

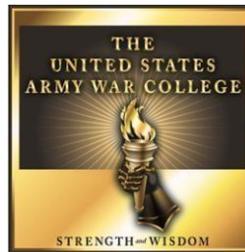
# Strategy Research Project

## Intentional Ignorance? – USAWC, PME, and Middle Eastern Theory and History

by

Lieutenant Colonel Shawn Leonard  
United States Army

Under the Direction of:  
Dr. Christian Keller



United States Army War College  
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## Intentional Ignorance? – USAWC, PME, and Middle Eastern Theory and History

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### Abstract

Despite being engaged in the region for over 15 years, the United States Army War College does not offer a perspective on Middle Eastern thought regarding warfare. Yet the War College's students—senior officers—continue to receive a Western-based foundation of strategic thought centered on the writings of Clausewitz and Jomini. This short survey seeks to explore the writings of the Islamic social scientist, Ibn Khaldun, who described the world's first social cycle and the tribal phenomenon which fuels it, known as "asabiyyah." Next, the paper focuses on two of Islam's foremost commanders, Khalid Bin al-Waleed and Saladin, who demonstrate the innate Arab-turn-Muslim reliance on mobility and surprise to consistently defeat numerically and technically superior opponents. Finally, the paper offers a pedagogical recommendations section to further discuss the rationale for introducing these topics into the AWC curriculum. There are clear linkages between the concept of "asabiyyah" and the strategic acumen of Bin al-Waleed and Saladin to America's contemporary adversaries throughout the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, and Central and South Asia.

## **Intentional Ignorance? – USAWC, PME, and Middle Eastern Theory and History**

One of the most destructive forces in the Middle East, [President] Obama believes, is tribalism—a force no president can neutralize. Tribalism, made manifest in the reversion to sect, creed, clan, and village by the desperate citizens of failing states, is the source of much of the Muslim Middle East's problems...

—Jeffrey Goldberg<sup>1</sup>

Nearly fifteen years ago the United States began a bombing campaign against the Taliban in Afghanistan leading to the introduction shortly thereafter of U.S. military ground forces as part of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. Although under a new operational name, U.S. military forces are still in Afghanistan to this day. Thirteen years ago the United States invaded Iraq to mark the beginning of a nine-year occupation known as Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Five years ago the United States initiated Operation ODYSSEY DAWN in Libya, which lasted eight months. Throughout each of these operations the U.S. military was also the principal instrument of national power to wage the so-called Global War on Terrorism against al-Qaeda (AQ) and other violent extremist organizations (VEOs). In the summer of 2014, the U.S. military kicked off yet another operation—Operation INHERENT RESOLVE—intended to defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) in Syria and Iraq. This was a direct reaction to ISIS taking advantage of the civil war in Syria and Sunni discontent in northern and western Iraq to create a self-declared caliphate. Once again, the U.S. military is back in Iraq, and now with limited forces in Syria. Meanwhile, the United States is keeping an eye on an unstable Libya and assisting a Saudi-led coalition in Yemen fighting Houthi insurgents and an al-Qaeda faction. As if all these concurrent operations were not enough, Iran is an ever-present boogeyman that must be watched. The U.S. military has F16s and Patriot air defense batteries in Turkey, F16s and Patriots in Jordan, and collections of

joint formations throughout the Gulf States. Fifteen years and counting, America has been massively and militarily involved in the Middle East. Yet in the U.S. Army's capstone professional military education (PME) school, the United States Army War College, there is no curriculum to study Middle Eastern and Islamic thought on war. There are no works by Islamic philosophers, theorists, strategists, or historians to read, no relevant Middle Eastern case studies to review or exercises to plan against. This is a major deficiency in the curriculum as this region and its religion produce the U.S. military's most volatile contemporary adversaries, and the existing planning doctrine taught at the War College, and indeed throughout earlier PME schools, is insufficient to address them. This paper will offer compelling examples of Middle Eastern and Islamic military history and philosophy worthy of inclusion in the Army War College core curriculum, provide some reasons why these choices should be considered, and offer suggestions regarding how to teach them effectively.

Certainly there are numerous estimable examples of Middle Eastern and Islamic strategic thinking and of historic campaigns to study. Yet they are not taught within the U.S. Army's Professional Military Education (PME) core curricula. There are two related reasons why this is the case. The first is that the U.S. military does not consider the Middle Eastern/Islamic thinking on war distinctly different enough from that already prescribed in the curriculum—Thucydides, Clausewitz, Jomini, Sun Tzu, Kautilya, Mahan, Corbett, Douhet, Hart, and Fuller, among others.<sup>2</sup> The other explanation is that the Army's PME is, perhaps understandably, built upon the foundations of the Western way of war. Indeed, this foundation is set upon the histories of Thucydides and Tacitus and the just war theory of St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, thereby bookending the

Dark Ages of feudalism and the Crusades. The foundation continues with the collective European movements of the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation, characterized in political-military thought by the likes of Niccolò Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes. Field grade officers at the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) as well as colonels at the War College study these thinkers. Next, majors study the age of dynastic warfare that provided the great military minds of Gustavus Adolphus and Frederick the Great, and officers at both levels of PME spend time evaluating Napoleon's brilliance and impact on the art of war. That is done, however, with an eye towards historically introducing the theorists upon whose altars the U.S. Army kneels: Carl von Clausewitz and Baron Antoine Henri de Jomini, who described war through the lens of Napoleon's conventional exploits across the plains of Europe. More recent military thinkers, also examined at both CGSC and the War College, such as von Moltke, Mahan, Corbett, Douhet, Erfurth, Hart, Fuller, Huntington, and Janowitz, have each adapted Clausewitz and Jomini to new domains and through advances in technology.<sup>3</sup>

Taken together, these thinkers monopolize how Western militaries plan and execute strategy and operations. Through the myriad principles, maxims, and concepts developed, rehashed, and redefined since Napoleon's exploits early in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Western military planners and commanders still frame military problems in the same terms and definitions as Napoleon once did. It is hard to argue with brilliance such as that displayed by the former French emperor, but as with all things, it is important to remember context. Napoleon introduced the West to total war by devising the Grand Armée and supporting it on the backs of the citizens of France and conquered lands. He

created new echelons for better command and control while employing new tactics to outmaneuver his opponents. He did all of this against like-minded opponents who were comparatively manned, organized, and equipped. Napoleon just did it better through innovation. The French Emperor's victories and operational art were analyzed and synthesized by Clausewitz in his seminal *On War* and by Jomini in multiple volumes, starting with the *Art of War*.<sup>4</sup>

