

“An Analysis of the Confession of Khalid Sheikh Muhammad in the Development of Themes for the Interrogation of Islamic Fundamentalist Terrorist Suspects”;

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## **An Analysis of the Confession of Khalid Sheikh Muhammad in the Development of Themes for the Interrogation of Islamic Fundamentalist Terrorist Suspects**

**Louis C. Senese and Philip A. Mullenix**

The evolution of strategies for the interrogation of Islamic fundamentalist terrorists has been a challenge to United States military and intelligence case officers for multiple reasons. Traditional doctrines covering the interrogation of criminals and military prisoners do not apply well enough to the unconventional and extremist enemy encountered in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Effective interrogation is complicated by Al Qaeda's proactive education of its terrorist agents on countermeasures which are detailed within the *Al Qaeda Jihad Training Manual*. The *Manual* is a combination of political/religious indoctrination as well as a tactical handbook on matters ranging from explosives, assassinations, chemical weapons, and interrogation. Among the specific countermeasures taught within the manual for terrorists facing Western interrogation are: preparation of disinformation, control of behavior symptoms, noncompliance, defiance, denial, and silence. But most formidable is the advocacy of unconditional commitment to Al Qaeda's deification of martyrdom and the moral justification for assassination, bombing, and destruction as a means of "establishing the religion of majestic Allah on earth."

By definition, interrogation themes are the arguments (when presented in monologue fashion by the interrogator to the subject) which provide reasons and excuses to psychologically (not legally) justify a subject's behavior. By rationalizing a subject's behavior within the framework of that subject's mentality and beliefs, the interrogator facilitates the subject's task of self incrimination.

An exceptional opportunity has emerged to study the conduct, motives, mentality, and beliefs of the Islamic fundamentalist terrorist from the words of one of Al Qaeda's most prolific terrorists. On 10 March 2007, during his Combatant Status Review Tribunal Hearing on board U.S. Naval Base Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Khalid Sheikh Muhammad (hereinafter "KSM") admitted his role as Operational Director for Sheik Usama Bin Laden (hereinafter "UBL") in multiple terrorist attacks around the world, including organizing, planning, follow-up, and execution of the September 11, 2001 attack upon the United States. KSM's own statements, both prepared and extemporaneous, illustrate how his mentality and beliefs helped him to justify and admit his murderous conduct before a military tribunal. It stands to reason that

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Note to Readers. The information and opinions expressed herein are based largely upon the authors' independent research and personal interrogation experiences.

KSM's disclosure of his own mentality, beliefs, and rationalizations can serve as a model for successful theme development for use during the interrogation of other Al Qaeda terrorist suspects.

[The Unclassified "*Verbatim Transcript of Combatant Status Review Tribunal Hearing for ISN 10024*", Khalid Sheik Muhammad, on 10 March 2007 hereinafter referred to as the "Transcript".]

### **Confession Validation**

As a prelude to KSM's extemporaneous remarks, his personal representative read into the record a prepared statement which contained a list of 31 specific admissions by KSM of his involvement in terrorist activities or plots, either as a responsible participant, principal planner, trainer, financier, executor, and/or personal participant. Among the admissions, which appear on pages 18 and 19 of the Transcript, are the 1993 World Trade Center attack; 9/11; decapitation of Daniel Pearl; and assassination attempts upon President Carter, President Clinton, Pakistan's President Musharaf, and Pope John Paul. KSM's admissions paint a remarkable portrait of conspiracy and terrorist activity.

The extemporaneous "Oral Statement," which follows the prepared admissions, displays a vernacular that is presumably unique to KSM and thereby validates that the statements are undeniably his. In short, he's speaking in his own words. Further, in the first two sentences of his extemporaneous remarks before the Tribunal, KSM: a) answers "Yes" when asked whether the statement containing the 31 admissions were his words; and b) says he wants to add "verification" of his conduct.

