"Beyond Jihad": The Islamic Contributions to the Field of Strategic Studies

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ABSTRACT

Several historical literatures in the field of Strategic Studies (Gray, 2013; Heuser, 2010; Kane, 2013) have always centered its Hellenic and ancient Oriental origins, ignoring (or negating) the contributions of other cultures (African, Islamic, etc.) to the discipline. Furthermore, in the modern era, references to the Islamic strategy of warfare have been reduced to one of its components: Jihad (Bar 2008, Zabel 2007, Spencer 2019). This is due, in part, to the recent theology of Islamic militants (Al Qaeda, for example), who have portrayed (erroneously) Jihad as the sole strategy of Islamic warfare in contemporary times. As a result, this research highlights the contributions of Islamic thoughts on Peace and Warfare. This paper aims to highlight major Islamic scientific thoughts on warfare through a historical attempt. The goal of this exercise is to correct two errors: first, to reintroduce Islamic perspectives on peace and warfare into the canon of Strategic Studies, and second, to correct the contemporary perception of Islamic warfare contributions as primarily jihadist in nature. This study employs comparative historical research methodology to describe the vast literature of Islamic strategic thoughts and events in order to demonstrate the historical shortcomings of the west's rejection or ignorance of Islam's contributions to the field of strategic thinking.

Keywords: *Grand Strategy, Islam, Jihad, Strategic Studies, Warfare.*

Over the past 200 years, theorists from many nations have made an effort to formulate guiding principles that they claim would explain to practitioners how to deploy battle power most effectively. "Principles of War" have been widely taught at military institutions and written about in field manuals and doctrine books since before World War II. It is indeed interesting to note that the development of these lists of principles has mostly followed the development of a western or European set of doctrines. Rarely mentioning the Chinese military philosopher Sun Tzu as proof that rules of war also existed outside of the western past, Western academics, military historians, and commentators have appeared to establish a monopoly on the development of strategic thought. Claims that this narrowing of attention is unbalanced because of cultural or civilized prejudice are

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without merit. Instead, it seems to result from Western scholars' and commentators' lack of familiarity with the philosophical frameworks of other cultures as well as their limited proficiency in the languages other cultures employ to express their views.

Islamic principles of war are nuanced, appear conflicting, and necessitate careful examination. The simple images of heaven espoused by radical Islamist clerics contradict 1,400 years of Islamic historiography and understanding. Osama Bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi are proficient in Islamic law and yet use it deliberately to achieve their cause of mass killing and terror. The goal of this research is to not only introduce readers to the vast Islamic principles of warfare, but also to (re)introduce these principles into the general canon of historicalizing strategic thinking. These theories are enshrined in a body of Islamic legal jurisprudence that has evolved over time. They represent pre-Islamic Arab tribes' battle techniques, early and more recent times of Muslim expansion, and clashes with Western and Eastern forces like the Mongols and Crusaders. The sacred scripture, the Quran (the Muslim book of divine revelation), and the prophetic tradition are the two most fundamental sources for Islamic law, known as *shari'ah.*

Several historical manuscripts in the field of Strategic Studies (Gray 2007; Heuser 2010; Kane 2013) have always emphasized on the Hellenic and ancient Oriental beginnings, ignoring (or rejecting) the contributions of other traditions (African, Islamic, etc.) to the discipline. Furthermore, in the modern day, references to the Islamic strategy of combat have been reduced to one of its components: Jihad (Bar 2004; Zabel 2007; Dorschner 2019). This is owing, in part, to the recent ideology of Islamic terrorists (Al Qaeda, for example), who have depicted (erroneously) Jihad as the main strategy of Islamic combat in modern times. As a result, this study highlights the contributions of Islamic ideas on peace and combat. This article aims to highlight the important Islamic books (both holy and scholarly) on combat through a historical approach. The goal of this exercise is to address two problems: first, to reinstate Islamic perspectives on peace and warfare into the canon of the discipline of Strategic Studies; and second, to correct the modern perception of Islamic warfare contributions as primarily jihadist in nature.