However, apart from the state on state, army vs. army, set-piece style of warfare on the plains of Europe, it must be remembered that Napoleon failed *in toto* against the Spanish insurgency during the ill-fated Peninsular Campaign. In warning his disciples against waging limited war among the people such as Napoleon's "Spanish Ulcer," Jomini wrote in the *Art of War*, "To give maxims in such wars would be absurd..."<sup>5</sup> Yet ironically today U.S. Army planners steeped in traditional Western doctrine will instinctively follow a well-trodden path to devise a plan hearkening the ghosts of Austerlitz, in spite of facing contemporary threats which are more akin to the Dos de Mayo Uprising. The sands, cities, and mountains of the Middle East are not like the plains, forests, and metropolises of Europe. Islam shares some fundamental beliefs with post-Reformation Christianity but differs from it based on divisive historical, geographical, ethnic, and spiritual realities that make it difficult to comprehend to untrained Western eyes. These inherent differences should make the thinking man—especially the thinking senior military leader—take pause. Before the U.S. becomes embroiled any further in the Middle East, it is time to start teaching the Middle Eastern way of war.

## Ibn Khaldun and *Asabiyyah*

While Western policy makers and strategists search for ways to understand our Middle Eastern wars using Western-style thinking, there are answers or at least significant hints to be found in a plethora of Middle Eastern and Islamic manuscripts. The 14<sup>th</sup> Century Arab theorist, Ibn Khaldun, provides perhaps the best context and understanding for how wars were fought then and offers clues to how they will be fought in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This North African naturalist wrote a nuanced, highly-textured survey of man, his habits, and his desires centuries before Western philosophers and social theorists such as Machiavelli, Immanuel Kant, Hobbes, and Max Weber were able to obtain similar conclusions. He distilled his observations and ideas into a book titled, *The Muqaddimah*, Arabic for “Introduction,” over the course of five months in 1377 CE. The intriguing title came from Ibn Khaldun’s intent to write a multi-volume discourse on history, but sadly, the twists and turns of his life precluded him from finishing his epic undertaking and the world was left with only this one, comprehensive volume. Ibn Khaldun was not a sedentary man; he lived a life of adventure, scholarly pursuits, and intellectual curiosity leading him across most of the Islamic Empire from Moorish Spain to Cairo, Damascus, and points beyond. These extensive travels provided him many experiences to synthesize into a theory on social cycles and the root cause of those cycles.

Similar to Thucydides in 5<sup>th</sup> Century BCE Athens, Machiavelli in 15<sup>th</sup> Century CE Florence, and Hobbes in 17<sup>th</sup> Century CE London, Ibn Khaldun spent his life in a highly fractured society that experienced frequent infighting and changes in power. The Islamic Empire’s era of instability offered him a dangerous, but exciting time to observe the human condition which informed his social theories. Using something comparable to the

modern scientific method, he noted the sharp contrast between the unforgiving desert and the more agreeable environment of cities. These extremes served as Ibn Khaldun's independent variables. The humans who occupied both environments were his dependent variables. In the desert, Ibn Khaldun observed "savage" Bedouins banding together for survival. These tribes sought protection in numbers from the elements, animals, and other human groups trying to survive and eventually bonded together to form city-states.<sup>6</sup>

Atomic groups of relatively small size created the essence of societal bonds for Ibn Khaldun, something which he described as *asabiyyah* from the Arabic root for "nerve." There is no direct English translation for this word, but scholars have offered "group feeling," "party spirit," or "cohesive force of the group" as approximations.<sup>7</sup> The term regards that most basic feeling of belonging to a group and being a productive member. As Ibn Khaldun would describe it in context to life in the desert: One either belongs to a group and provides for the common good or he perishes alone. "Their defence and protection are successful only if they are a closely knit group of common descent. This strengthens their stamina and makes them feared, since everybody's affection for his family and his group is more important."<sup>8</sup> This is clearly a powerful notion and is an instructive insight into the savage, primal nature of man. Additive social constructs such as politics (need for order), religion (need to explain the world's mysteries), and security/force (need for protection and sustenance) derive from this origin.

*Asabiyyah* is not the sole domain of those in the desert. Ibn Khaldun further contended that humans residing in cities benefit from *asabiyyah* too. Although still using

the same term, he modified the meaning towards something analogous to “sublimated *asabiyyah*” or “social solidarity.”<sup>9</sup> As tribes and clans with superior *asabiyyah* inevitably subjugate other tribes and clans, they eventually seek a seat of power and form an ever-larger community around this power base. With each victory, a tribe or clan of superior *asabiyyah* compels its defeated foe to submit, and the sinews of the victor’s *asabiyyah* incorporate the new members into an ever-expanding pool of strength and order. In this sense, it is not too different from how Kautilya advised the Mauryan leadership to continually conquer or die in 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BCE India.<sup>10</sup> Yet as the atomic group uses strong leadership and *asabiyyah* to expand—first out of necessity to survive and later out of necessity to maintain power—it undergoes a metamorphosis from savagery to civility and from utilitarian to teleological society.<sup>11</sup> Sublimated *asabiyyah* assumes the place of group feeling among the body politic through a transition from simple leadership to “royal authority” combined with the addition of “religious coloring.”<sup>12</sup> The seat of power increases in size and the population within it desires more and more conveniences and luxuries and less and less instability and privation. As the Vanderbilt historian and philosopher Lenn Evan Goodman reduces it, this is the ultimate goal of *asabiyyah*.<sup>13</sup>

Ibn Khaldun depicted the first social cycle in history: Savages from the hinterlands band together out of necessity through a powerfully innate quality of group feeling and over time develop into an autonomous city-state. The city-state through sublimated *asabiyyah* and effective royal authority reaches a zenith of prosperity and social advancement. However, as the city-state attains this zenith—the ultimate goal of *asabiyyah*—it paradoxically loses its *asabiyyah* as the people become too sedentary

and complacent. This inevitable decline makes the city-state ripe for a new group of *asabiyyah*-empowered savages from the hinterlands to attack the city and supplant the old royal authority with a new one. This cycle perpetually repeats over time.<sup>14</sup>

