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**NAVAL  
POSTGRADUATE  
SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

**THESIS**

**YOUR FAITH, MY FEAR: COUNTERING CONSENT TO  
COSMIC POSITIONING**

by

Julie Nations

March 2012

Thesis Co-Advisors:

David Brannan  
Anders Strindberg

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**YOUR FAITH, MY FEAR: COUNTERING CONSENT TO COSMIC  
POSITIONING**

Julie Nations  
Grants Manager, Memphis Police Department

B.S., Arkansas State University, 1990

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES  
(HOMELAND SECURITY AND DEFENSE)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
March 2012**

Author: Julie Nations

Approved by: David Brannan  
Thesis Co-Advisor

Anders Strindberg  
Thesis Co-Advisor

Daniel Moran  
Chair, Department of National Security Affairs

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## **ABSTRACT**

Addressing American fear of discourse on faith, as indicated through evolving American faith narratives, is essential in effectively countering modern day terrorism and to sustaining and securing the republic founded upon unique and enduring democratic principles. This research explores American faith narratives and subsequent relevance to cosmic war, the consequences of American reactions and perceptions to religious extremism, and the prospect, parameters, and purpose of inclusive faith discourse in the public square. Reactions and realities explored herein are framed through (1) American history of faith in the public square; (2) theoretical world views—how we know the enemy and know ourselves through Social Identity Theory and Positioning Theory, and (3) fear of unknown or uncomfortable concepts related to faith as evidenced through storylines inherent in American faith narratives. Influencing the global perception of America involves imagining the possibilities to ensure that future generations are afforded the American tradition of opportunity and freedom. This involves aggressively initiating public discourse on faith based upon securing diverse religious freedoms and beliefs and democratic principles in such a way that American faith narratives position the United States as a positive global and social influence, thereby impacting the global terrorists' threat.



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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

*Addressing American fear of discourse on faith, as indicated through evolving American faith narratives, is essential in effectively countering modern day terrorism and to sustaining and securing the republic founded upon unique and enduring democratic principles.*

The secularism thesis had it right for a time, but that time is past (Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, & Lindsay, 2004). Or, one may consider that the secularism thesis was simply misguided; and as Juergensmeyer (2010:1) comments, that it is “falling apart.” Whether it is true (Toft, Philpott, & Shah, 2011) that this is “God’s Century” with a grand thesis evidenced in the modern day resurgence of religion is yet to be determined. However, if it is true and (Aslan, 2009) America’s reaction to 11 September 2001 was to counter cosmic rhetoric and action with like rhetoric and action, then how America frames its faith narrative is an urgent issue and not confined to the private lives of individuals or groups, but the influence of American faith narratives is now center stage in the public arena with global implications. It is evident that current American faith narratives are subject to more rapid development due to globalization and the advent of communications technology and, therefore, no longer confined to philosophical time frames of old or to ivory towers. Interestingly, this resurging influence is anything but simplistic. As Moghaddam (2010:91) reveals, the “surge in religious movements” is quite “puzzling” in that “religions are associated with peace, charity, and love toward others in the world,” yet simultaneously, often associated with terrorism.

Even more complex is the relationship among religious people. As Moghaddam (2010:91) notes, religious people “tend to be prejudiced against less religious individuals.” As history reveals, various sects and denominations of religious people often create significant, even deadly, levels of intergroup conflict. Further, according to Moghaddam (2010:103), “globalization has resulted in dangerous and growing feelings of insecurity among religious traditionalists and fundamentalists.”

Moghaddam (2010:93) asserts religion, specifically the resurgence of religion today, serves to dually influence “security and insecurity, as well as stability and instability.” The complexity of the association of religion to the phenomenon of terrorism can be explained to some degree, according to Moghaddam (2010:93), by globalization “resulting in greater interdependencies, super-rapid and interconnected changes, and sudden intergroup contact, which in the immediate future results in increased threats to security.” Moghaddam (2010:93) theorizes that religion, along with “human constructions of the divine,” is “continually changing.” Further, (Moghaddam, 2010:93) religion is “propagated across societies and across time through dynamic ‘sacred carriers.’” As “human beings are motivated to make their lives meaningful, and construct and ascribe meaning to themselves, their actions, and their surroundings” it is useful within this context to note that “the most pervasive strategy people use to make their lives meaningful is through the construction of narratives: we are natural storytellers (Moghaddam, 2010:93). Essentially, according to Moghaddam (2010:94) “construction of stories” aids humans in making “sense of the world.” Religious stories, like scientific stories, “play a role” in “socialization . . . in modern societies; yet, differing criteria are used in evaluation of these particular stories (Moghaddam, 2010:95). For example, “scientific stories are evaluated according to criteria that include reliability, validity, and falsifiability. But, these criteria are not applied by the faithful to religious stories because the only real need is faith” (Moghaddam, 2010:95).

This thesis analyzes American influences and reactions to the cosmic presentation of the war on terror, as evidenced through American faith narratives and as viewed through theoretical models; specifically, Social Identity Theory and Positioning Theory.

## **B. BACKGROUND AND NEED**

This exploration is essential and timely not only as the significant resurgence of religion is commonly acknowledged and apparent but also because terrorists frequently claim religious cause or connection; and, of significance, Americans self-report a lack of knowledge relative to religion or faith, including their own (Pew Research Center, 2010). Bulliet (2004:125) argues that Americans are “generally hazy on what the word

“Islamist” actually means. Strindberg and Wörn (2011:25) advise that “defining Islamism is fraught with difficulty.” Definitions vary specifically as to the treatment of social, political and personal life; religious ideology and shariah law; modernity and reform; and history (Strindberg & Wörn 2011:25). Further, Bulliet (2004:124) notes that America’s view is blurred by “our failure to comprehend the centuries-old dynamic of Islam political theory.” Ironically, the American cultural and faith narratives are created and sustained by many factors, including familiarity and values. Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011:8) note that “scholars, journalists, educators, and public intellectuals have come to realize by now that religion matters, they have only begun to understand how religion matters and whether it is likely to bring violence or peace, division or unity, progress or decline. But such an understanding is crucial for grasping contemporary global politics” clearly, as “one cannot afford to ignore religion’s resurgent political power in its almost infinitely varied manifestations.” Juergensmeyer (2010:1) comments that “in some ways, religion has never been of greater interest to a greater number of people than it is at present.”

Further, this thesis explores the well-published slogan that effectively countering global terrorism will require winning “hearts and minds”—an idea more easily stated than accomplished. It is suggested herein that Americans must begin with American “hearts and minds”—and that precursors to global influencing of hearts and minds to counter terrorism include:

- (1) Acknowledging the long and winding road of the origins and influences of American faith narratives and developing a realistic strategy and plan of action for ensuring that future generations know the origins; resultantly enhancing the depth of American faith narratives.
- (2) Understanding American faith narratives, as currently interpreted, applied and sustained by individual believers/nonbelievers and as collective groups of believers/nonbelievers; and knowing the freedoms, rights and/or duties essential



in ensuring the constitutional liberty to privately and publically embrace all religious beliefs acted upon under the rule of law to enhance the breadth of the American faith narrative.

(3) Imagining the possibilities, including aggressively initiating public discourse on faith, for the future of American faith narratives based upon securing diverse religious beliefs and democratic principles, expanding American faith narratives in such a way that the narrative serves as a positive global and social influence, thereby reducing the global terrorists' threat and ensuring that future generations are afforded the American tradition of opportunity and freedom.

This exploration inherently requires a discussion of the American faith narrative regarding separation of church and state. It is proposed that "separation" should be maintained, as it is an integral ingredient in the recipe for democracy and the freedoms afforded therein. However, the intent and judicial interpretation of the Establishment Clause are far removed from today's application of same (Toft, Philpott, & Shah, 2011). Departure from this particular intent has contributed to the production of generational ignorance and distancing from tenets of faith that may prove useful in challenging the cosmic narrative that has become reality.