This research utilizes comparative historical research methodology, through which we describe the enormous literature of Islamic strategic thoughts and occurrences in order to highlight the historical failings of the western negation or ignorance of Islam's contributions to the field of strategic thoughts as we analyze the (western) historical literature in the field of strategic thoughts. In the fields of political science, international affairs, and American politics, the comparative historical research approach has a long and venerable history as a research tradition. In addition to this, it may be found in sociology, and some historians also employ it in their study. Lichbach and Zuckerman (1997) believe that comparative politics has three separate research traditions: structural, rational, and cultural. One may argue that behavioral research, rational choice institutionalism, and the development of American politics share the same broad divisions. It is more challenging to claim that this distinction is as profound as it is in political theory and international relations. Although these approaches have had an impact on a variety of subfields, their methodological mix is more complex. This paper will be divided into three main parts: (a.) Between Eurocentrism and Historical Negationism: An Overview of the Western Identity and Cultural Dominance of Strategic Studies. (b) Rewriting History: The Islamic Contributions to Strategic Studies (c) Beyond Jihad, the Various Modes of Contemporary Islamic Military Strategy.

Between Eurocentrism and Historical Negationism: An Overview of the Western Identity and Cultural Dominance of Strategic Studies

In line with general descriptions, eurocentrism is an intellectual phenomenon wherein non-Occidental societies' memoires and ethos are seen from a European point of view. Europe, particularly Western Europe, or "the West," functions as a global signifier on the assumption that

European societal norms are better to those of cultures outside of Europe (Pokhrel 2011). Notwithstanding its anti-universalist nature, Eurocentrism encourages the emulation of a Western society centered on "Western norms"—individualism, individual rights, inclusivity, democratic values, market economics, liberalism, and social inclusion as a solution to all types of problems, irrespective of the social, cultural, and historical diversity of societies. As a field of study, security studies have been driven by Western scholars discussing and developing purported explanations for international security. Historically, classical theories, such as (neo) realism, have influenced the field and dictated its essential characteristics. Owing to the nonexistence of a superior agency and in accordance with realism, states are perpetually in rivalry; therefore, security is defined on the basis of the state power, interpreted predominantly in military terms.

Nevertheless, strategic studies as a field have recently made significant progress in opposition to customary methods' parochialism. This occurs as a result of the proliferation of other interpretive approaches, such as constructivist theory. According to Acharya and Buzan, the constructivist increased focus on "ideational forces compared to the material "powerlessness" of the developing countries" (2017: 345) results in a higher awareness for their capacity to challenge Western domination. It would seem that the rejection of scientific rigor and objectivism by constructivism has laid the groundwork for global security studies, but the approach is still founded on a Eurocentric conceptual model. Consequently, security studies are evidently not universal in scope, and efforts to address this have debatably revealed the field's incapacity to surmount its Eurocentrism. It can be claimed that the efforts of experts such as those stated above have been ineffective since security studies have never had "global" objectives. As a discipline born from IR in the aftermath of the war, security studies automatically absorbed the Eurocentric slant that dominated the academic field. IR was developed by and for the West to explain and evaluate European imperialism and Western participation in the international system (Wallerstein 1997: 93). Therefore, it is not unexpected that attempts to build a universal security study within a curriculum fundamentally grounded on the identity and culture of Westerners have failed.

More so, certain historical analysts and writers of the history of strategic studies have often remained Eurocentric in their analysis and explanations of the epistemic trajectory of strategic studies. For example, Gray 2007, Heuser 2010, and Kane 2013 have all focused on the Hellenic and ancient Oriental origins of Strategic Studies, ignoring (or dismissing) the contributions of other cultures (African, Islamic, and so on) to the discipline. The Eurocentric vision portrayed by these authors is somewhat deliberate or is a result of unawareness when considering that several manuals and journal articles on Islamic warriors and warfare tactics and African military history had been published prior to their documents: Hintze 1959; Sigwalt 2003; Said 2008; Laband 1998; Milton 1983; Holt 1958. These authors have succinctly demonstrated the existence of war thoughts, strategic warfare planning, the existence of conflict and peace strategies, geostrategy, international diplomacy, international economics, and military power in African and Islamic cultures, hence debunking the glorification of Hellenism and Orientalism as the major sources and origins of strategic thought.