In reviewing Ibn Khaldun's concept of *asabiyyah* and his social cycle, the importance of armed force to both is evident. In essence, *asabiyyah* is a martial spirit similar to the French concept of *esprit de corps* but at an atomic, familial level.<sup>15</sup> Ibn Khaldun applied *asabiyyah* directly to his observations of Arabs, Berbers, Turks, Persians, Kurds, and Mongols, but it can be equally administered to other early tribal and clannish peoples around the world such as Native Americans, Vikings, Visigoths, Celts, Cossacks, Zulus, and many more. Obviously, many of the latter group have either been fully incorporated into modern states or at least partially incorporated to the point that their *asabiyyah* is no longer discernable. This is not the case with the former group. With the possible exceptions of the Turks of Turkey and the Persians of Iran, the tribal *asabiyyah* described by Ibn Khaldun still forms the basic societal bond within these present-day tribal societies.<sup>16</sup> Modern states, such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq, and Syria, formed arbitrarily over and around these tribes have broken Ibn Khaldun's social cycle by imposing varying degrees of centralized authority and the lure of prosperity in urban centers, effectively eliminating the liability to regenerate every few generations. Therefore, sublimated *asabiyyah* is not truly present in these states. Yet these same states have not been able to dispose of the tribal nature of their people. Rather, most authoritarian governments of the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia curry favor among their tribes to ensure legitimacy and security.

Security and its internal association with *asabiyyah* is what frightens every dictator and warlord from Rabat to Islamabad. And it is generally something that political and military leaders in the West do not comprehend.<sup>17</sup> Security is based on tribal buy-in and support. The ability for tribes to maintain their coherence and strength is based on *asabiyyah*. Therefore, in these modern states security is directly tied to *asabiyyah*. Whether corruption of the state erodes its security from top-down--as the world witnessed during the Arab Spring events in Tunisia and Egypt--or tribal disaffection in southern Syria and northern and western Iraq attacks the security of the state from bottom-up, *asabiyyah* is the martial spirit which allows otherwise docile men to rise up together in violent protest. University of Gloucestershire geography professor, Gareth Matthews-John, recently highlighted this vulnerability: "In regions such as [the Middle East], politics is not dominated...by a compulsion to follow rules laid down by distant governing elites, but by local systems based upon kinship, tribal affiliations and dialect, and differentiated by religious persuasion or attachment to ritual."<sup>18</sup>

Ibn Khaldun purposed the term "religious coloring" as a requisite ingredient in the metamorphosis of *asabiyyah* from its base form of group feeling to its higher form of sublimated *asabiyyah*. Even though *The Muqaddimah* heavily reflects Ibn Khaldun's devout belief in Islam, as a naturalist he is careful to present his arguments as faith neutral. What is important to Ibn Khaldun in describing the world around him and how humans interact within that environment, is that those humans have faith in God regardless of how they practice that faith. It goes without saying that he would prefer his subjects to be Muslims, but a group seeking sublimated *asabiyyah* must have faith in God whether it is of Jewish, Christian, or Islamic faith.<sup>19</sup> It is important to note here that

Ibn Khaldun's "religious coloring" was not *jihad*; it was just faith transcending the individual and his tribe. As a trained jurist in Islamic jurisprudence, he was certainly aware of the concept of *jihad*. However, it is likely that Ibn Khaldun, like many of his 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Century Muslim contemporaries, struggled with the definition of *jihad* in a time when the original, external mandate began to transform to an internal focus. With the expansion of the Islamic Empire now in check and the advent of a strong ascetic movement in Sunni Islam manifest most notably by Sufism, an externally focused *jihad* was no longer a central theme in Islam as reflected by the lack of attention in Ibn Khaldun's *The Muqaddimah*.<sup>20</sup>

The savage simpletons of the desert are undoubtedly fierce fighters, but they are relatively few in numbers. A city-state requires larger numbers to provide for defense and expansion. *Asabiyyah* combined with faith is the key to create large armies in which individual soldiers are willing to die not only for their brother and cousin (group feeling) but also for their city-state consisting of distant or even unrelated tribes (sublimated *asabiyyah*).<sup>21</sup> The implications for Western senior military leaders are profound: If any centralized authority in the Middle East is able to harness sublimated *asabiyyah* with a tribe-like organization impelled by strong faith, the potential power it could control and unleash would be mighty indeed. Has the Islamic State or the Taliban already achieved this, knowingly or not? Further, to forestall, prevent, or degrade such an authority the West would do well to promote strategies that encourage better domestic and international engagement of rural tribes and introduce inclusive policies, technologies, material goods, and philosophical diversity to engender supportive, vice destructive, actions.<sup>22</sup>

## Islamic Commanders

What is the linkage between Ibn Khaldun's *asabiyyah* and the way Muslim tribal entities have historically fought and thought about war? The raid is the centerpiece of tribal warfare worldwide throughout history, as it was the foundational tactic for the early Islamic armies of the 7<sup>th</sup> Century. As John Walter Jandora describes in his book on Arab militarism, "it remains an ideal...participation in a camel raid is a dramatic test of courage, skill, and selfless dedication to the goals of the tribal group."<sup>23</sup> Skillful raiders engendered rapid maneuver of mounted infantry by horse and camel to surprise the enemy or to ensure that the infantry engagement would be conducted on advantageous terrain. Moreover, as Ibn Khaldun noted, religious fervor provides the impetus to go from *asabiyyah* to sublimated *asabiyyah*. In the case of the Islamic armies of the 7<sup>th</sup> Century, this religious inspiration drove the tribal raiders-turn-Islamic warriors farther afield to conquer and assimilate. With each new tribe and then city-state subjugated, the armies of the *Rashidun* caliphs transformed into the Muslim armies of the Umayyad dynasty populated with disparate tribes of Arabs, North Africans, and Persians.<sup>24</sup> "Raiding was an act of man and redounded to his glory. Conquest, in contrast, was an act of Allah and redounded to his much greater glory."<sup>25</sup> Hence, sublimated *asabiyyah* upgraded the Islamic armies skilled in the mobility and surprise of the raid with unparalleled morale. This combination proved unstoppable in the early dominance and various caliphates of the Islamic Empire. Professor Hugh Kennedy of the esteemed University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies effectively summarizes this subtle, but powerful advantage: "They seem to have been no more numerous nor better equipped than their enemies and their only discernable advantages seem to be those of mobility and morale."<sup>26</sup>

