

Denying Islam's Role in Terror

Problems in the U.S. Military

by David J. Rusin

As U.S. service members risk their lives to combat violent jihadists abroad, military leaders, both uniformed and civilian, capitulate to stealth jihadists at home. By bending to Islamists' appeals for religious sensitivity, these leaders ignore the most crucial lesson of the Fort Hood massacre: Political correctness can kill.

THE WAR ON TRAINING

A key battleground in the war of ideas between Islamists and the West is military training because Islamists seek to suppress knowledge of their beliefs and goals.¹ This campaign hit high gear in 2011 when journalist Spencer Ackerman of *Wired* launched a series of articles documenting "offensive" training employed by various government agencies. He highlighted, among others, FBI materials stating that Islamic doctrine calls for war against non-Muslims and equating greater religious devotion with the potential for violence.²

On October 19, 2011, dozens of Muslim groups, many Islamist in nature, signed a letter to John Brennan, President Barack Obama's counterterrorism advisor, with a copy to Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, demanding that the administration "purge ... biased materials" and jettison "bigoted trainers."³ However, Panetta's Department of Defense was already on the case. Five days prior, Jose Mayorga, deputy assistant

secretary of defense for homeland defense, had directed the Joint Staff to compile information on the "current processes used to vet CVE [countering violent extremism] trainers."⁴

The Islamists' most notable scalp to date—presented to them by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Army general Martin Dempsey—is that of Matthew Dooley, a decorated Army lieutenant colonel who had taught at the Joint Forces Staff College of the National Defense University.⁵ At issue was Dooley's course on Islam and Islamic radicalism during which he spoke of Islam as an ideology, not just a faith, and war-gamed provocative scenarios in which it would be confronted as such.⁶

A colonel enrolled in the class complained to his superiors, leading to the course's suspension in April 2012.⁷ On May 10, *Wired* published

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1 *FrontPage Magazine* (Sherman Oaks, Calif.), Dec. 13, 2011.

2 *Wired* (San Francisco), Sept. 14, 2011.

3 Various organizations to Deputy National Security Advisor John Brennan, Oct. 19, 2011.

4 Jose S. Mayorga to Joint Staff, "Request for Joint Staff Coordination," U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Washington, D.C., Oct. 14, 2011.

5 *Fox News*, Oct. 5, 2012.

6 *Wired*, May 10, 2012.

7 *Ibid.*, Apr. 24, 2012.

Despite ample indications of the Fort Hood attacker's Islamist outlook, Hasan's Army superiors did nothing other than promote him to the next rank.

course materials focusing on a handful of slides conjecturing about “total war” and taking the conflict to civilians, but which also included a disclaimer that the specific counter-jihad model was meant “to generate dynamic discussion and thought” and did not constitute government policy.⁸ According to *The Washington Times*, Dooley’s attorneys at the Thomas More Law Center (TMLC) have main-

tained that “the discussion about all-out war . . . was conducted by a guest speaker. It involved theoretical ‘out of the box’ thinking on what happens if Islamic extremists commandeer Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal and begin destroying U.S. cities: How does the U.S. respond?”⁹

External lecturers in the class were a major target of *Wired*, which

highlighted their politically incorrect statements such as that the Crusades had been initiated after centuries of Muslim incursions and that Islamists see the fall of Arab regimes as stepping stones to global dominance.¹⁰ Ironically, one maligned guest speaker, Stephen Coughlin, had been fired from his post with the Joint Staff years earlier because of his own controversial work on Islamic warfare.¹¹

Though one could debate whether aspects of Dooley’s approach were unbalanced, the military’s reaction surely was. Hours after the *Wired* exposé appeared, Dempsey condemned the class at a news conference.¹² “It was just totally objectionable, against our values, and it wasn’t academically sound,” he said, adding that Dooley, referred to as “the individual,” was no

longer teaching. Soon Dooley was ordered removed “for cause,” and his superiors produced a negative officer evaluation report, derailing his career.¹³ On November 26, Ackerman relayed that Dooley had been transferred to a “bureaucratic backwater.”¹⁴