Among the highlights of his subsequent "verification" of his conduct as set forth within his written and oral statements are the following:

a) At page 15 of the Transcript, when questioned about interrogation tactics, KSM indicated he wanted the United States to be fair with people but also admitted, "*Because when I say, I will not regret when I say I'm enemy combatant.*"

b) At pages 21-22 of the Transcript, KSM described himself as an American enemy and a jackal fighting in the night out of religious zealotry whereby we may consider his behavior as a fundamentalist.

c) At page 19 of the Transcript, KSM interrupts his personal representative's reading of KSM's written admission to make a specific correction. Whereas the document stated, at item 29, that KSM was responsible for the assassination attempt upon Pope John Paul while in the Philippines, KSM made it clear that he merely shared responsibility for that terrorist event. KSM's acute awareness of the accuracy of the admissions being read into the record compelled him to make a specific correction, thereby validating the remaining 30 admissions to which he offered no objection or amendment.

d) On page 20 of the Transcript, KSM engages in an extraordinary validation of his confession through a direct exchange with the President of the Naval Tribunal. At the conclusion of the reading of his written admissions, KSM through his personal representative stated: "*Also, hereby admit and affirm without duress that I was a responsible participant, principal planner, trainer, financier.*" KSM interrupted: "*For this is not necessary as I responsible. But with in these things responsible participant in finances.*" The President states: "*I understand. I want to be clear, though, is you that were the author of that document.*" KSM replies: "*That's right.*" The President reaffirms: "*That it is true?*" to which KSM replies: "*That's true.*"

Based upon the above and foregoing, it is evident that reliance upon the content of KSM's written confession and extemporaneous "Oral Statement" is justified.

### **Theme Identification**

Persuasive argumentation is the stock-in-trade of a professional interrogator. As applied to the interrogation of an Islamic fundamentalist terrorist, finding a persuasive

argument that appeals to the terrorist's mentality and beliefs is an interrogator's threshold challenge. KSM, through his own words, has given us a backstage pass into the mentality and beliefs of Islamic Fundamentalists and has thereby revealed a number of themes that can be successfully applied during the interrogation of terrorists at his advanced level of indoctrination and commitment. Among the interrogation themes that emerged within KSM's confession during his Tribunal Hearing are the following.

[A detailed discussion of each theme follows. But as an overview, the topics fall into five categories: 1) Nationalism; 2) Rationalization; 3) Shifting Blame; 4) Moral Superiority of Islam; and 5) Maximization.]

### **1. Nationalism.**

Nationalists are motivated by resentment toward the presence of Western military forces in Muslim countries. This notion resonates with KSM as justification for terrorist conduct against the United States. In his "Oral Statement" KSM argues a parallel between: a) Islamic terrorist attacks as a legitimate means of attaining nationalist *independence* from Western occupation of Arab territory and b) the American Revolutionary War for independence from Great Britain. KSM equates Usama bin Laden to George Washington, identifying both as heroes. KSM said the following.

Transcript, pgs 21-22.

*"So when we made any war against America we are jackals fighting in the nights. I consider myself, for what you are doing, a religious thing as you consider us fundamentalist. So, we derive from religious leading that we consider we and George Washington doing same thing. As consider George Washington as hero. Muslims many of them are considering Usama bin Laden. He is doing same thing. He is just fighting. He needs his independence. Even we think that, or not me only. Many Muslims, that al Qaida or Taliban they are doing. They have been oppressed by America."*

Transcript, page 23.

*"If now George Washington. If now we were living in the Revolutionary War and*

*George Washington he being arrested through Britain. For sure he, they would consider him enemy combatant. But American they consider him as hero. This right the any Revolutionary War they will be as George Washington or Britain. So we are considered American Army bases which we have from seventies in Iraq. Also, in Saudi Arabian, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain. This is kind of invasion, but I'm not here to convince you."*

KSM confessed that he engaged in multiple catastrophic terrorist acts out of nationalistic fervor for independence. But whether, in fact, KSM was motivated by nationalism is not significant to an interrogator. What is significant is that KSM relied upon that theme as a face-saving device to justify his conduct. It is reasonable, then, to infer that the same nationalist theme will appeal to the mentality and beliefs of other Islamic fundamentalist terrorists during interrogation.

#### **i. Resentment of U.S. presence (military force) in Muslim countries – Saudi Arabian, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain.**

Example: Omar's ecological-terrorist attempt to infect the Great Lakes water supply was scarcely thwarted by U.S. intelligence agencies.

"Omar, the results of our investigation clearly indicate that you are responsible for attempting to contaminate the Great Lakes water supply. My first reaction was to despise you and all those responsible for attempting such a cowardly inhumane act. However, the more I learned about you, the more I came to identify why you planned such an act. Understand this clearly, I do not in any way condone your actions. It wasn't until I discovered that many of your family members were killed by U.S. attacks that I began to empathize with your initial emotion of revenge.