Interestingly, these Muslim commanders rarely commingled the various ethnic groups in the same fighting formations. Instead, the commanders recognized the limits of even sublimated *asabiyyah* and preferred to keep their strongest block of warriors together in the center with those of lesser numbers or weaker abilities fighting in the left wing or the right wing. Khalid Bin al-Waleed made the mistake of commingling tribes early in his leadership for the Prophet. “Khalid saw that forming regiments out of mixed tribal contingents had been a mistake, for the clan feeling was still very strong among the Arabs. It added another pillar of strength to the Islamic zeal and the individual courage and skill which distinguished the Muslim army.”<sup>27</sup> So too, Saladin separated his forces on the battlefield with Kurds, Egyptians, Syrians, and “troops from the *al-Jazirah*” (northern Iraq) typically fighting in distinct formations.<sup>28</sup>

In an objective survey of each leader, it should be noted that Bin al-Waleed and Saladin were rather unimaginative in their battlefield tactics. For the majority of their engagements, they relied on the tried and true tactics of forming their infantry into a center with two wings often mirroring their opponent’s deployed array as was the custom of the day. Both commanders would maintain a mobile reserve of cavalry to exploit seams in the enemy’s lines or to chase down routed enemy infantry as they fled the battlefield. Benefitting from the later influence of Central Asian mounted archers, Saladin also used his cavalry to assail his enemies on the march with harassing fires. Therefore, chronicles report time and again that the armies of Bin al-Waleed and Saladin would clash with their enemies in brutal frontal assaults, followed by chaotic melees. Yet, both commanders had a habit of winning despite often being outnumbered against enemies with superior armament. This was the case for each of Bin al-Waleed’s

engagements with the Sasinids and the Byzantines. It was also the case for most of Saladin's battles with the Crusader Christians and his internecine engagements against Muslim opponents. Both Bin al-Waleed and Saladin used the Arab's knack for operational maneuver and surprise to gain the initiative tactically in battle; these methods came naturally to them as a result of their appreciation and utility of the harsh desert environment and the adamant bond of sublimated *asabiyyah* to mitigate stress and fatigue for a greater purpose.<sup>29</sup> Their historical legacy jointly influenced—and still influences—Middle Eastern strategic, operational, and tactical thinking. Whether as allies or adversaries of the West, state or non-state, Muslim military forces today exhibit many traits and characteristics that would have been familiar to these two great historical leaders.

#### Khalid Bin al-Waleed

Bin al-Waleed was the Prophet Mohammed's principal field general responsible for expanding Islam through Northern Arabia, Iraq, and Syria before the Prophet Mohammed's death and afterwards during the reign of the *Rashidun* caliphs. Originally an enemy of the Prophet, Khalid eventually converted to Islam and through his heroic actions earned the sobriquet, "Sword of Allah," from the Prophet himself.<sup>30</sup> Bin al-Waleed understood the character and value of tribal warfare. His warriors were inspired by Allah and His Prophet to fight harder and with more endurance than their tribal enemies despite being regularly outnumbered on the battlefield. The Prophet Mohammed's Mecca and Medina were the pinnacle of Ibn Khaldun's sublimated *asabiyyah* and from this consolidation of tribes and power, the society went from survival (utilitarian) to one of self-realization (teleological). The early Muslims were still very much tribal, but with Islam's religious zeal and the Prophet Mohammed's holy-royal

authority, they were able to dominate and expand at an extraordinary rate. Bin al-Waleed took advantage of this sublimated *asabiyyah* to fashion an ad hoc army representing multiple tribes into a highly effective fighting force that repeatedly dominated against other, disunified tribes. Eventually his battle-hardened force was able to take on and defeat the armies of the Sasinid Persians and the Byzantine Christians to claim present day Iraq and Syria in the name of Islam. Likely due to its accessibility and the fact the opponent was the more chronicled Army of Byzantium, history typically defines Bin al-Waleed's signature victory as the Battle of Yarmouk (August 636 CE) along the present-day Jordan-Syria border.<sup>31</sup> However, the lesser known, but perhaps greater victory came in present-day Iraq in May 633 CE at the Battle of Walaja where he annihilated arguably the best army of the day.

Bin al-Waleed's armies were relentless on the march, known to cover vast swaths of desert to tire an opponent before an engagement, and they carried that initiative into their battles against their heavier but less agile opponents. The Sasinid Dynasty of the Persians were known as the best fighters in the world and only rivaled by the soldiers of Byzantium, yet they met their match in Bin al-Waleed's men:

The Persian army, including its Arab auxiliaries, was the most formidable and most efficient military machine of its time. The Persian soldier was the best-equipped warrior of his day. But, and this was inevitable, he lacked mobility. In the general, set-piece battle he acknowledged no equals; and in this he was right, until Khalid's [Bin al-Waleed] lightly armed and fast-moving riders came along.<sup>32</sup>

At the Battle of Walaja (located near the present-day village of al-Shinafiyah on the west bank of the Euphrates River), after moving his army at breakneck pace to surprise the Persians, Bin al-Waleed pressed the attack. As the Persians hastily formed, he discreetly maneuvered his cavalry to his opponent's rear. The Persian army was

superior in numbers—estimated at a three to one advantage—and had better armament and weapons, but it reacted slowly. Bin al-Waleed in the preceding month had dispatched two other smaller Persian armies in southern Iraq and now had the attention of the Sasinid leadership. Although the Persian general, Andarzaghar, was alarmed at the Muslims' earlier successes, he felt confident—too confident—knowing his army was larger and better-equipped than the army of his adversary. Failing to check his rear, he found it puzzling that Bin al-Waleed choose to engage without his cavalry present. The ensuing melee again surprised the Persians with the skill and fighting spirit of the Muslims who seemed impervious to the Imperial army's clear advantages. Yet as the day wore on, the larger Persian force made headway. As the swing in initiative began to break the Muslims' ranks and a rout appeared in the offing, Bin al-Waleed signaled his cavalry to attack the Persians from each rear oblique. With this turn of events, the Persians panicked and Bin al-Waleed tightened the noose with his reinvigorated infantry. Andarzaghar's army ceased to exist. The door was now open for the Muslims to conquer all of Mesopotamia and points eastward.<sup>33</sup> Often overlooked, the subsequent elimination of the Sasinid Dynasty constituted the only true state the Islamic Empire destroyed in its long history of expansion.