TMLC lawyers argue that the military chose to “throw him under the bus in public” without ever privately instructing Dooley to tweak the course’s content.¹⁵ The center further asserts that Dempsey’s words prejudiced the investigation, that the syllabus had been approved, and that university policies guarantee the right to academic expression “free of limitations, restraints, or coercion by the university or external environment.”¹⁶ Two congressmen also objected to what they saw as excessive punishment;¹⁷ in response, the Pentagon issued a report defending Dooley’s dismissal on the basis that the class “did not meet appropriate academic standards” and was “overtly negative with respect to Islam.”¹⁸ According to a TMLC press release, the military’s primary goal was to appease Islamists and make an example out of Dooley, so others “will refrain from telling the truth about Islam or confronting the difficult strategic challenges facing our nation for fear of jeopardizing their professional careers.”¹⁹

A second trainer in the crosshairs is Reza Kahlili, a onetime CIA operative inside Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps and now a critic of Islamic supremacism. On July 23, 2012, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) announced, via a press release oddly citing Kahlili’s conversion to Christianity, that it was asking Panetta to drop him as a lecturer at the Joint Counter-

8 Ibid., May 10, 2012.

9 *The Washington Times*, Oct. 14, 2012.

10 *Wired*, May 10, 2012.

11 Bill Gertz, “Inside the Ring,” *The Washington Times*, Jan. 4, 2008.

12 Associated Press, May 10, 2012.

13 *The Washington Times*, Oct. 14, 2012.

14 *Wired*, Nov. 26, 2012.

15 *The Washington Times*, Oct. 14, 2012.

16 “Muslim Influence in Pentagon Prevails; Material on Radical Islam ‘Purged,’ Outstanding Army Officer ‘Disciplined,’ TMLC Enters Case,” Thomas More Law Center, Ann Arbor, Sept. 17, 2012.

17 Rep. Thomas J. Rooney and Rep. Duncan Hunter to Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C., Oct. 10, 2012.

18 *The Washington Times*, Nov. 29, 2012.

19 “Muslim Influence in Pentagon Prevails,” Sept. 17, 2012.

intelligence Training Academy, calling the situation “another unfortunate example of our nation’s military and counterterrorism personnel being trained by individuals who weaken America’s security by promoting their own religious and political agendas.”²⁰ A Pentagon spokesman backed Kahlili but was taken to task for clarifying that he “does not lecture on or about Islam.”²¹ In the opinion of Jihad Watch’s Robert Spencer, “the Pentagon accepted Hamas-linked CAIR’s false premise that there would be something wrong with bringing in Reza Kahlili to speak

about Islam, and implicitly accepted also the idea that Hamas-linked CAIR has a legitimate voice in these matters. And that is, in a word, shameful.”²²

Combat training has also been influenced by CAIR. On June 26, 2012, *The Virginian-Pilot* published an article about a new close-quarters training range for Navy SEALs at Joint Expeditionary Base Fort Story in Virginia Beach. Included was a photograph of a target depicting a hijab-wearing woman aiming a gun, part of exercises in which SEALs make split-second decisions to distinguish unarmed civilians from combatants.²³ Just four days later, however, the paper reported that the Navy had pulled the figure “hours after the Council on American-Islamic Relations asked the Pentagon to remove the target.” Ibrahim Hooper, CAIR’s communications director, lamented, “Why would you use this particular image in



Islamist sensitivities have led to the muzzling of any discussion of jihadist ideologies and tactics. Matthew Dooley, a decorated Army lieutenant colonel who taught a course on Islamic radicalism at the National Defense University, was relieved of those responsibilities despite a stellar record. At issue was Dooley’s course categorizing Islam as an ideology, not just a faith.

training people how to kill? ... It creates the impression ... that you should view Muslim women in head scarves with hostility and suspicion.”²⁴ Female Muslim terrorists are all too real,²⁵ but now elite U.S. forces must be shielded from this reality, potentially nurturing a deadly complacency on the battlefield.

UNLEARNED LESSONS OF FORT HOOD

It would not be the first time that political correctness put lives in danger. Case in point: the Fort Hood massacre by Army major Nidal Malik Hasan on November 5, 2009. The tragedy is worth reviewing because it perfectly encapsulates the see-no-evil mindset of U.S. military leaders.

