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# Mohammad's recipe for conquest

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Although the following is based on the best historical scholarship, it selects political-cultural features that are, to Western eyes, unfavorable to Islam.

## Mohammad's legacy

Mohammad (ca. 570 AD – 632 AD) is often thought of as the prophet that revealed Islam. His ministry is one directed at conquest, which places him more properly in the company of Genghis Khan, Alexander the Great, Tamerlane, Cyrus the Great and Attila. While the extent of the land conquered in his lifetime was small in comparison, he provided the motivation and vision for an empire of incredible duration. It only began to seriously contract after the defeat of the Caliph's army at Vienna on September 11, 1683.

His legacy has come back to haunt us 1,369 years after his death with his followers killing 3,000 Americans in an operation with a kill ratio of 160:1. Certainly Mohammad would have been proud and would have invoked Allah's blessing on the 19 martyrs. He would assure one-and-all of their immediate ascent to the highest level of heaven.

Islam reveres its history. Osama bin Laden selected September 11 for his dramatic announcement that Jihad was to resume quite appropriately on 318th anniversary of the Jihadists last high point.

### **What qualities once again revive this nearly 1400-year old recipe for conquest and set it out again on it's path toward world domination?**

Mohammad's legacy is strong and resilient, and has its foundation in the Islamic scripture. The focus of this essay is on the political aspect of Islamic scripture that drives relations with non-Muslims; not those parts devoted to ritual and rules for living.

## Islamic scripture

The Islamic scripture consists of the **Koran**, the **Sira**, and the **Hadiths**.

Mohammad recited the **Koran**, the direct word of God as revealed to him by the angel, Gabriel, from memory. It was revealed in Arabic orally and there is doubt Mohammad was literate. A written form of the Arabic language was just being developed in the area now known as Syria at the time of Mohammad. It was compiled into a book over many years. It consists of 114 chapters (sirahs) arranged in order of decreasing length (except the first). Neither chronology or topic organization was used.

The *Sirat Rasul Allah* is the first biography (**sira**) of Mohammad written 120 years after Mohammad's death. Although all recognize Mohammad as a man, Muslims consider him an example of perfect life as God wants us to live it. Since the Koran provides little direct guidance, his biography has become an essential part of the Islamic scripture.

The third part of Islamic scripture is the sayings of Mohammad (**Hadiths**). These also are essential in setting the daily goals and aspirations for all Muslims. These were reported by associates of Mohammad and their descendants and were compiled more than a hundred years after his death. Four major compilations exist, and although they have many similarities, have been essentially frozen since 920 AD.

Mohammad's final revelation from God does not depend on any other person for it's content.

The 5 essential **pillars of Islam** may be paraphrased as:

- 1) There is no god but Allah and Mohammed is his messenger.
  - 2) One should pray 5 times per day.
  - 3) One should give alms.
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4) One should fast. Especially during Ramadan.

5) One should make a pilgrimage to Mecca.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> items are conditional on the believer's ability and situation.

For political Islam there is a very important duty called **Jihad** that is often called the 6<sup>th</sup> pillar of Islam. This is heretical to mainstream Sunni Muslims, however it is considered by the fundamentalists to be an essential duty.

Jihad is often defined as personal struggle, but the bulk of Islamic scripture makes it clear it's most important political meaning is war on non-believers for profit, slaves, and to expand Islam.

Mohammad spent most of his ministry promoting and participating in Jihad. He left detailed instructions for overall strategy, the use of terror, deception, sharing of booty including captives/slaves, and who among the conquered peoples should be killed and who should be spared to act as serfs for the Muslims.

Jihad and terror have been essential elements of Islam since the beginning.

After all Mohammad said (Bukhari, V. 4, Bk 52, N. 220): "I have been made victorious through terror."

## Essential elements of political Islam

I have selected 13 features of Islam that can, at certain periods of history, cause severe problems for non-Muslims and moderate Muslims. These interlock to provide a highly motivated and expanding army with a significant, unending, and divinely mandated goal.