Understanding the parameters of the type of war fought against terrorism is essential in understanding or knowing the enemy. In Hoffman's (1995:272) consideration of doctrinal differences found between religious terrorism and other forms of terrorism, he states that "whereas secular terrorists generally consider indiscriminate violence to be immoral and counterproductive, religious terrorists regard such violence not only as morally justified but as a necessary expedient for the attainment of their goals."

However, (Toft, Philpott, & Shah, 2011:126) "religion is rarely the lone impetus for terrorism." Hoffman (2006) further informs that "terrorism, in the most widely accepted contemporary usage of the term, is fundamentally and inherently political." Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011:127) note that "in 1968 it [religion] motivated none of the world's existing eleven terrorist groups. However, Rapoport (1984:659) advises that "before the nineteenth century, religion provided the only acceptable justifications for

terror.” According to Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011:127) “the difference was secularization, which gave rise to terrorist groups motivated not only by nationalist and political ideologies but also by a host of unpredictable and unknown factors. Even the religious terrorism that exists today rarely involves religion alone; social political, economic, and environmental factors are often in play as well.” However, religious motivation, as claimed, is responsible for the largest proportion of terrorist attacks with known perpetrators from 1998 to 2004. Although most faith traditions have seen terrorists emerge from their ranks, in recent times Muslims have accounted for the overwhelming majority of the attacks. The enemies identified by the United States in the war on terror also define the war as a holy war; while there are some who argue that it is best defined as a cosmic war (Aslan, 2009). Cosmic war, within this context, is a term coined by Juergensmeyer (2003) meaning not just a fight fought for religious reasons, but the image of a broader conflict between good and evil.

Understanding the enemy in this environment requires an in-depth understanding of ourselves (Hoffman, 2006). This understanding necessitates defining the role of faith in American faith narratives. The unique and perceived role of church and state in American democracy is critical to American response and dialogue in this environment (Toft, Philpott, & Shah, 2011). In America, religious extremism and terrorism are often assumed synonymous with Islam and Islamic extremism. The United States is reportedly engaged in limited dialogue with the Muslim community and appears to have more limited dialogue established with Muslim extremists. However, meaningful dialogue is widely considered necessary to peaceful negotiations and developments (Farr, 2008). A by-product of this dialogue, or lack thereof, is directly linked to both national and international policy, as well as security (Farr, 2008)—all significant, relative components of American faith narratives. Religious extremism cannot be fully explored in this context apart from a discussion of Western fear related to the Muslim faith and to faith in general.

Since 9/11, reactive responses to Islamic extremism in America are on the rise. The evidence of this escalation is exemplified in current events including, but certainly not limited to: Chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, U.S. Rep. Peter T.

King's commitment to investigate and conduct hearings on Muslim radicalization in the United States; former Chairman U.S. Rep. Bennie G. Thompson's response to King requesting that he broaden the scope of his examination of ideological-based violence to include domestic extremists other than and in addition to Islamic extremists; the Center for Security Policy's publication of *Sharia: The Threat to America* led by very prominent national leaders; Daniel Pipes' publication of *Militant Islam Reaches America*; Oklahoma's amended state constitution opposing Sharia law and the subsequent ruling by a federal judge to block the state amendment; and, the recent Ground Zero Mosque debate. Countering sources, such as *Fear, Inc.: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America* (Ali, Clifton, Duss, Fang, Keyes, & Shakir, 2011) claim small networks of misinformed experts spread hatred and misinformation and serve as a catalyst for today's debates resulting in a negative impact on public discourse and the Muslim community in general. Other sources, including Cincotta's *Manufacturing the Muslim Menace* expose prejudice in communications and training related to Islam. There is a wealth of source material on the subject matter and current events—such as the United States attempting to engage the Afghani Taliban leadership in dialogue; the legitimacy of drone killings including the killing of Anwar as-Awlaki; and, the execution of Osama bin Laden. Hearings, legislation, claims of violation of rights, and public discourse, in general, inherently integrate the role of faith into the discussion of religious extremism and terrorism.

Normalizing faith and religious identity in the American public square may be a necessary first step in establishing useful or meaningful discourse as well as in educating and developing future leaders, policymakers, strategist, and analysts. Recognition of Islamic values and the role of these values in communications with Islamic individuals and groups is necessary. This recognition does not mandate acceptance, but requires genuine understanding—a step beyond tolerance.

This research explores American narratives on faith and subsequent relevance to cosmic war, the consequences of American reactions and perceptions to religious extremism, and the prospect, parameters, and purpose of inclusive faith discourse in the public square. Reactions and reality explored herein are framed through (1) American

history of faith in the public square; (2) theoretical world views— how we know the enemy and know ourselves through social identity constructs and positioning theory; and (3) the narratives—fear of the unknown or uncomfortable concepts of faith evidenced through storylines inherent in American faith narratives.

As the evolving pendulum swings between the secular and religious ideologies and discourse, the previous century was dominated by the idea of secularization resulting in the modern inclination often attributed to or recognized through the American idea of separation of church and state. Ironically, secularization has not accomplished the elimination of religion, as once predicted, as evidenced by original adherents recanting their predictions. As America's heritage recounts, religious discourse was a foundational building block of the nation. A resurgence of religion is apparent; however, the frame of discourse is yet to be established. There seems some irony in limiting or ignoring that discourse in sustaining America and assisting other nations with establishment of democratic principles. Especially for those nations proclaiming religious cause or struggling with religious issues, the more relevant question may be whether America can rediscover its foundational roots, identify any lessons learned, and apply wisdom to re-establishing a national discourse on faith.

### **C. PURPOSE**

Addressing American fear of faith and related discourse, as indicated through the evolving national American faith narratives, is essential in effectively countering modern day terrorism and to sustaining and securing the republic founded upon unique and enduring democratic principles. Meaningful dialogue and related policy should not imply replication of U.S. ideals, values or law. Ideally, this research fills a knowledge gap for homeland security leaders across the nation and provides recommendations for normalizing the American faith narrative in public discourse resulting in a more educated American society better prepared to deal with an imminent future of faith in American society and in global security challenges.

American history notes the role of religious discourse in the founding of the nation. However, as noted by Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, and

Lindsay (2004), integrating religion into governmental relations is a catalyst for fear, especially since the 9/11 attacks. Referencing faith, Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, and Lindsay (2004:1) reveal that it “seems a new departure, even if it is not.” Critical to this thesis, Hehir, et al. (2004:1) warn that this integration will be difficult as Americans “are not used to thinking about the topic” and “do not have much practice handling religion, and the consequences of getting it wrong could be enormous.”

#### **D. RESEARCH QUESTION**

How do American faith narratives influence America’s counterterrorism efforts against radical Islamism and contribute to sustaining and securing American democracy?

#### **E. SIGNIFICANCE TO THE FIELD**

This thesis serves to fill a gap in the American public discourse on Islamism as related to developing American faith narratives, specifically as related to framing U.S. response in a cosmic context. The literature on the independent topics—religion, terrorism, Social Identity Theory, and Positioning Theory—is vast; but, heretofore integrated analyses specific to the subject matter within the discipline of homeland security has been limited. Further, there does not appear to be a significant body of literature that addresses more fundamental questions such as how America positions herself within this context. The limited body of literature that compares and contrasts the different dynamics of a global war, a holy war and a cosmic war is even more dramatically limited regarding the various approaches to waging a successful campaign against radical Islam and certainly in regard to the influence of faith narratives. In sum, this thesis cohesively integrates the diverse source material addressing the issue to assess how (1) the origins of American faith narratives; (2) the application of Social Identity Theory, Positioning Theory and American world views; and (3) the emerging American faith narratives influence America’s quest to secure the homeland against the emergence of radical Islamism.