#### Salah al-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub

Five centuries later, the man known to the West as "Saladin" ingeniously used sublimated *asabiyyah* to forge an army of principally Egyptian and Syrian tribes together to dominate the lesser *asabiyyah* found among the infighting and religiously decaying city-states and tribes of northern Iraq and Syria. In so doing, the son of a Kurdish official in the preceding Turkish Zengid dynasty was the first Muslim to rule from Mosul to Cairo since the early days of the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad.<sup>34</sup> Of paramount importance

to the Muslims of the late 12<sup>th</sup> Century, Saladin was able to reclaim Jerusalem and most of the territory ceded to the crusading Europeans at the turn of the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. Like Bin al-Waleed before him, Saladin understood the tribal nature of Arabs (despite being a Kurd himself), and fashioned around him an army which fought harder with more endurance than its enemies. As Ibn Khaldun observed in his social cycle centered on the tribal phenomenon of *asabiyyah*, those who are hungrier for power and prominence—typically looking from the outside in—are more likely to fight with unity and strength. Indeed, many of Saladin's foes were fellow Muslims who, history would prove, were leaders of effete city-states too comfortable in their long-held status to mount worthwhile opposition to Saladin's supremacy. One of Saladin's secretaries captured his master's dedication to God which was certainly an inspiration for his troops:

His desire to fight in God's cause forced him to leave his family, his children, his native land, the place of his abode, and all else in his land. Leaving all these earthly enjoyments, he contented himself with dwelling beneath the shadow of a tent, shaken to the right hand and to the left by the breath of every wind...<sup>35</sup>

Saladin's kairos as a battlefield leader was at the Battle of the Horns of Hattin fought in July 1187 CE in present day Israel.<sup>36</sup>

Saladin was not only a genius on the battlefield, but he was also as an exemplary statesman. He deftly navigated the capricious halls of power between Mosul, Aleppo, Damascus, Cairo, and eventually Jerusalem as easily as he did the many battlefields he left victorious. This notable trait granted Saladin a distinguished reputation which over time preceded him by often disarming or confounding adversaries. Moreover, Saladin, as advocated by Kautilya before him and Machiavelli after, was not above entering treaties with friends and enemies when appropriate. He used such devices to secure a flank when focused on another objective. Both Muslim and Christian historians noted

that he never broke a treaty, but he acted with vengeance when another party broke a treaty with him.<sup>37</sup> When diplomacy did not work or was not in play, Saladin used his more mobile force to conduct harassing and costly raids into enemy territory to terrorize and draw the enemy to his location of choosing. Like the great generals before and after him, Saladin possessed the ability to seize upon the moment with the right disposition at the right place—Clausewitz's *coup d'œil*. It was a combination of all of these leadership traits and the *asabiyyah* of the forces he commanded which led to one of the most decisive operational victories in history.

By the start of 1187, the Crusader's Kingdom of Jerusalem had settled on the coronation of King Guy of Lusignan after a year of intrigue and deceit shattered any sense of unity within the kingdom and among its Christian allies along the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>38</sup> The timing of this dissidence could not have been worse for the Christians. With the turn of spring, Saladin's army conducted its annual raids across the Jordan terrorizing the Christians and plundering their stock and crops. To counter a particularly audacious raid of some 7000 Muslim cavalry deep into the kingdom's territory, the Knights Templar managed to muster a mere 150 knights. Only three of the knights survived the ensuing onslaught, including their grand master.<sup>39</sup> King Guy came under increasing pressure from his advisors and terrorized subordinate lords to do something about the "Saracen" menace. The king called upon his allies to assemble with his army in central Palestine near Nazareth. Some responded readily while others vacillated. Eventually, King Guy was able to muster the largest Christian army since the Second Crusade some forty years earlier.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, distrust and dissent plagued King Guy's leadership and his war council could not agree on a proper course of action

to challenge Saladin, now encamped with his large army near Tiberias on the western shore of Lake Tiberias (the Sea of Galilea). A number of key leaders who had at times been party to treaties with Saladin or had skirmished against him cautioned against maneuvering toward Tiberias out of fear of a trap. Others disposed to naivety, conceit, or revenge counseled their king to drive on the enemy and vanquish him with the Franks' superior skill, tactics, and weaponry. Indeed, "a Christian army which kept discipline and was not outrageously outnumbered was almost impregnable, even on the march. The superior physique of the Franks and their heavy armor gave them the advantage."<sup>41</sup> So it was that King Guy decided to sally his army forth to destroy Saladin once and for all. It was midsummer, blazing hot, as the Christians marched east, and Saladin smiled with the news of his foe on the march.<sup>42</sup> "One can only admire the skill with which Saladin had combined military and diplomatic manoeuvres during the foregoing months to open still further divisions within the enemy councils so that the crucial error of judgment was virtually forced."<sup>43</sup>

