do not try to rename us Torbeshi), *Utrinski vesnik*, 23 January 2011, <http://www.utrinski.com.mk/?ItemID=DD4A7E7A4E97B54F9129B44C0B3E1340> (accessed September 29, 2011).

<sup>124</sup> Deliso, *the Coming Balkan Caliphate*, 76.

Historically alienated from Macedonians and Albanians, Macedonian Muslims are more susceptible to outside influence. Because religion is the main source of their identity, they have become a primary target for Arab proselytizers seeking to make inroads to Macedonia.

## **G. RHOMAS**

The exact number of Rhoma is very hard pinpoint because they population are scattered around the world, and they are often not permitted to claim their identity. Historically, the Rhomas in Macedonia belong to the first group that migrated toward Western Europe and decided to settle. According to the 2002 census, Rhomas constitute around 2.6 percent of the total population in the Republic of Macedonia. They exist in several subgroups and differentiate in their language, social status and religious affiliation.

Rhomas have often been a target for assimilation because they are such a small group. Although most Rhomas in Macedonia speak their native language, in the Western part of the country they communicate in Albanian and Turkish. In the Eastern part of the country, a group of Rhomas declare themselves as Turks. Most Rhomas are Muslims, and a small number are Christians. The relationship between these two religious groups has often been mistrustful. Muslim Rhomas believe that Christian Rhomas are not true Rhomas. Recently, Rhomas coming from Germany and Belgium promote the Jehovah's Witnesses religion among other Rhomas in Macedonia; this religion remains largely unaccepted.<sup>125</sup>

Recently, local newspapers have brought the happenings in Shuto Orizari, a municipality inhabited largely by Rhomas, to the public's attention. The decision to build a new mosque in the center of the municipality, which had been intended for a shopping mall, was followed by disputes among local residents. In March 2006, Gunesh Mustafa, the president of the Democratic Integration of Rhomas political party, filed charges against the mayor of Shuto Orizari, Erduan Iseni, and the chairmen of the municipal

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<sup>125</sup> Martin Demirovski, "Romite vo Naselbata Sredorek," (Rhomas in the suburb Sredorek), <http://lgi.osi.hu/publications/books/mmcpxyu/13.PDF> (accessed October 6, 2011).

council, Ljuam Selimi. They were accused of breaking urbanization laws, violating the equity of citizens, and usurping land. Additionally, according to Mustafa, there was a danger that the construction of the mosque would create religious and racial intolerance. However, Iseni was also the general secretary of the United Party of Rhoma, which was part of the coalition in the existing government.<sup>126</sup> The mosque was built and there is no more information in regarding the filed charges.

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<sup>126</sup> “Кривични пријави за градителите на дивата џамија,”(Court charges for the constructors of illegal mosque), *Dnevnik*, 18 March 2006, <http://star.dnevnik.com.mk/default.aspx?pbroj=2577&stID=41188> (accessed October 7, 2011).

## V. CONCLUSION

Three theories are used to explain the conditions under which Islamic extremist ideologies are spread among Muslims in Macedonia, each with different levels of utility. The social movement theory is applicable to Macedonia and explains the dynamic processes of the Islamic extremist ideologies. The fundamentalism theory is also applicable, and leads to the conclusion that, Islamic extremist ideologies have not emerged in reaction to secularism in Macedonia, and thus can be categorized as potential fundamentalism. The cosmic war theory is not applicable to Macedonia because the level of violence in Macedonia is very low and does not represent a sacred struggle of Muslims in the country.