Eurocentrism is a concern of epistemology, not geography. The re-articulation of Eurocentrism as a system of knowledge occurs via spatio-temporal binaries that position "Europe" as a space distinct from the "non-West" and as chronologically ahead within the progressive narrative of the world. It means portraying Europe as a unique place in space that is constantly ahead of time. Hierarchies are assigned within this historical and geographical dualism to the West (logical, contemporary, and advanced) and the non-West (irrational, traditional, and undeveloped). The rationality of the liberal interpretation of history functions to sustain these spatio-temporal ladders by isolating "Europe" and assessing advancements (egalitarianism, autonomy, and human rights) as though they transpired in that area in isolation from other spaces. Non-Western strategy and methodologies have historically been absent from security studies, and this "historical absence" has

been a "constitutive practice" that has influenced (and continues to shape) the field as well as the subjects and objects of security in various regions of the world.

Rearticulations of spatio-temporal hierarchies that take Europe as an isolated space and temporally place it ahead of everyone and everything maintain Eurocentrism as a system of knowledge. These representations are facilitated by rearticulating non-West categories. Breaking down spatio-temporal barriers demands revising history by highlighting how experiences considered to have begun in Europe transpired in other locations, as well as analyzing the forms and changes of Occidental and non-Occidental subjects, as well as the chronological and rhetorical interpretation(s) of "diversity." Thus, it is imperative that we examine an epistemological assessment of the history of strategic thought through the reorganization of a perceived existing bias on the relationship between Islamic warfare and jihadism. The next section will focus on selected historical Islamic literature that has been written on many aspects of warfare. As was previously mentioned, the modern canon of the academic field of strategic studies has remained overwhelmingly Eurocentric; hence, the purpose of this activity is to reintroduce Islamic viewpoints on issues pertaining to both peace and war into that body of work.

Rewriting History: The Islamic Contributions to Strategic Studies

The common practice of commencing military studies with the Greek heavy infantry, or "hoplite phalanx," has resulted in a serious misinterpretation of the key elements of ancient military strategy. There were two separate military growth paths in the time before Alexander. The first begins in the Late Paleolithic and continues into ancient periods, passing through Egypt and Mesopotamia, until coming to a close with the Assyrian and Persian empires. Another starts with the formation of the hoplite phalanx in Greece circa 700 BC, a time when Greece was cut off from advancements in the Near East (Ferrill 1986). These two lineages developed separately for 200 years before beginning to cautiously converge throughout the Persian Wars in the beginning of the fifth century. Persia taught Athens a great deal on the employment of horsemen, spearmen, and light soldiers, and Greece taught Persia a lot about the deployment of heavy ground forces, until at long last the finest elements of both civilizations were combined and advanced military strategy and maneuvers to a level that generals down to the time of Napoleon rarely attained and much less frequently exceeded.

Despite the fact that so many war analysts have devoted far more emphasis to battle in the antique East compared to the origins of conflict in ancient civilizations, warfare in Mesopotamia, Anatolia, the Levant as well as Ancient Egypt is still largely disregarded. Undoubtedly, the evidence, especially the textual scientific proof, is scant. The scientific productions that have been produced are mostly based on archaeological remains and stress improvements in fortification and weaponry technology exposed by the archaeologist's spade (Yadin 1963; Oakeshott 1960). This disregard for the dynamics and war tactics of ancient Near Eastern combat in favor of hi-tech advancements has led to a misunderstanding of the primary characteristics of ancient military strategy and the evolution of Islamic strategic studies. Traditional Oriental tactics allowed the conquering of imperial powers and the transportation of troops over vast distances for ages. The Greeks advanced in theory, poetry, artwork, and governance throughout 700 to 500 B.C., nevertheless they were weak to master ground combat (Ferrill 1986).