Saladin baited Guy's forces in the heat of the summer to a location of his choosing, called the Horns of Hattin. Channeling the Franks into an open field surrounded by relatively steep slopes in northern Palestine within eyeshot of Lake Tiberias, the Muslim leader utilized the local terrain and climate perfectly. En route, the Franks grew weary and thirsty under their heavy armour and weaponry in the blistering heat, and agitated while the Muslims peppered them with arrows and javelins. Undeterred, King Guy's army marched on, "A running battle like this was one of the classic manoeuvres of crusading warfare – the Christian tactic was to maintain a steady march for its objective; the Muslim aim was of course to force the enemy to a standstill

or break his column.”<sup>44</sup> Allowing his enemy a night to rest and therefore increasing their confidence in an easy victory, Saladin used the cover of darkness to encircle the Franks along the crests of the surrounding slopes with his cavalry. The next morning the slightly refreshed Franks expected a straightforward battle with the Muslims, one in which they thought they held the advantage given their superior numbers and equipment. The two armies formed their lines and proceeded to engage in infantry melee. The Christian knights mounted on their chargers sought to exploit seams in the Muslim lines, but to their frustration, found none. However, as with the Persians against Bin al-Waleed’s Islamic army on the banks of the Euphrates five centuries before, the Christians began to make progress against Saladin’s infantry, impelling it rearward. It was at this moment, just as the Christians earned a modicum of initiative and confidence, that Saladin sprung the trap and released his cavalry down the slopes and into the Frank’s rear, creating fear and pandemonium. The result was complete disaster for the Christians. In the course of one terrible day, all military resistance in the Christian territories was annihilated. The result of this strategic battle opened Jerusalem and the other Crusader states in the Middle East to Saladin, and ultimately paved the way for Muslim reconquest of the entire Levant.<sup>45</sup>

#### Pedagogical Recommendations and the Way Forward

Clearly, there is value in studying Middle Eastern and Islamic military history and theory: How tribal groups come together to fight under *asabiyyah* against societal and environmental threats; how they submit when overcome by a force with greater *asabiyyah*; and finally how they fight once committed against forces employing more manpower and advanced weaponry are all critical—and critically understudied—insights demarcating how Westerners desire to organize and fight from that of the Arabs and

many of their tribal counterparts. Middle Easterners, along with their Muslim tribal cousins throughout central and south Asia and into sub-Saharan Africa, have a strong pedigree that U.S. military officers ought to take into consideration especially given our contemporary adversaries such as ISIS, al-Qaeda, and the Taliban. It is a fair critique that without exposure in the Army's PME, the majority of Army officers will not develop an appreciation for the history and theory behind today's enemies' actions, at all levels of war. Without that educational exposure, what linkages will the American military strategist draw between how *asabiyyah* tirelessly drives an outnumbered opponent and maintains their morale despite the odds? Or how their military heritage argues for mobility and surprise to take the fight to the enemy swiftly and discretely?

Ideally, senior military students ought to recognize the limitations of current, Western-dominated doctrine and strategic thought in planning for and executing campaigns against contemporary threats with this pedigree. Every level of the Army's officer PME teaches Clausewitz, Jomini, and other predominantly Western theorists as incorporated directly or indirectly into operational doctrine and strategic thinking.<sup>46</sup> Indisputably, this pedagogical grounding is valuable and should not be discarded; against future, more "Westernized" enemies it may yet prove quite useful. For example, the prescriptive elements of Operational Design and the Joint Operational Planning Process found in the U.S. military's Joint Publication 5-0 are proven tools in planning against traditional, conventional adversaries whose established orders of battle and doctrine are readily found in intelligence shops throughout the military. These are not, however, adequate tools in deciphering the intent and predicting the actions of stateless, asymmetric, and non-Western enemies fixed on waging holy war, committing

acts of terrorism, and creating Islamic caliphates. In a recent seminar exercise at the Army War College, seven out of fifteen students identified Abu Omar al-Baghdadi as the center of gravity for ISIS after following the U.S. military's instructions for determining Clausewitz's all-important center of gravity as a prescribed step in Operational Design. An additional six students identified the "ISIS army" as the center of gravity in the same exercise. In other words, thirteen out of fifteen students identified centers of gravity which may be perfectly rational against a traditional, conventional foe, but are problematic in the context of defeating ISIS.<sup>47</sup>

In fairness to those officers, how were they to know any better? Despite each of them having at least twenty years in service and combat experience in Afghanistan, Iraq, or both, they were clearly conditioned to a singular, Westernized methodology of thinking about the enemy. This is an indictment of the Army education system and Joint PME; it is unacceptable that senior officers are unable after years of war in the Middle East to think critically and with proper cultural context about an enemy that does not think and fight in a Western fashion.<sup>48</sup>

The Army War College and the Command and General Staff College should each incorporate at least one mandatory lesson in their core curricula regarding the topics presented in this paper. The central theme of this lesson would be simple: As it was during the days of Bin al-Waleed and Saladin epochs ago, *asabiyyah* is once again ascendant from sub-Saharan Africa to the Central Asian steppes to the Indus River valley and is manifest in how modern Islamic extremists wage war. The region is unstable and some scholars suggest it may be on the precipice of a reformation movement that could, as ISIS doctrine preaches, unify it under one great caliphate of

Islamic sovereignty or, in turn, lead Islam to an overall acceptance of modernity in a fashion similar to that of Christianity in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century (the latter, by virtue of separating religion from the state, all but eliminated the role of European clans; such a modernizing event would probably have a similar effect on tribes within Islam).<sup>49</sup> While modern Middle Eastern armies struggle under Western tactics and formations alien to their cultural and theoretical heritage, savage non-state actors are employing sublimated *asabiyyah* and the tactics and operational techniques of their ancestors to achieve stunning victories against numerically superior opponents and to withstand withering counter-attacks. UCLA economist Deepak Lal, in his article, “The New Jihadist Threat,” offers this linkage:

Given the stunning success of ISIS in [Iraq and Syria], the continuing turmoil caused by Boko Haram in Nigeria and Mali and by Al-Shabab in Kenya, and the emergence of the Pakistani Taliban as an existential threat to that country, these and other countries face a new, more brutal and atavistic form of jihadist assault...[Ibn] Khaldun would recognize these new jihadists as the successors of the tribal warriors, with the nomadic kinship ties called *asabiyyah*.<sup>50</sup>

It is a fight for the soul of Islam—in which tribal traditions mixed with religious ideology comprise the vital component. ISIS, the Taliban, the Houthis, Shi’a militias, and the Kurds’ *Peshmerga* forces are succeeding where U.S.- and British-trained and equipped state armies are failing (or at least failing to make significant progress) in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, and other areas. The fighting spirit of the Arab, Kurd, or Pashtun should not be questioned; they are brave fighters all. What should be questioned is the American military’s understanding of the theoretical heritage of the Arab, Kurd, and Pashtun that undergirds their military proclivities.