"I thought how I might have reacted had another government invaded my country killing my family members. I love my family very much as I am sure you do and as a father and husband, there is nothing you or I wouldn't do to protect our families. That was

part of your motivation as I'm sure would be mine. However, revenge solely for your family would be too shallow. You were protecting all of your countrymen from experiencing the same tragic fate as you experienced. You're fighting for a higher cause than simply acting out of a personal revenge.

"You and your countrymen lack the military resources as the United States, but you attempted to challenge the United States strategically. Certainly the message would have been clear – stay out of our homeland! I also know that your military training tells you to remain silent during questioning and deny any accusations, however, there comes a time in each person's life when he has to follow through with his convictions. It is necessary to acknowledge your bravery to your countrymen. You can deny involvement and choose to be a coward or tell the truth validating your convictions.

"Omar, for me to better understand your motivation, was this to have been a personal act of revenge or was this part of the larger picture, designed to protect fellow countrymen? I think this was designed to stop the U.S from harming your people and cause them to remove their military presence from your countries, right?"

#### **ii. Seeking nationalist independence from Western occupation of Arab territory**

Example: Ali arranges for a coordinated bombing of six U.S. train stations.

"Ali, we know you were responsible for the coordinated attack of the six major U.S. train stations. You have two options, either to deny involvement or to tell the truth. At this point our intelligence clearly indicates that you were the leader of these attacks. Ali, understand this very clearly, your acknowledgement of orchestrating the bombings is not necessary. The only reason I am talking to you is to learn from the lesson you were teaching the U.S. Was this done to stop the oppression of the U.S insurgency into Arab territories or was this simply an order you were carrying out acting as a minion or puppet? I know you are unhappy with U.S. aid to Israel. You and I know that most Western people hear 'aid' and they automatically think food, clothing, medicine,

money and so forth. But you and I really know what 'aid' is, it is bombs, fighters, state of the art weapons, and of course a credit card from the U.S. with no interest or payback attached! Why are we so kind? You and I both know the truth, to have an ally in the Arab territories and perhaps ultimately achieve full control over the Arab Peninsula. You simply wanted to send a message to the U.S. to remove their occupation from the Arab territories, is that right?

"Well Ali, you have done something that no other has done – sent the U.S. a loud and clear message to allow you and your countries to once and for all gain independence from Western occupation of the Arab countries. What we are hoping from you right now is to negotiate peace between our nations before any more innocent people are harmed either in the Muslim world or ours. Before we negotiate in good faith, we need to know we are talking to the person that can arrange the peace. The only way to truly know we are in good faith negotiations is for you to validate our intelligence that you were the coordinator of the train station missions. Ali, you are an intelligent man and I am sure that you can see that denying involvement tells us that we cannot trust you and talk in good faith, right? Can we talk in good faith? Are you or are you not the person we can negotiate with? You are aren't you?"

#### **iii. American Revolutionary War was independence from Great Britain**

#### **iv. Usama bin Laden – hero or terrorist?**

Example: Yousef was responsible for a terrorist attack on the U.S. military in Kuwait.

"Yousef, we know without a doubt that you funded and directed an attack on our military in Kuwait. You have been portrayed as a terrorist but I don't see you simply as a terrorist. I think you are a man sending a message to the Western regimes to remove their troops from Muslim countries. You see, terrorism can be good or it can be bad, it all comes down to who is making the distinction. As an example, if you are terrorizing criminals, bad people, and oppressors, then it is good. On the other hand, if you are terrorizing good and innocent people than I am talking to the wrong person. If I am not

mistaken, I think Osama bin Laden had made the same distinction. I think in your case, you believed the U.S. to be oppressors and felt it necessary to act in a commendable manner trying to stop the terrorism of your countries. You are fighting a government that you believe is challenging your religion and trying to steal your wealth.

“You see Yousef, in our country we had a man just like you. His name was George Washington, our first president. He defended the U.S. against the invasion from Britain during the Revolutionary War. He is viewed as a hero by the people of the U.S. and as a criminal and terrorist by the British. He was defending his country from oppressors and terrorists just like you. In fact, there was another heroic figure fighting for the U.S. at the same time and his name was Patrick Henry. He once made a speech during the time of the American Revolution and is best remembered by stating, “Give me Liberty or give me Death!” He is viewed as a true patriot and ironically radical, just as you are by your countrymen. He denounced the corruption just as you. Am I right, Yousef, you are not a terrorist, but a true patriot trying to end the undefined U.S. declared war on terror, right?”