They include:

- 1. Raiding, slaughter, and taking slaves from among non-Muslims encouraged.** After reaching Medina, Mohammed organized raiding parties to steal valuable goods from caravans returning to Mecca from the North. He used these goods and those kidnapped for ransom to support his adherents and expand his army. He introduced trenches and very deceptive mounted attacks into Arabian warfare. Since his troops preferred slaves or captives to dead enemies, Mohammad emphasized the wish of Allah to kill most enemies. This helped Mohammad spread fear through terror.
- 2. Expansion of Islamic dominance by force of arms.** Unlike the other monotheistic religions, Islamic scripture strongly encourages expansion of Islam by force of arms. This is only indirectly to convert the subject people, but primarily to provide booty, slaves and a subservient class for the dominant Muslims. In theory anyone could join the dominant class by professing that "There is no god but Allah and Mohammad is his messenger." In practice this was not always permitted as the substantially higher taxes paid by the subject people (Dhimmis) was an essential element in the state's support.
- 3. Direct access to the highest level of heaven for those killed during Jihad.** Mohammad promised direct access to the 100<sup>th</sup> level of heaven for those killed while seeking the expansion of Islamic dominance. This would absolve them of all past sins and would elevate them above the most devout adherents of the Islamic religion who had not died in Jihad. Those not killed were promised booty, slaves and dominance over unbelievers.
- 4. Short truces approved.** When further fighting would weaken the cause of Islam truces with the

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enemy can be negotiated. Most scholars say that these truces should not last beyond 10 years. Following Mohammad's example they are to be broken as soon as the Muslims have gained sufficient strength to continue Jihad.

- 5. Hopeless warfare not approved.** Warring against unbelievers is not an obligation if there is no reasonable possibility of success. Within its very heavy demands for individual sacrifice in Jihad, Islam has this very practical streak that there must exist some possible benefit to Islam before Jihad is undertaken. This may have been the reason Jihad fell into disuse for the last couple centuries when Islamic countries fell so far behind their Western counterparts as to make warfare pointless.
- 6. No time or area limits to Jihad.** The Jews and Christians have authorized religious war at various times and places for specific objectives. Mohammed promoted a strategy of unending war for the expansion of Islam over the whole human race with no limit on its duration.
- 7. Lying in the cause of Islam approved.** Mohammad specifically advocated deception and lying if it would be beneficial to him or Islam. He used this to assassinate several who criticized his new religion. Islam contains in its fundamental scripture injunctions to tell lies if doing so will advance the power of Islam.  
  
This approved lying causes a real difficulty in identifying who supports the Islamic terrorists and who does not. Distinguishing a moderate Muslim from a fundamentalist may only be done only after long acquaintance and then only with some degree of uncertainty since Islamic adherents can be excused almost any infraction if its ultimate goal is favorable to the position of Islam.
- 8. Areas of peace are under Islamic control.** We often hear that Islam is the "Religion of Peace." This is deceptive since peace is prescribed only for those areas under Islamic control. Areas controlled by non-Muslims are defined as the region of war. Areas controlled

by Muslims require special taxes on non-Muslims and treat them as very inferior, but exempt them from military service.