Whether the United States seeks to counter or to facilitate these forces, it is necessary for American policy, strategy, and security cooperation to be coherent with

their cultural norms rather than operating in naiveté of their existence. This coherence can only be created through education of military officers at multiple levels of their PME experience. A “crash course” of a couple hours immediately before deployment will not be sufficient, especially if real change is desired at the strategic and theatre-strategic levels. In a similar vein, imposing Western military theory and doctrine on Middle Eastern partner nations’ armies violates *asabiyyah* and will continue to engender frustration and underperformance. Seeking to diversify forces by combining rival ethnic and tribal groups may play well in the American political imagination to form democratic institutions, but these actions also violate *asabiyyah* and therefore have little hope of succeeding. One will not find *asabiyyah* in the theories of Clausewitz and Jomini or in the military histories of Western Europe. The theories and histories of Ibn Khaldun, Bin al-Waleed, and Saladin should be key readings for U.S. Army officers as they attempt to think critically and creatively about the current and future military problems of the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, and central and south Asia.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey Goldberg, “The Obama Doctrine,” *The Atlantic*, April 2016, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/04/the-obama-doctrine/471525/> (accessed March 15, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> This assertion is supported by U.S. military doctrinal documents and USAWC course directives. A survey of the following current documents notes that Clausewitz has a starring role in each (cited at least once in each document) followed by supporting actor roles for Thucydides, Hart, Fuller, Mahan, Corbett, and Douhet. Interestingly, Jomini plays a starring role only in the USAWC course directives, but his legacy through the “Principles of War” is on prominent display in every single document. While Sun Tzu makes a surprise, but nominal, appearance in JP-1 (pg I-4), he and Kautilya only receive due accord in one of the USAWC course directives. There are no references of any kind to Middle Eastern or Islamic thinkers. See the following publications:

U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, Joint Publication 1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, March 25, 2013), example at I-3.

U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operations*, Joint Publication 3-0 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, August 11, 2011), example at II-1.

U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operation Planning*, Joint Publication 5-0 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, August 11, 2011), example at III-22.

U.S. Department of the Army, *Doctrine Primer*, Army Doctrine Publication 1-01 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, September 2014), example at 3-1.

U.S. Department of the Army, *Unified Land Operations*, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, May 2012), example at 4-3.

Department of National Security and Strategy, *Theory of War and Strategy: Course Directive AY16* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2015).

Department of National Security and Strategy, *National Security Policy and Strategy: Course Directive AY16* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2015).

Department of Military Strategy, Planning, and Operations, *Theater Strategy and Campaigning, Course Directive AY16* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2015).

William T. Johnsen et al., *The Principles of War in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Strategic Considerations* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, August 1, 1995), <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/doctrine/research/princwar.pdf> (accessed March 20, 2016). This reference is particularly useful as it provides a short history of the principles of war. Its references are telling in that it is a who's who list of Western military thinkers. There are no Middle Eastern or Islamic thinkers provided.

<sup>3</sup> Same sources as above. The foundation for the theory and philosophy behind the Western Way of War is studied at length in both CGSC and at the Army War College. The course directives cited in the endnote above along with the CGSC history and tactics blocks of instruction support this assertion.

<sup>4</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, eds. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976); Antoine Henri Jomini, *The Art of War*, trans. Capt. G.H. Mendell and Lieut. W.P. Craighill (Greenhill Books, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> Jomini, *The Art of War*, 35.

<sup>6</sup> Akhilesh Pillalamarri, "Why Militant Groups Succeed," *The Diplomat*, August 27, 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/08/why-militant-groups-succeed/> (accessed March 15, 2016).

<sup>7</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, ed. N. J. Dawood (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005) 97; Lenn Evan Goodman, "Ibn Khaldun and Thucydides," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 92, no. 2 (Apr – Jun 1972): 256; Mohamed Talbi, quoted in Ed West, *Asabiyyah: What Ibn Khaldun, The Islamic Father of Social Science, Can Teach Us About The World Today* (A Kindle Single, 2015), Kindle e-book.

<sup>8</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, 98.

<sup>9</sup> Goodman, "Ibn Khaldun and Thucydides," 261; West, *Asabiyyah*.

<sup>10</sup> Roger Boesche, "Kautilya's *Arthashastra* on War and Diplomacy in Ancient India," *The Journal of Military History* 67, no. 1 (January 2003): 9-37.

<sup>11</sup> Goodman, "Ibn Khaldun and Thucydides," 259.

<sup>12</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, 107; *Ibid*, 120.

<sup>13</sup> Goodman, "Ibn Khaldun and Thucydides," 258.

<sup>14</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, 133-136.

<sup>15</sup> Goodman, "Ibn Khaldun and Thucydides," 258.

<sup>16</sup> The author distinguishes the Turks of Turkey and the Persians of Iran from their ethnic relatives throughout the Caucasus and Central and South Central Asia. The latter Turks and Persians are still very tribal and therefore anchored by Ibn Khaldun's idea of *asabiyyah*.

<sup>17</sup> Francis Fukuyama provides an insightful survey of the effects of tribalism and how Westerners are generally blind to these effects in the following source:

Francis Fukuyama, "Tribal Societies: Property, Justice, War," in *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011), 77-78.

<sup>18</sup> Gareth Matthews-John, "The Conflicted Geography of ISIS," *Rebel News*, September 2015, <https://rebelnews.com/garethjohn/the-conflicted-geography-of-isis/> (accessed March 15, 2016).

<sup>19</sup> Ibn Khaldun maintains the Islamic tradition of considering Jews and Christians as people of the Book; it is therefore natural that Bedouins who transition from *asabiyyah* to sublimated *asabiyyah* through Judaism or Christianity would theoretically attain the same benefits of the latter while those choosing other religions (such as Zoroastrianism) would not.

<sup>20</sup> For excellent analyses on the two types of *jihad*, see Reza Aslan, "Chapter 4: Jihad," in *No God but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam*, Update Edition (New York: Random House Trade, 2011); Aslan, "Chapter 8: Sufism," in *No God but God*; David Cook, *Understanding Jihad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), chapter 2.

<sup>21</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, 126.