## **F. PARAMETERS AND LIMITATIONS**

This thesis does not endorse a particular faith. The scope is limited specifically to the influence and implication of American faith narratives in terms of predominate historical influence(s); and, in terms of the relevance to terrorism, specifically to radical Islamism. There are admittedly many terrorist related religious influences and implications to America and the world outside the scope of this work.

This thesis does not attempt to prove that all terrorism has a religious nexus, but does limit its focus primarily to that particular influence and more importantly to the necessity of religious literacy in intelligible and accurate determinations of both root causes and solutions—which may or may not be religion.

This thesis does not claim, either implicitly or explicitly, that America was founded as a Christian nation. It does attempt to highlight the religious influences and implications in the founding of the United States. Further, it does offer literary evidence of the demise of the secularism thesis, as well as the resurgence of faith in the 21st century as a dominant force in society and politics.

For the purposes of this work, faith and religion will be used interchangeably. Justification for such is based not on substantiating research of a definitive nature; the case could adequately be made otherwise. The justification is simply based on common usage and the American lexicon. It is also noted here that certain terms with multiple spellings are presented within this text as used within specific source documentation. Examples of these variations include: shariah versus sharia and al-Qaida versus al-Qaeda.

Finally, this work does not propose definitive, linear solutions to answer the question(s). Rather, this work seeks to frame adequate considerations for broadening relative dialogue—enhancing American faith narratives—from which both questions and answers will emerge.

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## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

The literature review addresses three areas related to influences and implications of American faith narratives. Specifically, faith or religious identity in the American public square as related to the war against terror and preserving American democracy are analyzed against a backdrop of the ever evolving American faith narratives. The first section explores research related to historical and legal milestones in American faith narratives. The second section focuses on research studies about theoretical world views, specifically Social Identity Theory and Positioning Theory - including fear of the unknown and uncomfortable in a faith context and benefits of knowing the enemy and ourselves as explored through identity constructs. The third section discusses research related to American narratives through storylines. These storylines are viewed as claimed, as lived, and as predicted. Further, the possibilities of storylines in the future of America's faith narratives are analyzed, specifically for influencing and positioning friends and enemies through public discourse and policy.

In America, the terms religious extremism and terrorism are often used synonymously with Islamic extremism or Islamism. Religious extremism in the context of war, specifically cosmic war, cannot be fully explored outside of secular nationalism, globalization, forms of identity, or religious foundations and freedom. A decision to focus specifically on religious terrorism rather than secular terrorism is supported by Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011:122) in that "religious terrorism is more deadly"; religious terrorism is related to "worldwide trends of globalization, democratization, and modernization"; and most importantly, "religious terrorism is an urgent matter."

The concept of religion or faith is complex and difficult to define; but, for purposes of this research and in agreement with Hehir, et al. (2004:21), philosopher William P. Alston's definition is useful: "Religion, he [Alston] says, involves the following elements: (1) a belief in a supernatural being (beings); (2) prayers or communication with that or those beings; (3) transcendent realities, including 'heaven,'



‘paradise,’ or ‘enlightenment’; (4) a distinction between the sacred and the profane and between ritual acts and sacred objects; (5) a view that explains both the world as a whole and humanity’s proper relation to it; (6) a code of conduct in line with that worldview; (7) a temporal community bound by its adherence to these elements.” This definition is not perfect and is not promoted as more perfect than others; however, it is useful within the scope of this research as both explicit and implicit elements related to beliefs, practices, and world views of Christianity, reportedly the predominate American faith, and Islam are explored within the context of American faith narratives.

The literature is categorized generally into three primary sections:

- American Faith: Historical and Legal Milestones
- Theoretical Perspectives and World Views
- The Narrative: Influence and Implications of Faith Storylines

## **B. AMERICAN FAITH: HISTORICAL AND LEGAL MILESTONES**

As the evolving pendulum swings between the secular and religious ideologies and discourse, the previous century was dominated by the idea of secularization resulting in the modern inclination often attributed to or recognized through the American idea of separation of church and state. Philpott (2002) surveys recent efforts to bridge the divide, not for the purpose of promoting faith, but for the purpose of clarity, accuracy and effectiveness of analysis. Secularism found its origins during the Enlightenment and gained prominence during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries primarily through contributions of Nietzsche, Darwin, Marx, Freud, and Weber, among others (Toft, Philpott, and Shah, 2011). Secularization has not accomplished the elimination of religion as once predicted and even its original adherents, chief among them Peter Berger, have recanted their predictions. Specifically, “the secularization thesis has proven a poor guide to global historical reality” as “globally speaking, most people—79 percent—believe in God” according to Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011:2). Over the last forty years, the global resurgence of faith and its integration into the realm of politics is evident (Toft, Philpott, & Shah, 2011). Faith, according to Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011:3), once “confined to the home, the family, the village, the mosque, synagogue, temple and church,” is now an

influential presence “in parliaments, presidential palaces, lobbyists’ offices, campaigns, militant training camps, negotiation rooms, protest rallies, city squares, and dissent jail cells . . . once private, religion has gone public . . . once local, it is now global.” Ironically, the factors that were to contribute to the abolishment of faith are the same factors that played the greatest role in its resurgence: “democracy and open debate, rapid progress in communication and technology, and the historically unprecedented flow of people, ideas, and commerce around the globe (Toft, Philpott, & Shah, 2011).

Religious discourse was a foundational building block of the American nation as history recounts. However, as noted by Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, and Lindsay (2004), integrating religion into governmental relations is a catalyst for fear, especially since the 9/11 attacks. Referencing faith, Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, and Lindsay, (2004:1) reveal that it “seems a new departure, even if it is not.” Critical to this thesis, (Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, & Lindsay, 2004:1) warn that this integration will be difficult as Americans “are not used to thinking about the topic” and “do not have much practice handling religion, and the consequences of getting it wrong could be enormous.”

Fear of faith, according to Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, and Lindsay (2004:2), is founded first in its tendency to be an American “conversation stopper” and secondly, in its doubted potential “utility as a guide to moral foreign policy.” The latter is based on historical “wars over religion” and fear of fostering an environment of “abandonment of the Westphalian synthesis” and a “return to the religious wars of old” couched in medieval terminology of “darkness and evil,” crusades and holy wars, “infidels, idolaters, and antichrist” (Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, & Lindsay, 2004:2). The Westphalian synthesis, emerging from the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, according to Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, and Lindsay, (2004:12) proposes explicit sovereignty in state authority and a principle of nonintervention with the basic purpose and intent of the treaty, as described by Henry Kissinger, “to put an end to carnage once and for all” and “to stop the merging of domestic and foreign policy (in the language of the period) of faith and diplomacy.” In addition to sovereignty and nonintervention, in the third Westphalian synthesis principle

religion is more implicit, “often assumed,” with “the separation of religion from political discourse and the broader assumption that religion may be treated as a ‘private phenomenon,’ significant in the lives of individuals but not a force of public consequence” (Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, and Lindsay, 2004:12).

Religious independence hailed in the 1648 Peace of Westphalia echoed a time years earlier, dating back easily to the Reformation beginning in 1517 (Toft, Philpott, & Shah, 2011). Such independence was decidedly promoted through the “framing of the United States Constitution” and most specifically in the First Amendment to the Constitution, the “first legal document in the world both to enshrine religious freedom and to prohibit a nationally established church” (Toft, Philpott, & Shah, 2011:33). Schaeffer (1976:106) highlights that, oft forgotten, Samuel Rutherford’s 1944 publication of *Lex Rex: Law is King*—depicted visually as the “sociological base and legal base” for “freedom without chaos” in the post-Reformation mural *Justice Lifts the Nations*—served as a tremendous influence in the development of the United States Constitution. Although many of the founding fathers were deists rather than Christians, “they built upon the basis of the Reformation either directly through the Lex Rex tradition or indirectly through Locke” (Schaeffer, 1976:109). Rutherford, influenced greatly by John Locke, understood (Schaeffer, 1976:109) that the “concept of freedom with chaos” was founded in freedom based on rule of law, the basis of which he attributed to sacred law and subsequent “consensus” (Schaeffer, 1976:105) emerging from the Reformation. However, Schaeffer (1976:245) stating that the United States is failing to preserve the memory of the origin of this consensus through sacred law concludes by quoting Hoffer: “when freedom destroys order, the yearning for order will destroy freedom.”