The Islamic contributions to Strategic Studies can be found in various forms, including historical examples of military strategy, theoretical works on war and peace, and contemporary discussions on the use of force in the Islamic world. One of the most important historical instances of Islamic military strategy can be found in the early Islamic conquests. During this time, Muslim forces were able to rapidly expand the territory that was ruled by Islam. This is one of the most noteworthy examples of Islamic military strategy. This achievement can be attributed, in part, to the utilization of creative strategies and the construction of a decentralized command structure, which made it

possible for quick and decisive action to be taken. Religious principles, such as the concept of jihad, which acted as a unifying factor among the soldiers and offered a moral framework for their acts, were also given a significant amount of weight in the early Islamic military. This was done by placing a great focus on their importance. Nevertheless, jihad is not the primary foundation of the doctrines that guide Islamic armed conflict.

In the realm of theoretical writings, the Islamic tradition has generated a substantial body of work on topics pertaining to both war and peace. *Kitab al-Siyar*, also known as the *Book of Conduct*, was written by the Muslim jurist al-Mawardi in the 14th century and is considered to be one of the most prominent works in this area. This research presents a detailed study of the laws and principles that govern the use of force in Islamic law. These rules and principles include the conditions under which war is legal as well as the rights and obligations of the parties involved in the conflict. Al-Mawardi addressed the issues of military strategy and tactics. He believed that military power was necessary for maintaining order and stability, and that the ruler should have a strong military force to protect the state from external threats. He discussed the principles of war, including the importance of intelligence, diplomacy, and logistics, and emphasized the importance of strategy in determining the outcome of a conflict (Al-Mawardi 2018).

Other books, among them the *Risalat al-Huquq* (Treatise on Rights), written by the philosopher and theologian al-Ghazali in the 12th century, have also made significant contributions to the development of Islamic just war theory. Al- Ghazali's work on *maqasid al-shari'ah*, Islamic law's overall purposes, is important to Islamic strategic studies. Al-Ghazali was the first Muslim scholar to thoroughly explain this idea, emphasizing the significance of balancing the letter and spirit of Islamic law (Auda 2008). He claimed that Islamic law's ultimate goal is human well-being and spiritual, moral, and intellectual development. Islamic strategic studies benefit from al-work Ghazali's on ijtihad, Islamic logic and interpretation. Al-Ghazali emphasised the need of ijtihad in adapting Islamic law to new situations and circumstances. He believed ijtihad was essential to Islamic thought and part of the Islamic tradition of critical inquiry and meditation.

In more recent times, Islamic countries have been forced to deal with a variety of different types of conflict, including civil wars, international interventions, and asymmetric warfare. As a direct consequence of this, there has been a resurgence in interest in comprehending the Islamic viewpoint on the employment of physical power, in particular with regard to modern day threats to national security. Scholars and policymakers have begun to investigate how Islamic teachings and ideas, such as the principle of non-aggression, might be able to assist them in conceiving of better, more moral ways to deal with these issues (Ledrach 1996; Smock 2005; Fuller 2019 and Abu-Nimeh 2020).

Beyond Jihad: The Various Modes of Contemporary Islamic Military Strategy

An impartial and honest analysis of Islam's war historiography (according to history's methods and principles) would disprove the occidental belief that Islam is more violent and tolerant of excessive or arbitrary violence than other major religions. It will demonstrate that the Islamic rules and principles of war have limited violence, restrained wrongdoing, and ensured that conflict has been conducted in accordance with guiding principles remarkably analogous to those set up in Occidental "just war" doctrines. And far from endorsing the views of Jihadists or Islamists that all Muslims who desire political or social change should resort to violence, an authentic and thorough account of Islamic war history would illustrate that no person, no matter how angry, has ever had the right to use violence.