## **2. Rationalization of civilian casualties as acceptable collateral damage from attacks upon legitimate wartime targets.**

KSM argues that Islamic terrorist acts represent legitimate wartime attacks upon military/political/economic targets; and that civilian casualties to terrorist attacks are unintended victims of a *declared war between nations*. For an interrogator, there are three significant components to KSM’s rationalizations.

a) First, the terrorist attacks were in furtherance of a declared war among nations.

Transcript, page 21.

*“You know very well there are language for any war. So, there are, we are when I admitting these things I’m not saying I’m not did it. I did it but this the language of any war. .... For sure, I’m American enemies.”*

Transcript, page 23.

*“But if you and me, two nations, will be together in war the others are victims. This is the way of the language (of war). You know 40 million people were killed in World War One. Ten million kill in World War. You know that two million four hundred thousand be killed in the Korean War. So this language of the war. Any people who, when Usama bin Laden say I’m waging war because such such reason, now he declared it.”*

KSM cites Usama bin Laden’s declaration of war in order to legitimize terrorist attacks within the context of conventional war. This rationalization appeals to KSM’s mentality as a face saving device for his conduct. For the interrogator, it represents an opening for theme development. Suggested themes may include the following:

- i. Terrorist attacks are a continuation of a declared war
- ii. Terrorist attacks are a different type of war
- iii. The intention is to stop U.S. invasion of Muslim countries

Example: Ahmed orchestrated the successful communication interruption of all cell phones and Internet connections for one week, crippling the U.S. economy, causing total chaos.

“Ahmed, our investigation clearly indicates you were responsible for the disruption of cell phone communications and Internet service throughout the U.S. This war we wage against each other is really a continuation of the Holy War, the Crusades that began in the 11th century. The Christians and Jews rose to defend the Holy Land against the Muslims of that time. As a result, thousands of people were killed.

“The Muslim world is now defending itself against the Christians and Jews who have invaded your land trying to claim it as their own. Your actions of disrupting communications did cause the chaos you planned but thankfully, you did not launch a nuclear attack causing massive deaths of innocent men, women and children. Your mothers and daughters are being killed as a result of Western presence in Muslim countries. I firmly believe you are acting in

retaliation against U.S. actions. I must commend you for not indiscriminately killing civilians. You are fighting against what you believe to be a dishonest government and maybe that is true. But for us to work together to better understand each other, we need to know the rationalization behind your actions. Were your acts designed to cease the war or were they to escalate the war?"

b) Second, the targets chosen for terrorist attack are military/political in nature.

Transcript, page 24.

*"But war language also we have language for the war. You have to kill. But you have to care if unintentionally or intentionally target if I have if I'm not at the Pentagon. I consider it is okay. If I target now when we target in USA we choose them military target, economical, and political. So, war central victims mostly means economical target."*

Appealing to this mentality, a few interrogation themes are as follows:

- i. Selective targets are chosen reducing collateral damage, i.e., military, economical and political
- ii. The language of war is that we all kill
- iii. Compare U.S. action on Hiroshima and Nagasaki – weapons of mass destruction

Example: Hamdan was to have been the 21st hijacker on 9/11.

"Hamdan, we know you were to have been on American Airlines Flight 93 that crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. As you know all religions profess not to kill but yet we all kill in defense. We all justify killing just as you did when planning to hijack the aircraft on 9/11. Most of the U.S. population really does not know what it means to be al-Qaeda or Taliban. In fact, most don't understand the struggle of your fighting to help Muslims; to prevent the oppression by America and seek your own independence.

"You choose selective military, political or economic targets with your efforts. I know you do not want to kill innocent men, women, and children. But maybe you do and I have been misguided in my thinking. That is why I

am talking to you, to determine the intended targets of your retaliation. I know that Dr. Ayman Zawahiri 's home was bombed and his wife, two daughters and son were killed in one bombing by the U.S. Zawahiri was not present and escaped. What do you call that, collateral damage? I understand your frustration and growing hatred toward the Americans. It has been brought to our attention about the U.S. bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, again much collateral damage by the U.S. for sure. Weapons of mass destruction were used correct? I am saying the U.S. has made its share of mistakes but until we both stop killing, things will get worse, right?