Since the attacks of 9/11, Islam’s ability to exist harmonically within a democratic environment has been contested (Toft, Philpott, & Shah, 2011:115). Pointedly, Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011:115) surmise that “skeptics find obstacles to democracy in Islam’s lack of an intellectual basis for constitutionalism, human rights, and democracy; its proneness to fundamentalism; its stress on revelation over popular opinion and legislative deliberation; its treatment of women; and its lack of economic and political

development. Defenders rejoin that Islam includes a multiplicity of voices, sources of law, and schools of political thought: a historical tradition of respecting minorities, especially Jews and Christians, who are considered ‘people of the book’; and concepts that favor democracy including shurah (consultation), ijma (consensus), and ijihad (independent interpretive judgment).”

According to Aslan (2009), America must use caution in defining the war against terror. He claims that terminology beginning in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 began to frame the war in a cosmic sense—terminology related to end times; a spiritual enemy; ethics and torture; no negotiations. For many Americans, Aslan claims, especially the nearly 50 percent that self-describe as evangelical according to the Princeton Religion Research Center, these wars and related conflicts are viewed through a cosmic lens and are evidenced as such by referencing Ronald Reagan’s “Evil Empire” or George W. Bush’s “Axis of Evil” (2009:87). Further, Aslan (2009:9–10) warns that “by adopting the same religiously charged rhetoric and cosmic world view as the Jihadists, by viewing al-Qa’ida militants as a demonic force bent on destroying civilization instead of an international criminal conspiracy to be brought to justice—in short, by treating the War on Terror like a cosmic war—we have not only played into the Jihadists’ hands, we may have set the groundwork for a new and terrifying age of religious war.”

The study of religious terrorism can inform us about religion, public violence and societal characteristics globally (Juergensmeyer, 2003). Renowned terrorism authors such as Juergensmeyer (2003) and Bobbitt (2009) often portray terrorism as a theatrical setting, a stage—complete with terrorists playing out their respective parts of the script. “That is why the most potent weapon a terrorist has is neither a gun nor a bomb but a television camera. As a spectacular, even theatrical display of public violence, terrorism must have an audience; otherwise it is not terrorism” (Aslan, 2009:118). Major Abrahamic religions—Christian, Jewish and Muslim—have historically been and continue to be a resource for violent actors (Juergensmeyer, 2003.) Religious actors, as defined by Hehir, et al. (2004:23) are “any individual, group, or organization that espouses religious beliefs and that articulates a reasonably consistent and coherent message about the relationship of religion to politics.”

Understanding the connection between religion and politics becomes essential in consideration of Strindberg's (Gunaratna, et al., 2006:95) notation that "seventy to eighty percent of contemporary conflicts are either ethnic or religious driven or based." According to Akins (2007:66), "researchers have failed to include the historical and theological dimensions of Islam in their analyses," leading to policies focused on specific groups (al-Qaeda) as opposed to a focus on the "sociocultural phenomenon of jihad." A common Western obstacle to understanding Islam according to Moghaddam (2006) is the tendency to stereotype terrorists as irrational thinkers with illogical strategies and insane plans.

Former International Religious Freedom Ambassador at Large Thomas Farr (2008) asserts that America needs to rediscover the basis of the Bill of Rights guaranteeing free exercise of religion nationally in order to correct perceptions that "religion and freedom, or faith and reason, are irreconcilable." Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011:178) highlight examples of Americans exercising their faith resulting in significant national accomplishments from nineteenth century Protestant Evangelicals fighting to bring an end to slavery, to advance the feminist movement, and to pioneer the International Red Cross; to the twentieth century when President Woodrow Wilson, influenced by his faith, founded the League of Nations; to Protestants' lobbying efforts for the United Nations; to "a much more religiously diverse group of individuals—including a Catholic, a Confucian, a Hindu, and a Muslim—[working] with Eleanor Roosevelt in negotiating the landmark Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948." In the 1948 United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, three distinct rationales are offered in support of the concept of tolerance of religious differences: belief, strategic necessity, and internal protection of religion. Shattuck (2002) proposes that belief resides at the core of human existence. Further, (Shattuck, 2002) the definition or parameters of belief must be broad to include even atheism, which many tend to assume is void of belief. Those that view faith as a strategic necessity see faith as a means to reduce conflict and diminish bloodshed (Shattuck, 2002). Thirdly, according to Shattuck (2002), the rationale declaring that belief is essential to the continued existence of religion argues

that the strength of any religion is built on internal debate and directly related to tolerance of internal differences and thereby, subsequently, tolerance of different religions.

In the United States, historical legal considerations of religion are primarily related to freedom. At the 2002 Harvard Human Rights Journal Conference, John Shattuck (2002), former Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, delivered the keynote address surveying why we recognize freedom of religion as well as the relationship between religious freedom and terrorism. Shattuck (2002) suggests that religion has always existed as opposed to the idea of “freedom of religion.”

The preamble to the United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* adopted in 1948 proclaims that human rights should be protected by rule of law. Shattuck (2002) argues that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights manifests an ideology of tolerance of religious difference and suggests that this idea was a response to centuries of religious conflict that included but was not limited to the Crusades, the Islamic conquests, the Inquisition, the Thirty Years War and the Holocaust. Article 18 and Article 30 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights specifically deal with religion. Article 18 states:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 30 states that:

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

The linking terms in Articles 18 and 30, for this discussion, are teaching, practice, worship, observance and destruction.

America’s founding fathers included Islam, by name, in their vision of freedom of religion (Hutson, 2002). Hutson (2002) also notes that in Jefferson’s campaign for religious freedom throughout the state of Virginia, he insisted on “recognition of the religious rights of the Mahamdan, the Jew and the pagan.” In 1776, Hutson (2002:1)

recalls that Richard Henry Lee made the motion before Congress to declare independence and on religious freedom and in agreement with Jefferson, Lee stated that “true freedom embraces the Mahomitan and the Gentoo (Hindu) as well as the Christian religion. Citing an excerpt of a petition presented by American citizens in Virginia, in 1785, Hutson (2002:1) notes the public cry to “Let Jews, Mehometans, and Christians of every domination find their advantage in living under your laws.” Aslan (2009:84) states that “the Founding Fathers themselves consciously conceived of the United States as “the Israel on the Potomac: a light onto the nations; a city on a hill.” Aslan (2009:84) brings to memory, too, the first seal developed for the nation, by the founding fathers, depicted Moses, his staff raised to Pharaoh’s army, with a motto to read: “Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God.” Aslan (2009) does not interpret these actions to equate to the founding of the nation as a Christian nation and he refers to the founding fathers as predominately deists. Whether from Christian, Jewish, or Muslim—terrorist or peacemaker—according to Aslan (2009:10), “the truth is that religion is a stronger, more global force today than it has been in generations” due in part to “the failure of secularism to live up to its promises of global peace and prosperity.”

Threats to tolerance of religion based on fanaticism and terrorism served as a catalyst to the creation of U.S. law supporting foreign policy on religious tolerance, specifically, the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (Shattuck, 2002). Public Law 105-292, titled the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, was signed into law by President Bill Clinton on January 27, 1998. In summary, this legislation is described as “An Act to express United States foreign policy with respect to, and to strengthen United States advocacy on behalf of, individuals persecuted in foreign countries on account of religion; to authorize United States actions in response to violations of religious freedom in foreign countries; to establish an Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom within the Department of State, a Commission on International Religious Freedom, and a Special Adviser on International Religious Freedom within the National Security Council; and for other purposes.”