Based on the Qur'an, the Prophet's example and sayings, and Ab Bakr's counsel, the earliest jurists and theologians formulated Islam's philosophy and war laws. Early writers included Mu'ammad al-Shaybani (749-805 CE), Mu'ammad ibn Jarir al-Habari (839-923), Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad al-Samarri (972-1058), Taqi ad-Din Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328), and `Abd al-

Rahman ibn Khaldun (1332-1406). All of these philosophers believed that war is a collective endeavor, not an individual one. It is only justified when fought at the command of a lawful authority (the caliph or ruler) and for self-defense, removal of an imminent threat, or redressing a grave wrong. Under some conditions, offensive warfare may be used to expand the state, but soldiers are strictly regulated. No Islamic intellectual or legal doctrine or ruling supports war for aggressive or exploitative reasons, the targeting of noncombatants, or the repression of non-Muslims in Muslim nations. Whether one teaches Islamic military history's historical events, regulations, and theology, or both, it's a positive story. Teaching and writing about it is the best way to disprove the claim that Islamic history was exceptionally violent or conceptually more indulgent of violence than other civilizations. It also disproves the Jihadist idea that every Muslim can fight a jihad based on personal grievance or injustice.

With this in mind, there is something inherently beneficial about understanding how one's own civilization's norms, traditions, ideas, and practices have evolved, and one can only see merit in Muslims defending the reputation of the Islamic umma when it has been tarnished by Islamists, Jihadists, and terrorists, as well as the inaccurate but popular writings of those who misinterpret Islam (Spencer 2003; 2014; 2019; Pipes 2003; Rubenstein 2011; Calvert 2018; Hohmann 2017; Pryce-Jones, 2009; Bar 2008; Zabel 2007; Kapur 2017), causing significant harm to the reputation of a civilization that now accounts for a quarter of the world Presenting the history of Islam accurately and unapologetically — including its vibrant military history — not only exposes the behavior of Islamists, Jihadists, and terrorists as aberrant and non-representative of that history, but it also strengthens Muslims' civilizational self-esteem, sense of belonging to something positive in the world, and solidarity with others who share the same connection to Islam. Within Islam, there is a strong sense of solidarity, unity, and community. "The believer is to the believer like sections of a house, each one supporting the other," the Prophet declared (Book 1, hadith 1928).

The intellectual and cultural legacy of the Islamic tradition is incredibly rich, and Islamic contributions to Strategic Studies reflect this richness via their variety and diversity. The Islamic perspective continues to give unique insights and perspectives on the complex difficulties that are confronting the globe today, such as historical examples of military strategy, theoretical works on war and peace, and contemporary dialogues on the use of force. Islamic strategic studies today has moved beyond jihadism. It connotes an interdisciplinary field of study that examines the political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of Islamic civilizations and their impact on international relations. Due to the ongoing worldwide conflict and the increasing engagement of Muslim nations in international events, the field has attracted a great deal of attention in the modern era.

Contemporary Islamic strategic studies now encompass a broader range of themes, including global governance, economic globalization, and religion's influence in politics. This course focuses on the impact of global events on the Muslim world and how these events have shaped the discourse and strategic outlook of Islamic cultures. The study also investigates the impact of economic globalization on the Islamic world and how it has influenced the emergence of Islam-based economic systems and Islamic finance. Another important aspect of contemporary Islamic strategic studies is the role of religion in politics. This study is important as religion has played a critical role in shaping the political landscape of the Muslim world. The rise of religious-based political movements, such as political Islam, has challenged the traditional political structures of Muslim countries and has had significant implications for regional and international security. The study of the role of religion in politics also sheds light on the relationship between the Islamic world and the West and how this relationship has been shaped by cultural and political differences.

Furthermore, the study of Islamic strategic studies also encompasses the analysis of the Muslim world's relations with other regions, including Europe, the Americas, and Asia. The study is critical in understanding the interconnections between the Muslim world and the rest of the world and how these interconnections have influenced global politics and international relations. The study is also

significant in understanding the role of Muslim countries in regional and global conflicts and the impact of these conflicts on the political, social, and economic development of the Islamic world. Contemporary Islamic strategic studies are a dynamic and evolving field that seeks to understand the impact of global events on the Muslim world and the role of Islam in shaping international relations. The study is critical in providing a comprehensive understanding of the interconnections between the Islamic world and the rest of the world and in understanding the challenges facing the Muslim world in the 21st century. The field provides a platform for experts from different disciplines to collaborate and engage in meaningful discussions and debates on the most pressing issues facing the Islamic world.