"I think you were willing to let your actions speak for themselves by making the ultimate sacrifice, giving your life for your country, right? You were not targeting innocent children with the aircraft, were you? I am convinced the aircraft you were to have been on had a military, political or economic target chosen, right? If that is true, which I think it is, then let us both take the next step in stopping the language of war and stop the killing. Let us work together to stop the killing of future generations of our people. Hamdan, you were not going to kill innocent people were you? You were selective in your target, right?

c) Third, civilian collateral damage was not intended by the terrorists.

Transcript, page 23.

*"Because war, for sure, there will be victims. When I said I'm not happy that three thousand been killed in America. I feel sorry even. I don't like to kill children and the kids. Never Islam are, give me green light to kill peoples. Killing, as in the Christianity, Jews, and Islam, are prohibited."*

Transcript, pages 23-24.

*"This is why the language of any war in the world is killing. I mean the language of the war is victims. I don't like to kill people. I feel very sorry they been killed kids in 9/11. What will I do? This is the language (of war)."*

In deference to this form of rationalization, the themes suggested in paragraph 2(b) above are equally applicable.

**3. Shifting Blame for the root causes of terrorism.**

a) In speaking of the beheading of Daniel Pearl, KSM blames Mosad and the CIA.

Transcript, page 20.

*“It’s like beheading Daniel Pearl. It’s not related to al Qaida. It was shared in Pakistani. Other group, Mujahadeen. The story of Daniel Pearl, because he stated for the Pakistanis group that he was working with the both. His mission was in Pakistan to track about Richard Reed (shoe bomber) trip to Israel. Richard Reed, do you have trip? You send it Israel to make set for targets in Israel. His mission in Pakistan from Israeli intelligence, Mosad, to make interview to ask about when he was there. Also, he mention to them he was both. He have relation with CIA people and were the Mosad.”*

b) In describing UBL’s declaration of “Jihad against America,” KSM blames “American military presence in Arabian peninsula and aiding Israel and many things.” (Transcript, page 21.)

These excerpts suggest themes that blame the cause of terrorism upon its victims.

- i. Blame Israel for placing demands on U.S. and the U.S. for supporting Israel’s demands
- ii. Blame the Western degrading morals
- iii. Blame CIA for false intentional misrepresenting intelligence
- iv. Blame U.S. fear of no longer being the world leader and power

Example: Ibrahim is responsible for coordinating attacks on several U.S. Embassies.

“Ibrahim, you are clearly responsible for the coordinated attacks on the U.S. Embassies. People need to accept responsibility for their actions and behavior. I am not talking about you but our government’s relationship with Israel. Usama bin

Laden clearly stated that Israel is represented inside the American government. Examples he gave were the Ministry of Exterior and the Ministry of Defense and the CIA. He firmly believes that Israel uses the U.S. to further its dominance in the Muslim world.

“As a result, our intelligence may not be accurate and in fact may be slanted to validate our retaliatory actions against the Muslim world. Had the U.S. not been influenced by Israel, we might not be talking to each other. You and I know that had our intelligence about weapons of mass destruction been reliable, we would not have invaded your homeland. The Muslim world does in fact view the U.S. as wanting to become the world leader and power. I am sure other neutral countries view us as an aggressive nation, a nation that should stay out of other country’s politics, right?”

“While I don’t condone what you have done, I understand why you did what you did. I know you targeted U.S. embassies but you could have targeted civilian facilities but you didn’t. To that end, I commend you. What we need to know is was this done as a result of rejecting Western morals, corruption, and support of Jewish and Zionist plans for expansion into the Arabian Peninsula? Was that your intent or are you a paid mercenary acting for money? I don’t think you are a common criminal acting for money, are you? I think you acted out of love of country, with the ultimate goal of stopping the U.S. proliferation, right?”

Further theme examples on the shifting of blame for root causes of terrorism:

- v. Blame U.S. for callous intentions – lying in an attempt to control oil and its people versus the moral superiority of the Islam nations
- vi. Blame the U.S. for wanting world superiority
- vii. Blame the U.S. for weak religious and family values

Example: Ramzi is responsible for recruiting and coordinating car bomber attacks.