Social movement theory suggests several findings. Major political, economic, and legal changes in Macedonia have provided a fertile ground for nontraditional Islamic ideologies. There is a myriad of incidents and situations that were exploited by Islamic extremists, including the collapse of the Yugoslav Federation, the fall of socialism as a political system, the religious revival, the conflict in 2001, weak institutions of the new independent state, and tensions among ethnic minority groups in Macedonia. Although adherents to radical Islamic ideologies in Macedonia have used NGOs, charities, and IVZ as mobilizing structures, they were not able to create their own organization. Thus their survival depends on the support of external factors. For most Muslims in Macedonia, critiques and visions of contemporary radical Islamic ideologues are problematic as framing processes. Findings also suggest that Muslims in Macedonia are most vulnerable to individual recruitment; the attempts of local Islamic extremist to mobilize a greater number of followers for collective action were unsuccessful.

Fundamentalism theory suggests that activities of Wahhabi affiliates in Macedonia follow the pattern of fundamentalist movements. However, most ideological and organizational characteristics of fundamentalist movements are absent in Macedonia, or present only to a low degree. The findings also suggest that, in Macedonia, Islamic extremist ideologies are not a reaction to secularism and modernism, nor do they defend religion. The absence of this ideological characteristic differentiates them from

fundamentalism. Although their characteristics are very similar to fundamentalism, it would be wrong to place them in this category. Thus, activities of Wahhabi adherents in Macedonia can be categorized as potential or marginal fundamentalism.

#### **A. WHAT IS THE THREAT?**

Neither transnational nor indigenous Islamic terrorist organizations exist in Macedonia. However, the cause and effect analogy between Islamic extremist ideologies and Islamic terrorism should not be ignored. The presence of Islamic extremist ideologies places Macedonia in a frontline position to counter Islamic extremists. This section analyzes the degree to which different Islamic ideologies pose security threats to Macedonia.

The ideology of Islamism advocates the shari'a law as the establishment of Islamic state. The most radical Islamists oppose any inclusion of Western concepts, while moderate Islamists accept democracy and pluralism. In both cases, these ideas inherently pose a threat to the country, although these threats do not seem achievable. Adherents to these ideas in Macedonia are represented by Turks living in the country, who have been greatly influenced by the Gulen movement and the political situation in Turkey. However, minority Turks in Macedonia have never been involved in violent incidents, and have appreciated religious freedom while participating in political life.

One of the most important characteristics of Wahhabism as an ideology is *takfir*, or excommunication. Its goal is to theologically purify followers of Islam. Adherents to Wahhabism have accused the majority of all Sunni Muslims of jurisprudence, and all Shia's of innovation and unbelief. It is obvious that Wahhabi ideas are first and foremost directed towards fellow Muslims and its leadership, and latter toward the rejection of democratic role by people. In the case of Macedonia this ideas serves well in regard to internal conflicts among ethnic Albanian Muslims. Their struggle for power and property has often been followed by violent incidents. However, the majority of Muslims in Macedonia prefer traditional Islam, represented by Hanafi school of jurisprudence. It seems that adherents to Wahhabism in Macedonia pose a threat, but their existence depends on foreign funding and external support.

The ideology of Salafism advocates the “true” interpretations and practices of Islam, and rejects the Islamic schools of jurisprudence. Salafists criticize all forms polytheism, innovations, and superstition. They are apolitical in nature, do not advocate establishment of an Islamic state, and live in isolated communities. For these reasons, this ideology might be attractive to Macedonian Muslims, for whom Islam has been major factor of identity.

It should be noted that no further analysis of Islamic extremist ideologies would result in a clearer assessment of the threat they pose to Macedonia. It is difficult to distinguish between different Islamic extremist ideologies because they have blended together in the last several decades. The ethno-linguistic composition of Muslims in Macedonia is very complex, and Islamic extremist ideologies in the country became present only in very recent history. Finally, it seems that Macedonia does not fit well in the concept of near and far enemy and thus Islamic terrorist organizations will more likely use the country as a refuge.