Language of P.L. 105-292 proclaims U.S. commitment to religious freedom. Specifically, in Section 1 (b) § 2(b) (2) (a) (1), the law states that “the right to freedom of

religion undergirds the very origin and existence of the United States. From its birth to this day, the United States has prized this legacy of religious freedom and honored this heritage by standing for religious freedom and offering refuge to those suffering religious persecution.” On rights and violations of rights of religious freedom, Subsection 2 of Section 1 of P.L. 105-292 proclaims that “Freedom of religious belief and practice is a universal human right; Religious freedom is a fundamental right of every individual, regardless of race, sex, country, creed, or nationality, and should never be arbitrarily abridged by any government; and, the right to freedom of religion is under renewed and, in some cases, increasing assault in many countries around the world. Among the many forms of such violations are state-sponsored slander campaigns, confiscations of property, surveillance by security police . . .” Title III, Section 301 of P.L. 105-292 amends Section 101 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 402) to institute within the staff of the National Security Council a Special Advisor to the President of the United States on International Religious Freedom. In Section 103, the law requires establishment of a religious freedom internet site. The law also requires an Annual Report on International Religious Freedom and sets forth specifics related to implementation to include but not limited to: 1) violations, including torture and detention; 2) training guidelines; 3) Presidential actions; 4) preclusion of judicial review; 5) reform of the Refugee Policy and the Asylum Policy; and 6) Business Code of Conduct.

Shattuck (2002) addresses five criticisms to the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998: 1) perception of international promotion of the American model of separation of Church and State; 2) perception of disproportionate representation of evangelical religions; 3) promotion of a human rights hierarchy with religion at the top; 4) questionable punitive sanctions that appear to coerce other nations to adhere to U.S. standards; and 5) perception that the United States acts unilaterally bypassing international vehicles for addressing the issue of human rights. Shattuck (2002) responds to each of the criticisms summarily noting that perceptions prevail regarding U.S. sensitivity to religious traditions abroad and that the most favorable U.S. response



requires clearly communicating that the United States will not promote any specific religion, but rather will respect political, economic, social, cultural rights and freedoms, and related international standards.

Farr (2008:13) holds that the United States can no longer ignore the role of religion in the war on terror, even though he claims that Islamist terrorism is responsible for national denial of the relation of religion to terrorist's actions, as well as the assumption that Islam cannot be engaged on the subject. Moghaddam (2006:x) asserts that Americans have a contextual "blind spot" related to "certain conditions" that "make it inevitable that some individuals will engage in evil acts, including terrorism." Further, Islamic terrorism is linked to "social, political, and economic conditions associated with the identity crisis of Islamic communities" resulting in terrorist's motivations that are secular, religious, nationalist, and ethnic (Moghaddam, 2006:x). Based on an exploration of these particular conditions, Moghaddam (2006), holds that it is an understanding of societal characteristics, as opposed to individual characteristics, that will influence terrorism.

According to Aslan (2009:119), "they [the terrorists] cannot be negotiated with because they want nothing—at least, nothing that this world can offer them." Aslan (2009:119) agrees with religious scholar Bruce Lawrence, noting that "theirs is a creed of great purity and intensity capable of inspiring [their] followers with a degree of passion and principled conviction that no secular movement in the Arab world has ever matched."

Terrorists see U.S. law and foreign policy as primary contributors to terrorism (Moghaddam, 2006:7) resulting from a Western worldview of terrorists "as violent people" and "enemies of peace." The terrorists' view holds that there can be no peace without justice, a justice defined from the terrorists' perspective (Moghaddam, 2006:7). Some of the controversy with the terrorists' perspective is rooted in the historical evolving role of clergy in Muslim society as clergy first attained economic independence from the government and through increased authority and revolutionary transitions, the clergy who were previously critical of governmental corruption had now become involved in the corruption (Moghaddam, 2006).

Muslims, as well as Muslim extremists, are the source of current controversy in America as depicted in the publication entitled *Shariah—The Threat to America: An Exercise in Competitive Analysis* (2010). This report states that though shariah “has spiritual elements, it would be a mistake to think of shariah as a ‘religious’ code or law in the Western sense because it seeks to regulate all manner of behavior in the secular sphere—economic, social, military, legal and political” (2010:2). The report defines shariah as anti-constitutional and suggests that any effort to pursue or promote shariah in the United States is sedition. Adamantly, the report regards the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) as “shariah’s most sophisticated jihadists,” claiming that “steeped in Islamic doctrine, and already imbedded deep inside both the United States and our allies, the MB has become highly skilled in exploiting the civil liberties and multicultural proclivities of Western societies for the purpose of destroying the latter from within” (2010:11). Citing increased demand for First Amendment protections related to shariah, the report challenges the lack of comparison to Article VI and the role of the Constitution as the supreme law of the land. The report references a 2009 court case where consideration was given to shariah and calls for ceasing outreach efforts to the Muslim community through the MB, but also acknowledges that “millions of Muslims around the world—including many in America—do not follow the directives of shariah, let alone engage in jihad”(2010:11).

In the West, society demands that the rule of law must guide all, including religious groups—whatever their beliefs—as they exercise their “right to organize themselves and attempt to influence politics at home and abroad” (Hehr, et al., 2004:73). Hehr, et al. (2004:74) argue that the resurgent “role of religion in politics is more truly a function of organization and political space than of faith” but acknowledge that faith is a factor. Specifically, Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, and Lindsay (2004:73) note that “strength of faith” is a contributing factor and, more specifically, that “passion is power in American politics . . . passionate belief, whether secular or religious, simultaneously explains the potential role that religious groups can play . . . passionate faith is powerful.” Finally, Appleby and Marty (2002:17) remind us that “interpretation is nine tenths of the law—even religious law—and the sources of religious law are often

multivalent and contradictory.” They refer to the selection or adoption of an interpretation as an art. “The art is called hermeneutics—developing a theory that guides the interpretation” (Appleby & Marty, 2002:17).

## **C. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND WORLD VIEWS**

The second section of this Literature Review introduces Social Identity Theory and Positioning Theory and will subsequently highlight literature useful in exploring social identity and positioning constructs in the context of how American faith narratives influence America’s counterterrorism efforts against radical Islamism and contribute to sustaining and securing American democracy.

### **1. Social Identity Theory**

Social Identity Theory allows the researcher to frame when, why, and how individuals identify within social groups thereby adopting patterns of behavior accepted as normal within their particular group identity. Henri Tajfel, the father of Social Identity Theory, defines social identity as “the part of the individual’s self-perception deriving from his or her knowledge of membership of a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership in the group” (Tajfel 1972:31). Tajfel’s theory contains three “variables that should influence intergroup differentiation” (Tajfel & Turner, 2004:284) distinguished by Strindberg and Wörn (2011:64), as “first a cognitive component (i.e., knowledge that one belongs to a group); second, an evaluative component (in the sense that the group and/or one’s membership of it may have a positive or negative connotation); and third, an emotional component (i.e., the cognitive and evaluative aspects of group membership generate emotions—such as love, pride, anxiety, loathing, etc.—directed towards one’s own group, as well as towards other individuals and groups that stand in certain relationships to it).” The goal of “differentiation” according to Tajfel and Turner (2004:284) “is to maintain or achieve superiority over an out-group on some dimensions. Any such act, therefore, is essentially competitive.”

Strindberg and Wörn (2011:64) define Social Identity Theory as “a heuristic model of the way human identity develops in and between groups through interaction and communication. As a nonreductionist theory of group behavior, Social Identity Theory emphasizes the significance of the subject’s hermeneutic situation and group members’ internally constructed social identity.” The “central idea” of Social Identity Theory, according to Strindberg and Wörn (2011:65) “is that being categorized as members of certain groups provides an important part of the self-concept of individuals.” Discovering how, in this context, hearts and minds are influenced is of utmost importance (Strindberg & Wörn, 2011). The inquiry, within the social identity framework, as to how this influence is manifested leads to the linkages between culture and social cues found within particular cultural context. Specifically, individual roles and individual positions within both roles and cultural settings, and more importantly, the individual’s distinct position within the group and the distinctiveness of the particular group’s positive identity valuation contribute further to the linkage between culture and social cues (Strindberg & Wörn, 2011).