Despite ample indicators of Hasan’s Islamist outlook²⁶—which included giving a talk sympa-

20 “CAIR Asks Pentagon to Drop Another Anti-Islam Trainer,” Council on American-Islamic Relations, Washington, D.C., July 23, 2012.

21 *The Daily Caller* (Washington, D.C.), July 24, 2012.

22 Robert Spencer, “Why Is the Pentagon Listening to Hamas-Linked CAIR?” *PJ Media*, July 31, 2012.

23 *The Virginian-Pilot* (Norfolk), June 26, 2012.

24 *Ibid.*, June 30, 2012.

25 *FrontPage Magazine*, Nov. 6, 2012.

26 Daniel Pipes, “Major Hasan’s Islamist Life,” *FrontPage Magazine*, Nov. 20, 2009.



An apparently “PC” aversion to examining the tenets of Islam and Islamism is hamstringing the U.S. military’s ability to properly challenge a deadly enemy. This withholding of pertinent information could potentially lead to more tragedies like the killing spree by a jihadist officer at Fort Hood, Texas, in November 2009, whose victims are memorialized here.

thetic to violent jihad,²⁷ obsessing about Muslims with dual loyalties,²⁸ and telling colleagues that infidels should be beheaded and have boiling oil poured down their throats²⁹—his superiors did nothing, other than promote him to the next rank.³⁰ The Associated Press noted days after the shooting that during his medical training, “fellow students complained to the faculty about Hasan’s ‘anti-American propaganda,’ but said a fear of appearing discriminatory against a Muslim student kept officers from filing a formal written complaint.”³¹ A 2010 Senate report confirms this reluctance.³²

So great was the Army’s willful blindness

27 *The Washington Post*, Nov. 10, 2009.

28 *Ibid.*, Nov. 12, 2009.

29 *The Daily Telegraph* (London), Nov. 8, 2009.

30 *The New York Times*, Feb. 4, 2011.

31 Associated Press, Nov. 7, 2009.

32 “A Ticking Time Bomb: Counterterrorism Lessons From the U.S. Government’s Failure to Prevent the Fort Hood Attack,” Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman and Sen. Susan M. Collins, U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Washington, D.C., Feb. 2011.

task forces, it had little effect on the rose-colored narrative. “A Defense Department analyst on one of the task forces concluded that the chatter was innocent and in keeping with Hasan’s research interests,” *The Post* found.

Political correctness remained in full bloom long after the bloodshed. Gen. George Casey, then the Army’s chief of staff, claimed that “as horrific as this tragedy was, if our diversity becomes a casualty, I think that’s worse.”³³ The military proceeded to double down on recruiting Muslims.³⁶ Furthermore, Louay Safi—whose Islamist baggage includes being an unindicted co-conspirator in the prosecution of Palestinian Islamic Jihad bigwig Sami al-Arian, as well as serving in senior positions with the Islamic Society of North America, an unindicted co-conspirator in the successful trial of the Holy Land Foundation (convicted of funding Hamas)—was lecturing at

33 *The New York Times*, Feb. 4, 2011.

34 *The Washington Post*, Nov. 12, 2009.

35 *The New York Times*, Nov. 9, 2009.

36 *USA Today*, Dec. 10, 2009.

that, in the words of Sen. Joseph Lieberman (Independent, Conn.), Hasan’s commanders “outrageously suggested that the evidence of his radicalization showed a knowledge of Islam that could benefit our military and our country.”³³ As such, Hasan’s previous supervisors at Walter Reed “tried to turn his growing preoccupation with religion and war into something productive by ordering him to attend a university lecture series on Islam, the Middle East, and terrorism,” according to a *Washington Post* article.³⁴ “You don’t want to close him down just because it’s different,” one staffer explained. Even when Hasan’s communication with al-Qaeda’s Anwar al-Awlaki put him on the radar of terrorism

Fort Hood soon after the attack.³⁷ Though he was later suspended,³⁸ why had he been instructing soldiers in the first place?