## **B. WHAT SHOULD BE DONE**

Although research suggests that, in Macedonia, affiliates of Islamic extremist ideologies can be categorized as potential or marginal fundamentalism, they still pose a threat. This is especially true when the worldwide concern regarding religiously motivated terrorism is taken into account. According to David Rapoport, the world is currently in the “fourth wave” of terrorism,<sup>127</sup> and according to Cronin, this wave is dominated by religiously inspired groups with access to dangerous technology.<sup>128</sup>

### **1. Counter the Ideology**

Most scholars agree that Islamic radical ideologies are driving force of Islamic terrorism. Some scholars suggest that countering radical Islamic ideologies is the best way to deal with the threat. In her work *Fighting the Jihad of the Pen*, Heather S. Gregg argues that the ideology of contemporary Islamic terrorist organizations is not new, and

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<sup>127</sup> David Rapoport, “The Four waves of Modern Terrorism,” in Audrey Kurth Cronin and James Ludes, *Attacking Terrorism*, Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2004.

<sup>128</sup> Audrey Kurth Cronin, “Behind the Curve,” *International Security* Vol.27, No 3 (Winter 2003/03).

their vision for a better world order is vague.<sup>129</sup> However, the author also acknowledges that governments often lack credibility, and concludes the best approach for countering Islamic radical ideologies in the Muslim world is to nurture a culture of questioning and debating. This policy suits Macedonia well. Any direct government involvement will most likely make the situation even worse while the indirect approach might result positively.

## **2. Fighting Organized Crime**

The notion that organized crime and terrorism are linked is not new. Phil Williams argues that there are three distinct relationships between organized crime and terrorist networks: cooperation, use of criminal methods by terrorist groups, and transformation of criminal activities into terrorist ones. The author believes the most serious threat is the transformation of criminals into terrorists.<sup>130</sup> Fighting organized crime is a plausible recommendation for Macedonia. These measures would dramatically decrease money laundering activities, reduce terrorist threats, and strengthen overall stability in the country.

## **3. Application of Social Science Concepts**

This section proposes application of three concepts of recent work in social science; social network analysis, social models and social movements, and undermining dark networks in order to provide better understanding and more effective counterterrorism actions in Macedonia. These methods would enable identification of such groups and movements if they pose a security threat as well as provide a method for alleviating the threat.

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<sup>129</sup> Heather S. Gregg, "Fighting the Jihad of the Pen: Countering Revolutionary Islam's Ideology," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22, no. 2, Routledge, 2010, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09546551003597584#preview> (accessed October 23, 2011).

<sup>130</sup> Phil Williams, "Terrorist Financing and Organized Crime: Nexus, Appropriation, or Transformation?" in *Countering the Financing of Terrorism*, Thomas J. Biersteker and Sue E. Eckert, eds. (London: Routledge, 2008), 145.

**a. Social Network Analysis**

One policy recommendation for counterterrorism measures is the application of social sciences aiming to understand how groups of individuals operate and behave. According to Sparrow, there is a pertinent link between social network analysis and intelligence analysis. Such collaboration would benefit both fields.<sup>131</sup> According to Stuart Koschade,<sup>132</sup> social network analysis can assist in understanding the structure and communication of covert or extremist networks, and assist in predicting the outcomes of underground cells. In his work, Koschade presents a framework that is relatively simple, but based on academic principles that provide tools for intelligence analysis.

**b. Beyond Structural Analysis**

Another policy recommendation is related to the prevention and intervention options in dealing with extremist groups. In her work, Susie Driscoll<sup>133</sup> argues that the formation of extremist organizations is an organic process, and its different developmental phases provide different opportunities for influence. According to her, extremist organizations are most vulnerable in their early stages of recruitment, most impenetrable when the socialization is completed. The author also suggests strategies to influence the social formation of extremist organizations. Driscoll believes these groups should be organized to generate awareness within targeted communities, empower alternative groups, reduce isolation, challenge the myths, and fragment the empathy among members.

These are great policy recommendations for Macedonia. Potential extremist organizations in Macedonia are in the early stages of development, which provides the unique opportunity for influence and prevention.