Within the scope of this research, it is useful to explore Tajfel and Turner’s (2004:277) analysis of the extremes of social behavior that they refer to as “interpersonal versus intergroup behavior,” as well as the application of Social Identity Theory to these extremes. According to Tajfel and Turner (2004:278), “other social and behavioral continua are associated with the interpersonal-intergroup continuum”; specifically, these continua are defined in this context outside the scope of their traditional “sociological sense” as “social mobility” and “social change.” Social mobility refers to “quasi-ideological dimensions of attitudes, values, and beliefs” and thereby assumes that within a flexible societal environment an individual can choose to move from one group to another better suited for the individual (Tajfel & Turner, 2004:278). Conversely, according to Tajfel and Turner (2004:278), “social change implies that the nature and structure of the relations between social groups in the society is characterized by marked stratification, making it impossible or very difficult for individuals, as individuals, to divest themselves of an unsatisfactory, underprivileged, or stigmatized group membership.” Within this context, one breaking away from the group customarily would

be seen as betraying group values and taking on the cloak of a traitor (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Social mobility and social change “have to do with the variability or uniformity within a group of behavior and attitudes concerning the relevant out-groups” (Tajfel & Turner, 2004:279).

Two characteristics of importance relative to the treatment of members of defined out-groups are best described in relation to one’s position on the continuum of social change (Tajfel & Turner, 2004:279). For example, according to Tajfel and Turner (2004:279) “the nearer members of a group are to the ‘social change’ extreme of the belief-systems continuum and the intergroup extreme of the behavioral continuum, the more uniformity they will show in their behavior toward members of the relevant out-group.” And as Tajfel and Turner (2004:279) explain, “the nearer members of a group are to the ‘social change’ and the ‘intergroup’ extremes, the more they will tend to treat members of the out-group as undifferentiated items in a unified social category, rather than in terms of their individual characteristics.” Moreover, Tajfel and Turner (2004:281) surmise that “the mere awareness of the presence of an out-group is sufficient to provoke intergroup competitive or discriminatory responses on the part of the in-group.” Tajfel and Turner (2004:286), elaborating on the principles of Social Identity Theory and the subsequent “reactions to negative or threatened social identity,” note that “status is not considered here as a scarce resource or commodity, such as power or wealth; it is the outcome of intergroup comparison. It reflects a group’s relative position on some evaluative dimensions of comparison.”

Surveying these principles, Tajfel and Turner (2004:286) highlight individual mobility as significant in that the diminished status of “one’s own group is not thereby changed; it is an individualist approach designed, at least in the short run, to achieve a personal, not a group, solution.” Secondly, social creativity is highlighted and described as group members seeking “positive distinctiveness for the in-group by redefining or altering the elements of the comparative situation” (Tajfel & Turner, 2004:287). Altering these elements, according to Tajfel and Turner (2004), can be accomplished by dimensional comparison, altering the assignment of values, or modifying the out-group for purposes of positive comparison. Thirdly, social competition is explained by Tajfel

and Turner (2004:287) as when “the group members may seek positive distinctiveness through direct competition with the out-group.” Tajfel and Turner’s (2004:288) analysis of these principles of social identity can be summarized as individual mobility that “is destructive of subordinate group solidarity and provides no antidote to negative social identity at the group level.” Further, according to Tajfel and Turner (2004:288), social creativity “may restore or create a positive self-image, but it can be surmised, at the price either of a collective repression of objective deprivation or, perhaps, of spurious rivalry with some other deprived group.” Tajfel and Turner (2004:288) therefore note that “by reversing the conditions under which social stratification does not produce intergroup conflict,” one can “hypothesize that negative social identity promotes subordinate-group competitiveness toward the dominant group to the degree that: (a) subjective identification with the subordinate group is maintained; and (b) the dominant group continues or begins to be perceived as a relevant comparison group.” Simultaneously, (Tajfel & Turner, 2004:289) “when the dominant group or sections of it perceive their superiority as legitimate, they will probably react in an intensely discriminatory fashion to any attempt by the subordinate group to change the intergroup situation.”

Ellemers and Haslam (Van Lange, Kruglanski & Higgins, 2012:393) conclude that as a “grand theory,” Social Identity Theory and the process of social change “do not simply contribute to the reproduction of the status quo, but also help to bring about change in the world,” further describing Social Identity Theory as “progressive and optimistic, rather than conservative and pessimistic.”

Social Identity Theory as an analytical framework provides the foundation for Positioning Theory. Specifically, Social Identity Theory describes the motivation underlying positions. Positioning Theory builds on Social Identity Theory through analytical exploration of positions resulting first from individual and group identities and second from acts and storylines or frames emerging from those identities. According to Harré and Moghaddam (2003:4), “positions exist as patterns of beliefs in the members of a relatively coherent speech community.” Positions are “social in the sense that the relevant beliefs of each member are similar to those of every other” (Harré & Moghaddam, 2003:4). Specifically, Harré and Moghaddam (2003:206) argue that

“articulating a personal identity requires a clearly defined collective identity, and thus the process by which a personal identity relates to collective identity is pivotal. Thus far, the relationship between the two levels of identity has been implicitly depicted as a fixed comparison process. Positioning theory provokes us to address the relationship in a more in-depth manner that allows for an appreciation of the complexity and fluidity of the relationship.” Simply put, it is argued that identities as viewed through Social Identity Theory are more stable and fixed than positions within those identities as viewed through Positioning Theory. The basis for this argument is that even though social constructs and cultures continually evolve, and are subject to alteration through social mobility, they evolve more gradually than positions which can, as described, change or alter instantaneously—that is, with a word, a glance, a nod, or recognition of a symbol.

## **2. Positioning Theory**

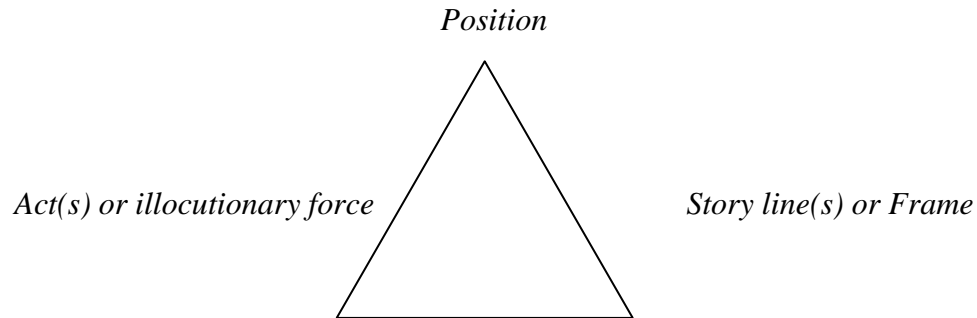
Positioning Theory, according to Harré (2004:4), is “the study of the way rights and duties are taken up and laid down, ascribed and appropriated, refused and defended in the fine grain of the encounters of daily lives.” Harré, Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, and Sabat (2009:10), advise that positioning is a “discursive process,” one that may or may not be deliberate. Framing Positioning Theory within a “social constructionist perspective,” Harré and Moghaddam (2003:204) proffer that our social world is more fluid than fixed and “based on a set of shared meanings between individuals,” and further inform that “Positioning Theory provides a framework that allows for the exploration of how people negotiate such shared meanings.” According to Harré (2004:5), meanings are derived from language; however, language is not a sole source for full interpretation of meanings, as the “significance of utterances” varies contextually and with “historicity.” Importantly, within this context, Harré and Moghaddam (2003:204) add that “a position provides one with a set of rights and duties that supply meaning to one’s act . . . and, positioning also reveals the nature of one’s identity.” However, it is important to note that positions are not limited to individuals. Nations, organizations, and various groups position themselves as well as one another, according to Harré, Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, and Sabat (2009:12).