“Ramzi, there is no doubt you coordinated the car bomber attacks. Many of

my colleagues view you as a militant fanatic and didn't want me to talk to you. They wanted a low level analyst questioning you. My purpose in telling you this is not to brag or seem arrogant about my position. Ramzi, I am a senior investigator of intelligence, and I thought you should know, because I believe that you are the leader within your organization and deserve to be questioned by an equal.

"I need to talk to you hoping we could work together to put an end to further bloodshed. A terrorist is someone who indiscriminately harms innocent people, like the rapist or child molester. I don't think your actions are that shallow. I think you are acting in defense and motivated by self-preservation due to America's attempt to control your oil and more importantly your country's morals and values. I know the U.S. is far from perfect, but sometimes drastic measures are necessary to bring about change. You have chosen individuals that are willing to give their lives for what they believe is a just cause. They have taken the most drastic decision one can take – to sacrifice their lives. You see, that is not a terrorist; that's a hero.

"How many of my countrymen would do the same? I doubt many, Ramzi, and that is why I wanted to personally talk to you. I think we are both people that can have an influence on each other as well as our respective countries. My people need to understand your cause and once that is accomplished we can better work together. You do not want any more of your countrymen killed and likewise, I don't want any more of mine killed. Let's become the leaders we are and work towards ending the killing. Would you be willing to call your people and tell them to stop, at least for a week or so until you and I can talk and see what needs to be done to stop the bloodshed? Would you just give me a week?"

#### **4. Moral Superiority of Allah's war against unbelievers and the unjust.**

KSM stakes out the high moral ground as a recurring theme throughout his statement, sometimes in brazen fashion. For example, in his opening remarks, KSM refuses to accept the customary oath of the Tribunal,

scorning its legitimacy by drawing attention to President Clinton as a means of undermining the solemnity of the oath taken in court.

Transcript, page 21.

*"When I not take oath does not mean I'm lying. You know very well peoples take oath and they will lie. You know the President he did this before he just makes his oath and he lied."*

Generally, KSM invokes Allah as the sole arbiter of his conduct and the righteousness of his terrorist cause in furtherance of Allah's justice. In rejecting the customary courtroom oath, KSM substitutes instead the following sanctimonious warning to the Naval Tribunal that *"if any fail to judge by the light of Allah has revealed, they are no better than wrong doers, unbelievers, and the unjust."* Transcript, at page 21.

Substantively, KSM outrageously states that in contrast to radical Islam, America does not care about civilian collateral damage in America's choice of civilian (versus military and/or economic) targets for attack.

Transcript, page 24.

*"When we target in USA we choose them military target, economical, and political. So, war central victims mostly means economical target. So if now American they know UBL. He is in this house they don't care about his kids and his. They will just bombard it. They will kill all of them and they did it. They kill wife of Dr. Ayman Zawahiri and his two daughters and his son in one bombardment. They receive a report that is his house be. He had not been there. They killed them."*

Implications of this fundamentalist mentality for the interrogator in theme development carry significant weight in empathizing with the suspect's perception of callous Western intentions in contrast to the "moral superiority" of Islam. Interrogation themes may effectively play upon this perceived disparity in moral justification between Islamic theocracy and Western democracy.

### **5. Ideological Maximization of responsibility for terrorist attacks.**

Perhaps among the more subtle, if not unorthodox, component of KSM's statement is his apparent willingness to assume maximum responsibility for the terrorist acts in which he participated. In a weak attempt at hiding his pride in the litany of his terrorist conquests that had just been read into the record, KSM states: *"What I wrote here, is not I'm making myself a hero, when I said I was responsible for this or that. .... So, there are, we are when I admitting these things I'm not saying I'm not did it. .... This is the best way if I want. If I'm fighting for anybody admit to them I'm American enemies. For sure, I'm American enemies."* (Transcript, page 21)

KSM could not have been more blatant in proudly maximizing both the accomplishments on his terrorist resume as well as his mandate as America's enemy. This perspective is consistent with KSM's commitment to his previously described declaration of Jihad by Usama bin Laden as seen through the prism of the Al Qaeda Jihad Training Manual.

The Al Qaeda Jihad Training Manual teaches that each terrorist "has to be willing to do the work and undergo martyrdom for the purpose of achieving the goal and establishing the religion of majestic Allah on earth." The Manual further teaches: "The confrontations that Islam calls for with these godless and apostate regimes does not know Socratic debates, Platonic ideals nor Aristotelian diplomacy. But it knows the dialogue of bullets, the ideals of assassination, bombing, and destruction, and the diplomacy of the cannon and machine gun."