Official Defense Department reports also bear the stamp of political correctness. In January 2010, the department released *Protecting the Force: Lessons from Fort Hood*, based on an investigation chaired by former Army secretary Togo West and Adm. Vernon Clark.³⁹ The report is noteworthy for the striking absence of the words “Islam,” “Muslim,” or their variants.⁴⁰ This is despite overwhelming evidence of Hasan’s religious motives, which culminated in his giving a neighbor a Qur’an and saying that he was “going to do good work for God”⁴¹ just hours before he shouted the Islamic war cry and mowed down fellow troops.⁴² The report does not even mention Hasan’s name. Identical patterns are seen in an internal Army review⁴³ and a 2010 memo by then-defense secretary Robert Gates on implementing the recommendations.⁴⁴

The problems continue to this day: Hasan’s actions are classified as “workplace violence,” a banal phrase used repeatedly in these documents, rather than as terrorism,⁴⁵ though survivors of the Fort Hood massacre are pushing to overturn this designation.⁴⁶ Justice for Hasan’s victims also has been delayed by a dispute over his desire to wear a religiously inspired beard in military court.⁴⁷ To top it all off, Hasan is still drawing government paychecks.⁴⁸

APPEASING AN UNNAMED ENEMY

The Pentagon’s verbal tiptoeing is not limited to the Fort Hood rampage. The Defense Department-produced “Quadrennial Defense Review” (QDR) provides a measure of current trends. Whereas the 2006 QDR features more than a dozen instances of “Islam,” “Muslim,” and their variants,⁴⁹ the 2010 QDR has none, instead describing challenges in vague terms such as “violent extremists.”⁵⁰ Then there was the testimony of Paul Stockton, an assistant secretary of defense, on December 7, 2011. When Congressman Dan Lungren (Republican, Calif.) asked if America is “at war with violent Islamist extremism,” Stockton replied, “No, sir. We are at war with al-Qaeda, its affiliates.” Questioned whether al-Qaeda is “an exponent of violent Islamist extremism,” Stockton could muster only that these “murderers” are “dedicated to overthrowing the values that we intend to advance.” He added, “I don’t believe it’s helpful to frame our adversary as Islamic with any set of qualifiers.”⁵¹

Though military officials hold their tongues about Islamism, they do not hesitate to speak out against private citizens exercising their First Amendment rights in ways that could offend Muslims and serve as excuses to attack U.S. troops. While threatening to burn a Qur’an in 2010, fringe pastor Terry Jones received a call from Defense Secretary Gates imploring him not to do so.⁵² Army general David Petraeus, then the top

An unindicted co-conspirator in the prosecution of Sami al-Arian was lecturing at Fort Hood soon after the attack.

37 Andrew C. McCarthy, “Somebody at Fort Hood Should Be Walking the Plank,” *National Review*, Dec. 3, 2009.

38 *The Dallas Morning News*, Feb. 12, 2010.

39 *Protecting the Force: Lessons from Fort Hood*, U.S. Department of Defense, Washington, D.C., Jan. 2010.

40 Robert Spencer, “Pentagon on Fort Hood: Jihad? What Jihad?” *Human Events*, Jan. 21, 2010.

41 *The Washington Post*, Nov. 8, 2009.

42 Associated Press, Nov. 6, 2009.

43 “Fort Hood Army Internal Review Team: Final Report,” U.S. Department of the Army, Washington, D.C., Aug. 4, 2010.

44 “Final Recommendations of the Ft. Hood Follow-on Review,” Robert M. Gates, U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Washington, D.C., Aug. 18, 2010.

45 *Fox News*, Dec. 7, 2011.

46 Associated Press, Oct. 19, 2012.

47 *Ibid.*, Dec. 3, 2012.

48 *ABC News*, Aug. 2, 2010.

49 “Quadrennial Defense Review Report 2006,” U.S. Department of Defense, Washington, D.C., Feb. 6, 2006.

50 “Quadrennial Defense Review Report 2010,” U.S. Department of Defense, Washington, D.C., Feb. 1, 2010.