The growth of extremist ideologies, such as Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, is one of the major concerns facing the Islamic world today (ISIS). These groups have taken advantage of the region's political and economic instability to advance their violent and extremist goals, resulting in widespread violence and instability. With limited effectiveness, many countries in the Islamic world have chosen a counter-terrorism strategy that emphasizes military and intelligence operations. Contemporary Islamic strategic studies emphasize the need for a multifaceted approach that includes not just military and intelligence operations, but also diplomacy, economic growth, and cultural engagement, in order to effectively combat extremism. This approach acknowledges that the fundamental causes of extremism are frequently political, economic, and societal in origin, necessitating a broader, more comprehensive strategy that targets these root problems.

In addition to focusing on extremism, contemporary Islamic strategic studies also examine issues such as economic development, political instability, and resource scarcity that affect the Islamic world. These obstacles are interconnected, necessitating a strategic approach that considers the interdependencies between these diverse components. For instance, political instability and a lack of economic development frequently contribute to extremism, necessitating a policy that targets both political stability and economic development.

Another important aspect of contemporary Islamic strategic studies is the analysis of the role of the Islamic world in the global strategic landscape. The Islamic world is home to a number of significant powers, such as Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia, which have the potential to play a significant role in shaping global politics and economics. However, the Islamic world is also facing a number of internal and external challenges, such as political instability, economic underdevelopment, and competition with other major powers, that limit its ability to exert its influence on the global stage. Contemporary Islamic strategic studies is a critical field of study that recognizes the importance of understanding the current strategic landscape of the Islamic world and the challenges facing it. By adopting a multi-pronged approach that encompasses not only military and intelligence operations but also other strategic tools, such as diplomacy, economic development, and cultural engagement, this field offers a comprehensive and coherent strategy for addressing the challenges facing the Islamic world today.

To conclude, the field of Strategic Studies has long ignored the contributions of other civilizations, including African and Islamic cultures, in favor of its Greek and ancient Oriental foundations. This strategy has led to a limited comprehension of strategic philosophy and warfare. It is vital to decolonize Strategic Studies by adopting a broader viewpoint that encompasses varied voices and experiences in order to reach a more thorough understanding. This paper argues for the decolonization of Strategic Studies by examining the strategic ideas of a number of non-euro-oriental cultures. The purpose of this research is to broaden the discourse on strategy and tactics by recognizing the breadth and diversity of thought that has emerged from other cultures. To do this, a comparative historical research methodology is utilized to sift through the vast literature of distinct cultural strategic concepts and events. The purpose of the study is to demonstrate the historical inadequacy of the West's rejection or disrespect of the contributions of other civilizations to the field of strategic studies. This study's major purpose is to broaden the discussion on strategy and tactics by acknowledging and valuing divergent perspectives. Decolonizing strategic theory demands a

thorough reevaluation of how non-Western civilizations conceive and use combat, including weapon systems, defense mechanisms, and military science. There are three key sections in this study. Focusing on eurocentrism and historical negationism, the first section provides a critical study of historical works in the subject of Strategic Studies. The second section highlights underappreciated African and Islamic contributions to Strategic Studies and reviews the historical development of their strategic ideas. Outside Hellenism, the third section explores the many approaches of contemporary non-Western military strategy. This study's theoretical framework is informed by a critical perspective that tries to question strategic studies' dominating Eurocentric narratives. As such, it acknowledges that the traditional approach to strategic studies has mainly ignored or disregarded the contributions of non-euro-oriental civilizations. By adopting a comparative historical research technique, this study illustrates the historical shortcomings of this conventional approach and highlights the significance of embracing multiple perspectives and experiences. Through an investigation of historical works in the area, this study identified gaps in the existing literature and filled them with a more comprehensive and diverse knowledge of strategic thought and warfare.

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