A position is not the equivalent of a role, Harré and Moghaddam (2003:204) “a position is dynamic, whereas a role is static and, knowing one’s own role helps to provide direction and meaning to one’s actions.” According to Harré and Moghaddam (2003), roles and positions play a significant role in identity. Role theory is more restrictive than Positioning Theory (Harré, 2004:11) as Positioning Theory “offers a conceptual system within which to follow the unfolding of episodes of everyday life in new and illuminating ways.” Harré, Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, and Sabat (2009:9) instruct that “Positioning Theory focuses on bringing to light the normative frames within which people actually carry on their lives, thinking, feeling, acting, and perceiving—against standards of correctness . . . positions are clusters of beliefs about how rights and duties are distributed in the course of an episode of personal interaction and the taken-for-granted practices in which most of these beliefs are concretely realized . . . positions are features of the local moral landscape.” Positioning Theory, according to Harré and Moghaddam (2003:24), is more aligned with meaning “essentially linguistic, culturally relative, socially constructed and local,” and it serves “as starting point for reflecting on many different aspects of social life.” Positioning Theory can serve as an “alternative way to maintain inter-group harmony” by positioning “oneself and/or one’s group as not being in competition with other groups” (Harré, Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, & Sabat, 2009:25). Harré, Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, and Sabat (2009:10) provide critique noting that “the realization that the content of positions is local and may even be momentary and ephemeral is the deep insight of Positioning Theory.”

As for methodological procedures, Harré (2004:6) instructs that various types of media—spoken language, gestures, signs, etc.—and media interaction construct each “social episode.” Harré (2004:6) describes the “background conditions for the meaningfulness of a flow of symbolic interactions” as first, the “local repertoire of admissible social acts and meanings”; secondly, “the implicit pattern of the distribution of right and duties,” realizing that each “distribution is a position”; and thirdly, each “episode of human interaction is shaped by one or more story lines.” A story line is often referenced as a “frame” (Harré, Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, & Sabat, 2009:3).



Positioning Theory is graphically depicted through the positioning triangle. The points of the triangle are defined as (1) a position; (2) a speech act or illocutionary force; and (3) a storyline(s) or frame.



Harré and Moghaddam (2003:9) explain that “the positioning triangle can be entered empirically at any of the vertices, position, speech act, or storyline”; however, “entering at the storyline has advantages,” as the storyline is seen as a “working hypothesis about the principle or conventions that are being followed in the unfolding episode.” Harré, Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, and Sabat, (2009:12) purport that the “dominate story-line of a narrative can be determined by the local assignment of rights and duties.” Finally, Positioning Theory best accomplishes analyses in the rapid, dynamic, and evolving social events by “analyzing the active negotiation of meanings people give to their actions through their positioning within their conversation” (Harré & Moghaddam, 2003:204).

### **3. Contributing World Views**

For the Jihadists, the Crusades are not so much a historical event as they are an ideological construct – an enduring narrative whose final chapter is now being written in the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq, except it is no longer Europe but America that, as the locus of Christian imperialism in the twenty-first century, has “taken up the cross” in the eternal cosmic battle between Christianity and Islam . . . this battle is not between al-Qa’ida and the U.S. as bin Laden announced in October 2001 . . . this is a battle of Muslims against the global Crusaders. (Aslan, 2009: 62)

Scheur (2006:4) advised that the “contemporary [Western] perception of jihad tends to reduce it to terrorism—uses of violence whose forms make it deeply repugnant to Western sensibilities” and he further warned that “we grasp it [jihad] only dimly because it is rooted in a close connection between religion and politics, a connection we in the West either do not make or find uncomfortable.” Religious uncertainties may have contributed to the eighteenth and nineteenth century rise in secularism and the modern day surge in religion may be due to the “growing disillusionment with secularism” (Aslan, 2009:10), but globalization plays a significant role as it has “radically altered the ways people define themselves both individually and as a collective.” With globalization, traditional nation–state indicators are fading and “religion can no longer be viewed as simply a set of myths and rituals to be experienced in the private realm . . . religion is identity” (Aslan, 2009:10). Further (Aslan, 2009:10), “religion is fast becoming the supreme identity, encompassing and even superseding ethnicity, culture, and nationality.”

Religion is used as a vehicle in contemporary terrorism, according to Hoffman, (2002)—a communications strategy that often results in a ‘perversion of religion’ and a means to fill an ideological void. Drake (1998:59) opines that “terrorist’s ideologies may develop and alter over time.” Strindberg (2006:93) highlights McLellan’s description of the “elusiveness” of an ideological concept and defines an ideology as “a set of ideas, beliefs and attitudes consciously or unconsciously held, which reflects or shapes understandings or misconceptions” serving to “recommend, justify or endorse collective action . . .” Ideology is described by Silber and Bhatt (2007) as the foundation for radicalization and religious/political ideology as the foundation for jihadist ideology which serves as spiritual motivation for many terrorists groups. According to Schwartz, Dunkel, and Waterman (2009:539), one of the critical errors in attempting to understand the origins and foundational precepts of terrorism includes an inability or unwillingness to understand “motives and goals.” Aslan (2009:ixx) addresses the complex terrorists’ [Jihadist] ideology somewhat categorically, stating simply that globalization and emerging technologies have enabled bypassing of Islamic religious authorities allowing direct communications with individuals worldwide, thereby promoting a jihadist doctrine stripped of political and religious frameworks and presenting jihad outside the traditional

framework historically aligned with the Quran. This presentation of jihad is more a type of identity—“a mere metaphysical struggle stripped of all political considerations . . . this is jihad as cosmic war” (Aslan, 2009:ixx).

Juergensmeyer (2003) purports that Osama bin Laden’s political identity was provided through his use of religion and highlights that religion is also often used to provide a moral justification for terrorism. Determining whether religious violence is used for political purposes is not always an easy question to answer especially as religious nationalism movements involve intertwined religious and political ideologies (Juergensmeyer, 2003). Cosmic war, according to Gregg (2009:188), however, “makes violence a sacred duty to preserve the faith.” Aslan (2009:52) defines Jihadism as a transnational social movement merging “disparate identities . . . under a single collective narrative” through “injustice framing.” According to Aslan (2009:52), injustice framing involves “identifying a situation as unjust,” “assigning blame,” and proposing “a solution to include connecting the particular injustice to a larger frame of meaning so as to communicate a uniform message that will resonate with a population—successful framing has the power to translate vague feelings of anger and resentment into tangible, easy-to-define grievances” . . . allowing a social movement like Jihadism to more easily create in-groups and out-groups. Social movements are not new; they are not strictly secular; nor are they strictly religious (Aslan, 2009). Aslan (2009:132) argues that “with modernity came the recognition that society was merely a human construct. Further, according to (Aslan, 2009:132) “it used to be that a person’s identity was defined by the society to which he or she belonged. But as society was increasingly deemed to be nothing more than the product of human imagination, so too were social identities cast aside as mere human constructs. After all, if there are numerous alternatives to the present social order, there must also be numerous alternatives to the identities that society ascribes us.” That is, contemporary times enable “a transition from a world in which

identities were bestowed to a world in which identities can be gained or lost through deliberate action—from a world of ascribed identities to a world of self-identification” (Aslan, 2009:132).