51 Mark Thompson, “Anti-Islamic Hyperventilation,” *Time Magazine*, Dec. 8, 2011.

52 *CBS News*, Sept. 9, 2010.

officer in Afghanistan, issued a public appeal.⁵³ After Jones finally incinerated a Qur'an the following spring, Petraeus criticized the move as "hateful" and "intolerant."⁵⁴ Similar scenes played out in September 2012 as unrest blamed

By caving to Islamists, military leaders have encouraged jihadists to believe that victory against a cowering America is within reach.

on a video mocking Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, erupted across the Middle East. Jones did little more than express interest in the clip, but Dempsey telephoned him to request that he "consider withdrawing his support for the film."⁵⁵

Moreover, in an intriguing footnote to the sex scandal that toppled Petraeus as CIA director

in November 2012, it was revealed that he and Marine general John Allen, the current commander in Afghanistan, had asked Jill Kelley, the Florida socialite linked to the affair's exposure, to help dissuade a radio personality named Bubba the Love Sponge from "deep fat frying" a Qur'an. "I have Petraeus and Allen both e-mailing me about getting this dealt with," Kelley wrote to Tampa's mayor.⁵⁶

Also of significance is the response to the accidental burning of Qur'ans in February 2012 at a U.S. base in Afghanistan,⁵⁷ fueling retaliatory homicides of U.S. personnel by enraged Muslims.⁵⁸ Beyond Allen's apology to "the noble people of Afghanistan,"⁵⁹ the Pentagon dispatched Peter Lavoy, an acting assistant secretary of defense, to the All Dulles Area Muslim Society near Washington.⁶⁰ "It was very satisfying, very heartwarming to hear an apology

three times in one speech," said the center's imam, Mohamed Magid, who doubles as president of the Islamic Society of North America. In August 2012, six soldiers were punished for the burning even though "the investigation found that the texts were removed ... due to concerns that detainees were using books to pass messages."⁶¹

In contrast, the military unabashedly oversaw the torching of Bibles sent by an American church to a soldier stationed in Afghanistan. "The decision was made that it was a 'force protection' measure to throw them away, because, if they did get out, it could be perceived by Afghans that the U.S. government or the U.S. military was trying to convert Muslims," a Defense Department spokesman announced in 2009.⁶²

A CULTURE OF ACCOMMODATION

A full accounting of the military's myriad concessions to Islamists and its disturbing relationships with them could fill several articles, but the following examples offer some taste of their variety. In 2010, the Army rescinded an invitation to evangelist Franklin Graham to participate in the Pentagon's National Day of Prayer service, citing his comments critical of Islam.⁶³ A year later, the Defense Department gave in to CAIR's demands that high school students in the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps be allowed to wear hijabs with their uniforms.⁶⁴ In July 2012, a military judge postponed a hearing for five accused 9/11 plotters in deference to Ramadan.⁶⁵

For those on the front lines, the Army has issued, in the words of Judicial Watch, "a special handbook for soldiers that appears to justify Islamic jihad by describing it as the 'communal military defense of Islam and Muslims when

53 *CNN News*, Sept. 7, 2010.

54 *Ibid.*, Apr. 3, 2011.

55 *Politico* (Arlington, Va.), Sept. 12, 2012.

56 *Agence France-Presse*, Nov. 17, 2012.

57 *The Washington Post*, Feb. 21, 2012.

58 *Reuters*, Feb. 25, 2012.

59 *Associated Press*, Feb. 21, 2012.

60 *Ibid.*, Feb. 24, 2012.

61 *Reuters*, Aug. 27, 2012.

62 *CNN News*, May 20, 2009.

63 *Fox News*, Apr. 22, 2010.

64 *The Daily Caller*, Dec. 22, 2011.

65 *Associated Press*, July 16, 2012.

they are threatened or under attack.”⁶⁶ Servicewomen have been urged to don head scarves when interacting with Afghan locals⁶⁷ while all soldiers are warned to “respect Islam” in order to prevent violence there.⁶⁸ A draft Army manual, which faults Western cultural ignorance for helping motivate deadly “insider attacks” by Afghan forces, counsels U.S. troops not to speak about Islam, advocate the rights of women, mention homosexuality, or criticize pedophilia in the presence of their hypersensitive “allies.”⁶⁹ Furthermore, the military remains largely unperturbed by the radicalism of Muslim groups that certify chaplains,⁷⁰ and the Pentagon continues collaborating with Islamist-tinged defense contractors.⁷¹