The implications of this Jihad mentality for the interrogator are complex. It raises the specter that an interrogator's repertoire of successful themes should also include the novel concept of "maximization." Take the terrorist's logic to the extreme: argue that to achieve the glory of martyrdom he must acknowledge his sacrificial responsibility for the terrorist event in furtherance of establishing the religion of majestic Allah on earth. And instead of placing blame upon circumstances or upon others for inciting the terrorist event, the suspect should be

challenged by the interrogator to willingly accept blame in fulfillment of his highest goal. KSM shows no reluctance to maximize his role in advancing the spread of Islam through terrorist means, all while pursuing martyrdom via a potential death sentence in the United States for his admitted crimes.

In a stark validation of this theory, KSM stated at his arraignment on 5 June 2008 that he welcomed the death penalty as a way to martyrdom. When warned by the military judge at Guantanamo that he faces execution if convicted of his confessed terrorist attacks upon America, KSM responded: *"Yes, this is what I wish, to be a martyr for a long time. I will, God willing, have this, by you."*

"Example: Khalid has been identified as the number two person in the Al-Qaeda command.

"Khalid, we both know that you are head of the Al-Qaeda military committee and Osama bin Laden's principal al-Qaeda operative who directed the 9/11 attacks on the United States. You were responsible for over 30 acts of war against the United States culminating in the 9/11 attack.

"You and I both know that your wage of war against the United States is the direct result of the U.S. sending thousands of troops into the Muslim nations. Your justification is your call of Islam that was revealed to Mohammed. You are a messenger of Allah attempting to stop the spread and proliferation of Western influence into the Muslim world. Your belief is that the U.S. is invading the Muslim countries to steal their natural resources, force their religious beliefs and contaminate the minds of the people. I truly believe that you are acting in defense of your people. You know better than anyone that Allah said: 'Stand by your brother...by giving him guidance and counsel.' Allah has ordered you to defend the Muslim land and glorify his teachings.

"The United States must ultimately accept responsibility for what has happened in the nation of Islam. When the holy war was called, many of your countrymen responded and accepted responsibility. Why? Because they know that Allah has predetermined their

lives. Their lives are in the hands of Allah. But you also have to accept responsibility for your leadership role and stand by your brother by acknowledging commitment to the defense of your homeland. Instead of acting cowardly as a common criminal denying involvement, you need to achieve the glory of martyrdom as stated by Allah – the highest proof of faith. You and I both know that Usama glorified Allah acknowledging leadership of al-Qaeda. His message was crystal clear when he stated that he is an enemy combatant of the United States. Usama bin Laden accepted the consequences of his actions for the glory of Allah. Now you should, too.

“What would Allah require of you? To hide behind cowardly denials of your work or to acknowledge the actions in the Muslim crusade against the Western oppressors? What would the fatwah, the declaration of Usama bin Laden require of you? He would expect you to bravely accept responsibility as he has done. Yes, in doing so, you place yourself in jeopardy of consequences, but that is the true leadership and commitment to Allah, isn't it? Do you possess such courage, Khalid? Will you lead your countrymen by acknowledging your leadership or be viewed as a common criminal hiding behind cowardly denials? You owe it to yourself to be identified as a proud leader of the holy war, but perhaps more importantly you are acknowledging your

commitment to Allah. You are a servant of Allah following His word leading the fight until the Americans are forced out of the Islamic countries, right?”

## **Conclusion**

It's a gross understatement to suggest that the challenges on the interrogation front are profound. They have been deeply divisive politically within our country. But as a matter of national security, the technical development and application of interrogational approaches for Islamic terrorists require imaginative thought framed within reasonable constitutional parameters.

An almost sure-fired way of determining future behavior of any individual or group of individuals is to view the canvass of their lives and experience. Khalid Sheikh Muhammad's confession offers to the interrogation professional unprecedented insight into the canvass of life experiences of Al-Qaeda's elite operatives, including the thoughts which form the substance of their admissions to social destruction in the name of Islam. Accurate analysis of KSM's own words reveals his beliefs, mentality, and rationale for his behavior and thereby provides a very real foundation of themes for future interrogations of similarly indoctrinated Islamic fundamentalist terrorists.

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