<sup>22</sup> The Sunni Awakening in Anbar Province, Iraq, serves as an example of tribal outreach to limit VEOs. See Timothy S. McWilliams and Kurtis P. Wheeler, eds., *Al-Anbar Arab Awakening: Volume I: American Perspectives, U.S. Marines and Counterinsurgency in Iraq, 2004-2009* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2009).

<sup>23</sup> John Walter Jandora, *Militarism in Arab Society: An Historiographical and Bibliographical Sourcebook* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 9.

<sup>24</sup> The *Rashidun* (“rightly guided”) caliphs were the first four caliphs following the death of the Prophet Mohammed in 632 CE. In order they were Abu Bakr (632-634), Umar (634-644), Uthman (644-656), and Ali (656-661). This thirty-year rule primarily from Medina saw the rapid expansion of the Islamic empire. It was during Ali’s reign in which Islam incurred its first civil war (*fitna*) which attempted to determine the proper succession of the caliphate. Upon Ali’s death and shortly thereafter the end of the First *Fitna*, the Umayyad Caliphate established control over Sunni Islam from its seat in Damascus.

<sup>25</sup> Jandora, *Militarism*, 13.

<sup>26</sup> Hugh Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs: Military and Society in the Early Islamic State* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 14.

<sup>27</sup> A.I. Akram, *Khalid Bin al-Waleed Sword of Allah: A Biographical Study of One of the Greatest Military Generals in History*, ed. A.B. al-Mehri (Birmingham, UK: Maktabah, 2007) 174.

<sup>28</sup> Geoffrey Hindley, *Saladin: Hero of Islam* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire, UK: Pen & Sword, 2015) x.

<sup>29</sup> Kennedy, *The Armies*, 1-6.

<sup>30</sup> Akram, *Khalid Bin al-Waleed*, 79.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 370-418.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 222-231.

<sup>34</sup> Hindley, *Saladin*, 104. To be sure, the Abbasids still technically reigned from Baghdad over the Sunni Muslim world, but their authority by the 12<sup>th</sup> Century was nominal at best and completely destroyed by the Mongols by the mid 13<sup>th</sup> Century.

<sup>35</sup> Baha ad-Din, *The Life of Saladin*, trans. C.R. Conder (London: Palestine Pilgrims’s Text Society, 1897), quoted in S.J. Allen and Emilie Amt, eds., *The Crusades: A Reader* (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2003), 150-151.

<sup>36</sup> Imad ad-Din, *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, trans. E.J. Costello and F. Gabrieli (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), quoted in S.J. Allen and Emilie Amt, eds., *The Crusades: A Reader* (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2003), 154-158.

<sup>37</sup> Hindley, *Saladin*, 113-120.

<sup>38</sup> Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Yale University Press, 2005), 109-111.

<sup>39</sup> Hindley, *Saladin*, 125.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>42</sup> Imad ad-Din, *Arab Historians*, 155.

<sup>43</sup> Hindley, *Saladin*, 128.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 129-133.

<sup>46</sup> The author's experience demonstrates this fact. As an Infantry lieutenant and captain, he was taught the principles of war (Jomini) and center of gravity (Clausewitz) among other related concepts. As a major, he was further grounded in Jomini and Clausewitz in CGSC/ILE. Recently, as a lieutenant colonel, he received yet more instruction on the teachings of Jomini and Clausewitz at the Army War College. At no time in the author's PME has he received formal instruction on any Middle Eastern strategist, theorist, or noted military practitioner. The CGSC Catalog located at <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/cgsc/repository/350-1.pdf> provides support for the author's assertion at ILE with this course description: "H100 – History: Rise of the Western Way of War. This block provides students with a broad perspective on the interplay between war and Western society and the nature of revolutionary military change. Through that perspective, students gain insights into the challenges and opportunities the U.S. military faces today. The block focuses upon four 'Military Revolutions' that have profoundly recast Western warfare since 1600: the rise of the nation-state; the emergence of mass politics; the Industrial Revolution; and the emergence of new combined arms warfare in World War I. H100 also introduces the students to military theory through the writings of Jomini and Clausewitz. Finally, there is a 'Past as Prologue' lesson in which students reflect upon the lasting impact of 'Military Revolutions' and military theory for today's world." At USAWC, the following sources, reflecting the core courses most thematically fit for the study of theory and history, indicate a glaring paucity of Middle Eastern thought: Department of National Security and Strategy, *Theory of War and Strategy: Course Directive AY16*; Department of Military Strategy, Planning, and Operations, *Theater Strategy and Campaigning, Course Directive AY16*.

<sup>47</sup> The author's observation of a seminar at the Army War College. As opposed to conventional battles where targeting the leader or the army as a whole may be the strategic and/or operational center of gravity, VEOs continue to demonstrate resiliency when a critical leader is killed/captured or the force is degraded. Although others have suggested this is due to ideology, religion, sense of desperation on the part of the organization's members, or similar rationales, the author argues that it is sublimated *asabiyyah*. However, regardless of the intangible cause, the point is that the U.S. military is conditioned to identifying tangible centers of gravity per the typical rationale in conventional warfare.

<sup>48</sup> It is unlikely that ISIS, al-Qaeda, and the Taliban will disappear any time soon, even if they suffer serious losses of territory and/or adherents. They, or their derivatives, will continue to menace lands between West Africa and Pakistan for the foreseeable future, which means the U.S. Army cannot continue to overlook the military theory and history associated with this region as it educates future officers.

<sup>49</sup> Beyond the scope of this paper, multiple scholars including Aslan, *No God But God*; Aayan Hirsi, *Heretic: Why Islam Needs a Reformation Now* (New York: Harper, 2015); Farzana Hasan, *Unveiled: A Canadian Muslim Woman's Struggle Against Misogyny, Sharia and Jihad* (Toronto: Freedom Press Canada, 2012); Irshad Manji, *The Trouble With Islam Today* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2003). They have advocated for a reformation act within Islam.

<sup>50</sup> Deepak Lal, "The New Jihadist Threat," *Business Standard*, June 20, 2014, [http://wap.business-standard.com/article/opinion/deepak-lal-the-new-jihadist-threat-114062001250\\_1.html](http://wap.business-standard.com/article/opinion/deepak-lal-the-new-jihadist-threat-114062001250_1.html) (accessed March 15, 2016).