Although such failings have worsened under President Obama’s administration, the problems predated him. It was President George W. Bush’s Pentagon that hosted al-Qaeda’s Awlaki at a post-9/11 luncheon⁷² and ousted Coughlin, the Islamic warfare scholar, after he ran afoul of a Muslim official.⁷³ During the Bush years, the U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute published what has been called an “apologia for Hamas”⁷⁴ while the drive to refrain from verbally linking terrorism to Islam can be partly traced to a pair of government documents released in 2008.⁷⁵

66 *Judicial Watch Corruption Chronicles* (Washington, D.C.), Nov. 1, 2011.

67 *The Daily Caller*, Mar. 31, 2011.

68 *Truthout* (Sacramento), Aug. 24, 2012.

69 *The Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 11, 2012.

70 *Fox News*, Dec. 1, 2010.

71 Daniel Greenfield, “The Defense Contractors of Islam,” *FrontPage Magazine*, Sept. 29, 2011.

72 *Fox News*, Oct. 20, 2010.

73 Gertz, “Inside the Ring,” *The Washington Times*, Jan. 4, 2008.

74 “U.S. Army War College Publishes Apologia for Hamas,” Investigative Project on Terrorism, Washington, D.C., Jan. 21, 2009.

75 Associated Press, Apr. 24, 2008.



Even combat training has been influenced by Islamist groups. The photo of a hijab-wearing woman aiming a gun was included at a target range at a Navy SEALs training facility. The photo was published in The Virginian-Pilot. Although the existence of female Muslim terrorists is all too real, once CAIR protested, the Navy had the target removed.

CONCLUSIONS

Whoever deserves the lion’s share of the blame—the generals, the political appointees, or the presidents who install them—the devastating impact of this PC-added approach is unmistakable.

Curbing frank discussion of jihad and the theological foundations referenced by jihadists means ignoring a central tenet of warfare since the days of Sun Tzu: Know your enemy. Indeed, one of Dooley’s slides presciently asks: “How can we properly identify the enemy, analyze his weaknesses, and defeat him, if we are NEVER permitted to examine him from the most basic doctrinal level?”⁷⁶ With regard to Islamists inside the ranks, of which Hasan is the leading example to date, counterterrorism expert Patrick Poole explains that cloaking the subject in talk of “violent

76 *The Washington Times*, Oct. 14, 2012. Emphasis in original.



The U.S. Army seems to have succumbed to PC-Islamist sensitivities. It has issued a special handbook for soldiers that appears to justify jihad as “communal military defense ... when [Muslims] are threatened or under attack.” In addition, U.S. servicewomen have been urged to don head scarves when interacting with Afghan locals while all soldiers are warned to “respect Islam” in order to prevent violence there.

extremism” and “pretending that the threat is random and unknowable gives them [officials] license to do nothing” and thus opens the door to future attacks.⁷⁷ Finally, kowtowing to Islam-

⁷⁷ Patrick Poole, “Willful Blindness: Army Unprepared for Another Jihadist Attack,” *PJ Media*, May 3, 2010.

he and other military leaders have accomplished just the opposite: They have encouraged jihadists to believe that victory against a cowering America is within reach.

⁷⁸ *The New York Sun*, Jan. 24, 2007.



Seeking a More Manly Mustache

A mustache is a symbol of power and respect in some parts of the world. Men in the Middle East are reportedly seeking out mustache transplants in order to give their facial hair a thicker and fuller appearance.

“For some men who look young and junior, they think (a mustache) is a must to look senior ... more professional and wise,” Turkish plastic surgeon Selahattin Tulunay told CNN. “They think it is prestigious.”

Tulunay says he now performs 50 to 60 mustache implants per month on patients who largely hail from the Middle East and travel to his country as “medical tourists.” Altogether, the outpatient procedure costs about \$7,000.

The mustache is a fixture of the Arab world, dating to the Ottoman Empire. And there have been recent examples of the mustache playing a role in power politics. In 2008, the *Jerusalem Post* reported that Gaza militants shaved the mustache off a Fatah rival they had abducted.

Yahoo! News, Nov. 29, 2012