

[Losing the War against Jihadism](#)

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By Jacob Thomas

On Memorial Day weekend, Newt Gingrich and William R. Forstchen spoke on C-Span2 about their book "*Days of Infamy.*" They gave a riveting account of how the Japanese planned and executed their attack on Pearl Harbor, on 7 December, 1941. That day is known in America as the "*Day of Infamy.*"

Another day in American history deserves the same designation. I refer to *11 September, 2001*, when Islamic Jihadists attacked the United States causing the death of thousands of innocent civilians in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania.

Many changes have taken place in our lives as the result of that attack. The most noticeable one is experienced daily in American airports where long lines of passengers have to be thoroughly searched, and all prohibited items confiscated by agents of DHS "The Department of Homeland Security." We are thankful that no similar attack has taken place since that fateful day in 2001. However, we cannot but be puzzled by the directives of this federal agency that were issued recently regarding the appropriate and inappropriate vocabulary that may be used in reference to Islamic Jihadists. This official "advice" was highlighted in an op-ed article by Bret Stephens in the Wall Street Journal of Tuesday, 27 May, 2008. Its headline was: "*Homeland Security Newspeak.*"

Here are some excerpts.

"The Department of Homeland Security thinks it's a bad idea to use the word 'liberty' when describing America's foreign policy goals. Nor does it much like the terms 'Islamist' and 'jihadist.' Heaven forbid the federal government cause needless offense in the current war against, well, whoever.

"Such are the recommendations on 'Terminology to Define Terrorists,' a nine-page, 'Official Use Only' memo issued in January by Homeland Security's Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. It purports to represent the suggestions of a 'wide variety' of unnamed American Muslim leaders consulted on the subject. And while it is not a statement of official policy, it neatly captures the sophisticated government thinking about its rhetorical strategies for what used to be called the 'Global War on Terror.' Now, thanks to the DHS brain trust, we are offered a 'Global Struggle for Security and Progress.'

"In '1984,' George Orwell famously created *Newspeak*, 'the only language in the world whose vocabulary gets smaller every year.'

"In the new dispensation, much of which has reportedly been adopted by the State

Department, using the word Islamic is out because it potentially '[concedes] the terrorists' claims that they are legitimate adherents of Islam.' Use of the word jihad is said to 'glamorize terrorism.' Islamist – a neutral and broadly accepted term for those who espouse Islam as a political system – is frowned upon because 'the general public ... may not appreciate the academic distinction between Islamism and Islam.' Using the word Salafism, the religious variant of Islam espoused by al Qaeda, may have the unfortunate effect of demonizing those Salafists who aren't violent.

"Last October, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff was a guest of honor at a Ramadan event at which, according to one participant, he was publicly thanked by the president of the Islamic Society of North America for 'keeping the doors open so we can advise you on how to engage the Muslim world.'

"For the record, the ISNA was named an unindicted co-conspirator in the case of the Holy Land Foundation, a U.S.-based charity alleged to have had ties with Hamas. Imagine if the Kennedy administration had consulted with the Workers World Party on strategies to contain the Soviet Union, and you get a sense of what Homeland Security is doing today.

"No doubt the government really does need better terminology to describe the war we're in, which is against violent Islamic extremists and every regime, warlord, charity, school or imam supporting them. No doubt, too, we need the support of every Muslim we can rally to our side. Those many millions who do not shrink from the word 'liberty' might just fit the bill."

Thus far, my quotations from The WSJ. I recommend that the entire article by Bret Stephens, be read for its excellent description of the mindlessness exhibited by a governmental agency that purports to lead the fight against the Islamists' aggressive plans to attack us! The URL for the article is: online.wsj.com

When I finished reading *Homeland Security Newspeak*, I was aghast! I couldn't believe the recommendations of a federal department that was assigned by the Congress of the United States, to be responsible for the security of the land! The jargon preferred by the DHS tended to conceal rather than reveal the truth about Islamic terrorism. It is my strong conviction that God has given us, human beings, the gift of speech in order to *reveal* the truth, and not to *conceal* it. "*Newspeak*" falsifies reality and truthfulness. It is the mark of totalitarian regimes, and not of democracies.

Furthermore, the directives of the DHS manifest an abysmal ignorance of Islam, its history, and its religious-political ideology. Islam is unique among the major world religions. It's unlike Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Christianity, and Judaism. **Islam combines religion with politics in one indivisible entity.** This a fact firmly embedded in Islamic history.

The founder of Islam preached the Unity of Allah and the vanity of idols between 610 and 622 A. D., in his hometown, Mecca. He gained a few followers. After he migrated to

Medina in 622, he became both a “Prophet and Statesman.” He led his small army in several raids against the Meccan caravans. He expropriated the Jewish inhabitants of a nearby oasis, killing the men, and enslaving the women and their children. Whereas the revelations that “descended” in Mecca tended to be almost uniquely religious and ethical, the ones that came down in Medina between 622 and 632 (the year of his death) dealt with war and peace, civil laws, economics, and rules that govern the relations between believers (Muslims) and unbelievers.