- 9. Intolerance of other beliefs or Islamic moderates.** Mohammad initially prescribed limited tolerance for Jews and Christians providing they remained sufficiently subservient to the Muslims and paid extra taxes. Zoroastrians were later extended this form of tolerance. As his ministry progressed he rescinded this tolerance for those in Arabia. Although Mohammad was born in a town famous for tolerating many religions or multiple religions, he personally criticized (and later killed) any who did not subscribe to his claims. He founded a faith well known for its unyielding intolerance of any dissent.
- 10. Isolation from other faiths.** Fundamental Islam encourages separation from people of other faiths. Necessity rules, as is often the case in Islam, but Mohammad recommends contact only be through the Muslim leadership.
- 11. Apostates killed.** Those who become Islamic or are born into Islamic families and leave Islam are to be killed. This special form of intolerance allows the fundamentalists to kill other Muslims they deem insufficiently religious with God's sanction. To leave Islam is to live under a lifelong death threat. Therefore only the most brave let their religious disaffection become known. Coupled with bans on proselytizing by other religions this helps keep Muslims in ignorance of alternative religions.
- 12. Rigid segregation of the sexes.** Although Mohammad only prescribed veils for the women his own household, his rules for the treatment of women emphasized their inferior status. They received one-half the inheritance of the men, their testimony was given half as much weight, and Muslim women's rank was below that of male Muslims and below male Muslim slaves. Divorce by a man requires only that he announce the divorce three times while for women the procedure is so difficult as to be impossible without the man's consent. Most critical is the provision for men to take up to 4 wives, and

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marry additional “temporary wives” while out on campaign. This creates lots of progeny while freeing up many males for warfare. It also works to create a family structure that by Western standards is dysfunctional.

**13. Unchanging beliefs written by God.** Unlike other faiths whose scripture is written by men as an interpretation of what they saw or prophesied, the Koran claims to be a transcript of the actual words of God and is a copy of an unchanging book in heaven. Thus it is only subject to interpretation and cannot be treated as metaphorical. The Koran, sequenced with the help of the Sira and made topical with the help of the Hadiths provides much more detailed guidance than either the Torah or the New Testament. This leads to some interesting scholarship since the Koran contains a number of contradictions in the Aristotelian sense. Resolving contradictions helps make Muslim jurists the most honored members of the community. It has also led to the Doctrine of Abrogation where later revelations cancel others. This creates a fascinating conflict within the “unchanging book in heaven.”

Mohammad reported the selected 13 features of Islam gradually over about a decade. To an external observer they sound like adjustments to a plan to insure absolute obedience to Mohammad and to gradually expand the Islamic domain.

## Interlocking features

The final result is an extremely ingenious plan for recruiting, motivating, rewarding, and directing conquering armies. Although Mohammad did not appoint a successor his strategy goes forward without its charismatic founder to this day.

Though described separately, the power of the major features of political Islam comes from their interlocking long-term nature.

**Building armies.** Allowing multiple wives insures a plentiful supply of progeny. Males are frustrated and lacking the usual male role. With the promise that dying in jihad can guarantee access to a

sensual heaven or slaves, concubines and wealth, some become easy recruits.

**Staying the course.** Islam is remarkable in its ability to retain its orientation toward conquest for fourteen centuries. Its stipulation that the Koran is the last prophecy, the direct word of God, and the government is part of the creed. The isolation from other beliefs, the intolerance, and the killing of apostates make sure most of its adherents know no other possible life.

**Motivation.** The promise of booty and slaves, or 72 virgins in the highest level of heaven plus the honor and support of the community provides positive motivation. Mohammad’s description of the hell designed for non-believers and shirkers was truly horrific. Adherents could be killed if they admitted unbelief.

**The vision.** Muslims envision an earthly society at peace, where non-Muslims are theirs to command either as slaves or Dhimmi. Dhimmi will enable all Jihadists who survive a wealthy life as their reward from Allah. When they die in jihad their future in paradise is guaranteed. Even their participation ensures a much better chance.

Taken as a whole, Mohammad’s commands produce a survivable, strongly motivated, powerful, self-perpetuating force that is isolated from contradictory thought and directed toward eventual domination of the entire planet. Believers are able to ignore normal human standards for the treatment of other people if the result might advance the dominance of Islam.

There have been 13 hundred years of Islamic scholarship but no significant alteration of Mohammad’s formula for conquest. He definitely needs to be considered one of the most successful practitioners of military conquest.

Move over Genghis Khan, Alexander the Great, Tamerlane, Cyrus the Great and Attila; the legacy of Mohammad has outdone all of you.