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<sup>131</sup> Malcolm K. Sparrow, "The application of Network analysis to Criminal Intelligence: An Assessment of the Prospects," *Social Networks*, 13 (1991): 251–252.

<sup>132</sup> Stuart Koschade, "A Social Network Analysis of Jamaah Islamiyah: The Application to Counterterrorism and Intelligence," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 29:6, 559–575  
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/10576100600798418> (accessed September 20, 2011).

<sup>133</sup> Susie Driscoll, "The Psychological Motivations and Socialization of Suicide Bombers."

In his work, Brian A. Jackson uses a perspective of function, rather than structure, to decipher whether terrorist groups should be considered “groups,” “networks,” or “movements.” He argues that these labels are important when designing counterterrorism efforts. He categorizes terrorist “groups” where a leader exerts strategic, operational, and tactical control; they are “networks” when the leader controls only strategy and operations; and when leaders only influence strategy, they are “social movements,” defined as “a group of people with common ideology who try together to achieve certain general goals.”<sup>134</sup> This categorization enables internal and external boundaries of terrorist organizations to be drawn on three levels, each of which has advantages and disadvantages. However, the author concludes that there is no solution for creating appropriate boundaries around complex terrorist groups, although awareness of existing advantages should not be given up.

In Macedonia, if connections do exist, leaders of terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda would exert control only at a strategic level. Findings also suggest that Wahhabis in Macedonia should be categorized as a social movement, which supports the social movement theory. This categorization is important when dealing with the spread of Islamic extremist ideologies in Macedonia.

*c. Undermining Dark Networks and Extremist Groups*

Intelligence is crucial to winning the war on terror. However, traditional intelligence-gathering techniques are inefficient. To infiltrate terrorist networks is nearly impossible because of the vast amount of networks that exist. It would take years for informants to gain trust of networks. Undercover operations also compromise the government informants when they are forced to participate in violent acts. All of these difficulties are amplified when applied to global terrorist networks.

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<sup>134</sup> Brian A. Jackson, “Groups, Networks, or Movements: A command-and-Control-Driven Approach to Classifying Terrorist Organizations and Its Application to Al-Qaeda,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Routledge, 29, no.3, April–May 2006, 248.

Thus, techniques of gathering intelligence from outside terrorist networks were developed. The SNA is one method of understanding how networks operate, but these analyses are not sufficient for disrupting and neutralizing terrorist networks simply because they are structured around trust.

Kathleen Carley explains that jealousies and distrust can be intentionally instilled into terrorist networks in order to slow the performance. This can be achieved by reducing the number of times the group can communicate, or by rapid rotation (capturing) of the personnel in the network. According to Frank Fukuyama, if a network is tightly bound and not embedded in other networks, it can be neutralized by removing its key leaders.

Experts emphasize the role of new technology in disrupting terrorist communication. According to John Arquilla, technological innovations such as “cookie” softwares, “honey pots” websites, and keystroke reconstructions can expose a terrorist network’s structure, breed distrust, and divide members. Manuel Castells takes this approach even further, suggesting that by creating websites and joining networks, it is possible to infiltrate and then destroy terrorist trust structures.

In their work “Strategies for Combating Dark Networks,”<sup>135</sup> Nancy Roberts and Sean F. Everton advise that the use of SNA metrics, for developing counter-terrorism strategies, should depend on context rather than being used to define and drive a particular strategy. The authors conclude that ability to identify key players depends on the strategy one pursues, not on the metrics one chooses.

The authors recognize the value of SNA, but recommend that it should be embedded within a larger strategic and theoretical framework. The finding has even greater importance if we take in account that the proposed strategies are not mutually exclusive. They can be sequenced or combined in a manner to achieve greater effect.

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<sup>135</sup> Nancy Roberts and Sean F. Everton, “Strategies for Combating Dark Networks,” *Journal of Social Structure* 12, <http://www.cmu.edu/joss/content/articles/volume12/RobertsEverton.pdf> (accessed August 28, 2011).

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