After Muhammad’s passing, his successors, the Caliphs inherited his political mantle only. They began the *futuh* (conquests) of the world. And by 732, the nascent Islamic Empire stretched from Spain to Western India! The Umayyad Caliphate (661-750,) was renowned for its expansionist policy, and may be regarded as the continuation, on a global scale, of the raids undertaken by Muhammad against his foes in Arabia. This imperialist impulse or motif of Islam was carried further by the Ottoman Turks. After their conquest of the heartland of the Byzantine Empire, they gave it a death blow in 1453, with their conquest of Constantinople, now to be known as Istanbul! In 1529, the Ottomans laid their first siege to Vienna, repeating that almost a century and a half later. The failure to capture Vienna marks the beginning of the decline of this last Islamic Empire.

In relating briefly the history of Islamic imperialism, I have tried to show that the cessation of Islamic expansionism was due to Islam’s inability to engage in new *futuh*. This became apparent after the fall and dissolution of the Ottoman Caliphate in the aftermath of WWI. However, for the purists or *Salafists* in Islam, conquests must go on, if not by means of conventional wars, they can still take place by terrorist “raids” on the lands of the Infidels.

The recommendations of the Department of Homeland Security, vis-à-vis the proper nomenclature to be used when referring to Islamic terrorists or jihadists, are actually ludicrous. The very term “*Islamic Terrorism*” (*Al-Irhab al-Islami*) is actually used in the Arab press. For example, the online daily, Elaph.com devoted three articles on *Islamic Irhab* on 22, 23, and 25 July 2007. In concluding his third article on this topic, the writer asked: “*Having dealt with the subject [of Irhab in the Islamic World] in the first two articles, may we conclude that this phenomenon does not receive popular support within Islamic societies? Definitely not! The opposite is true; for this is exactly why Irhab has enjoyed a great degree of continuity, in spite of the efforts to contain it, in the majority of the countries of the world.*”

A note of explanation is needed regarding the popularity and impact of this Internet medium throughout the Arab world. *Elaph* began publishing its online daily on 21 May 2001; on December 2006, the Audit Bureau of Circulation certified that *Elaph’s* web traffic “showed 665,849 unique users and 12,332,686 page views in that month. *Elaph’s* uniqueness was also apparent in the even spread of its readers among Arab countries and as well as Europe and North America.”

In my daily visit to the *Elaph* website, I glance at the variety of articles and reports, and

especially note the responses received as “Letters to the Editor.” It is astonishing to discover the variety of readers, and their comments on the articles! I must confess that, as far as I remember, there were no outcries, or objections, when the term “*Al-Irhab al-Islami*” was used. *Elaph* is not the unique online source of enlightened Arab thought. I have already mentioned in my previous contributions to FaithFreedom website, the Kuwaiti website, kwtanweer.com

(*Tanweer* is an Arabic term for enlightenment) This scholarly Internet journal has published forthright and objective articles dealing with the subject of Islamic ***Jihadism and Irhab***. Here are some titles that indicate no reticence whatsoever in the use of a terminology that is being frowned upon and regarded as taboo by the DHS. “***The Psychology of Irhab***,” 9 February, 2007; “***The Politics of Salafism***;” “***Religious Education and its Relation to Irhab***,” 20 April 2006; “***The Caliphate: An Impossible Dream***,” 2 September 2007. All these articles, written by a variety of Arab intellectuals who subscribe to the ideals of democracy, freedom, and modernity; use a vocabulary that describes accurately and fearlessly, the dangerous worldview that dominates some large segments of Arab society. So, why should we, in the land of The Bill of Rights, have to be “advised” of our Department of Homeland Security or the Department of State to be cautious about the use of words that reveal the truth about Islamist ideology? And why do we consult some unnamed Muslim “leaders” in the USA, or such organizations like ISNA (Islamic Society of North America) or CAIR (The Council on American-Islamic Relations?)

Our brave men and women are engaged in a heroic fight against Jihadism in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many of them have already laid down their lives in the cause of resisting the attempts of ***Salafists*** and ***Jihadists*** to destroy the free world, and create another global ***caliphate***. We betray them and their loved ones at home, when we bind ourselves by political correctness, and fail to speak the truth about a mortal danger. If courageous and liberal voices in the Arab world are not afraid to describe the dangers coming out of radical Islam, and when they write articles and essays on the subject, we, in the free world, betray them by refraining to call a spade a spade. And just as the war in Vietnam was lost in the USA, so also our war in the Middle East will be lost in the home front, if we indulge in “***Newspeak***” rather than boldly speaking of the global ***Islamist Jihad***.

In closing, I wonder about the reports of the press-attaches in our embassies in Cairo, Damascus, Riyadh, Beirut, Amman, Kuwait, the Gulf, and other capitals in the Arab world! Do they visit the uncensored websites of ***Elaph***, ***Tanweer***, and other Arab Internet sources that tell the truth about the challenges of radical Islam? If they do, they better enlighten the high echelons of the State Department, and plead with them, not to advise the young Department of Homeland Security to resort to vapid and meaningless terms when speaking of the ***Islamic Irhab***. We can win the war against Jihadism, by telling the truth about its global threat, and by joining our voices to those valiant Arab intellectuals who are not afraid to openly and boldly speak about this menace to their homelands, and to the rest of the world.