Aslan (2009:134) goes on to note that “the perception of social movements changed in the 1960s, primarily in response to the legitimate countercultural challenges posed by racial and ethnic groups, student groups, environmental groups, and others, all of which sought to create broad cultural, social and political shifts in society through organized, collective action.” Modern global views of “social movements” are “normal, rational, institutionally rooted political challenges by aggrieved groups” (Aslan, 2009:134). Significant resistance by social scientists remains relative to expansion of “the definition of such movements to include groups, that while functioning exactly like a social movement, choose to define themselves in explicitly religious terms” (Aslan, 2009:134). Aslan (2009:134) suggests that “perhaps this is because scholars are used to thinking of religion as an isolated field of study, one too often brushed aside by the secularization theories that dominated sociological studies throughout much of the twentieth century. But in this new, emerging century, as the boundaries between religion and politics are, in all parts of the world, becoming increasingly blurred, we can no longer afford to view religious movements as inherently different from any other group of individuals who have linked their individual identities together with the purpose of changing society. The truth is that religion has certain qualities that make it a particularly useful tool for promoting social movement activism.” First among these qualities is religion’s ability to “tap into a person’s deeper sense of self—the existential self—giving members a profoundly personal and emotional stake in the success of the movement” (Aslan, 2009:134). Secondly, “religion brings to a social movement the hierarchal structures, financial resources, communication channels, and manpower that are so vital in getting the movement off the ground. A huge part of the success of the civil rights movement in the United States came from its ability to use black churches as venues for disseminating information from the pulpit to the streets” (Aslan, 2009:134).

Aslan (2009:136) asserts that “a social movement relies on the use of symbols to create solidarity among members across ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and national

boundaries. For such symbols to be effective they must be familiar enough to be recognized and easily absorbed by the movement's members, yet new enough to arouse excitement and interest; they must reflect societal values while also challenging them." Key to this research and subsequent analyses is religion's use of symbols—"words, phrases, and images—that can be interpreted and reinterpreted as often and as innovatively as one likes to invest a movement's message with meaning and significance" (Aslan, 2009:136). The diverse interpretation of symbols is particularly applicable within this context. For example, according to Aslan (2009:136), "zeal can be a symbol of personal piety or pious revolt. The cross of Christ can be employed as both an emblem of peace and a banner of war. Jihad can simultaneously be an internal struggle against sin and an external struggle for liberation." Symbols in this context may commandeer traditional interpretations and reapplied or misapplied to "draw a sharp distinction between the old, outmoded, arcane, and apolitical posture of the temple, the church, or the mosque and the new, innovative, populist represented by the social movement" (Aslan, 2009:136). Ultimately (Aslan, 2009:136), "religion's ability to sanction violence, to declare it permissible and just, to place it within a cosmic framework of order versus chaos, good versus evil, is indispensable to the success of a social movement." Aslan (2009:137) advised that "the intersection of religion and violence over time and across cultures has less to do with the logic or substance of religion itself than with the fact that both religion and violence function as durable markers of collective identity: the simplest, most effective means of saying who is us and who is them." Aslan (2009:139) concludes that "when it comes to dealing with a social movement, society has only two options: either it can address the members' grievances, thereby making the movement irrelevant, or it can deflect those grievances and further radicalize the movement."

Increasing pressures of discrimination and Islamophobia on Muslim youth contribute to the "crisis of identity faced by these young Muslims, many of whom feel they belong in neither the West nor the East, drives them to seek out new identities that cannot be contained by any culture or society, that in fact reach across all boundaries of race, ethnicity, and nationality" (Aslan, 2009:147). Simply put (Aslan, 2009:147), these

youth seek a “deterritorialized identity to match the deterritorialized world in which they live.” Aslan (2009:149) asserts that mobilization at this point, often referred to as radicalization, inspiring movement “beyond mere collective identity and toward collective action requires a prolonged personal connection with active members of the movement that can be difficult to sustain.” In the mobilization or radicalization process, Aslan (2009:151) warns, “only after a master frame has been firmly established, wherein an injustice to any Muslim in the world is perceived as an injustice to them (and vice versa), are the theological doctrines of Jihadism introduced. Only then is their world cleanly divided between the oppressed and the oppressors, the slaughtered and the slaughterers, the good and the evil: *al-wala’ al-bara’*. Only then does the recruit begin to believe that offensive jihad against innocent civilians and his fellow Muslims is justified.”

Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, and Lindsay (2004:56) propose three functions of religion in terrorist groups: first, “simply the badge of ethnic identity”; second and most common, “a tool for recruitment, a mask for political motives, and a means of acquiring or claiming legitimacy”; and, third, “as an alternative claim to legitimacy and sovereignty, an ideology or theory, or a guide to action.” In other words (Toft, Philpott & Shah, 2011:129), “religion and its place in public or private life is sometimes the object over which the enemies are fighting.” Hoffman (2006:277) concludes that religious groups are able to “transform abstract political ideologies and objectives into a religious imperative.” Interestingly, Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011:129) hold that even though “religious terrorism is disproportionately found in Islam,” no faith community or actors are immune to similar actions “if subjected to sustained suppression.” The lack of immunity is illustrated (Toft, Philpott, and Shah, 2011:130) in the case of “consensual independence” between religious authority and political authority in the United States failing to prevent the advent of terrorism in America by Christian white supremacists. Ultimately (Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, & Lindsay, 2004:22), “religion is something distinct, even if it sometimes shares characteristics with other forms of belief and belonging” and more importantly within

this context, “individual religious people also speak and act politically as voters, activists, intellectuals, journalists, propagandists, or dissidents, or through ordinary conversations,” thereby framing American faith narratives.

#### **D. THE NARRATIVE: INFLUENCES AND IMPLICATIONS OF STORYLINES**

According to Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011:42), “relationships between religious authority and political authority rarely remain frozen in time; rather, they change and evolve.” Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, and Lindsay (2004:7) reveal that “traditions are sites for arguments, and that’s not less true of religious than of secular traditions” and they further argue that “one can be critically engaged through the medium of different moral and religious traditions”; however, they note that “political and moral criticism is stronger if the critics are able to argue within a common tradition of some sort, for then the concepts and categories they use will be widely known and insofar as they use them persuasively, they will take on something of the authority of the tradition.” For example, Nicholson (2011:36) asserts that the King James Bible, translated some 400 years ago, “molded the English language, buttressed the ‘powers that be’—one of its famous phrases—and yet enshrined a gospel of individual freedom.” King James needed to bridge a divide between competing sacred text—to reframe the narrative—and he proposed that a new Bible was the solution in a “world in which there was no gap between politics and religion. A translation of the Bible that could be true to the original Scriptures, be accessible to the people, and embody the kingliness of God would be the most effective political tool anyone in 17th-century England could imagine (Nicholson, 2011:45).

Ultimately, reaching well beyond those of the Christian faith, impacting the entire English language, and influencing the whole of the American narrative—“the King James Bible has sewn itself into the fabric of the language.” (Nicholson, 2011:43) “If a child is ever the apple of her parents’ eye or an idea seems as old as the hills, if we are at death’s door or at our wits’ end, if we have gone through a baptism of fire or are about to bite the dust, if it seems at times that the blind are leading the blind or we are casting pearls

before swine, if you are either buttering someone up or casting the first stone, the King James Bible, whether we know it or not, is speaking through us. The haves and have-nots, heads on plates, thieves in the night, scum of the earth, best until last, sackcloth and ashes, streets paved of gold, and the skin of one's teeth: All of them transmitted to us by the King James Bible" (Nicholson, 2011:43-44). Nicholson's evidence (2011:48) of the proliferation of "18 classic phrases" introduced into the English language through the King James Bible is offered in his documentation of the most frequently used of the 18 phrases—"from time to time"—referenced in Ezekiel 4:10 and documented use of nearly 4.6 million times.

Narrative traditions "don't speak for themselves but lay claim to the accumulated [human] wisdom of many generations" (Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, & Lindsay, 2004:7). For example, Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011:111) write that "most religious actors that favor democracy have come to do so relatively late in the history of their tradition," noting that "elections, freedom of assembly, the separation of powers cannot be found in the Bible, the Quran, etc." Another point of significance in the religious actor's history of tradition is noted in that prior to the Reformation (Toft, Philpott, and Shah, 2011:62) "nations derived a significant share of their identity and dignity from being a part of a greater spiritual whole," but following the Reformation, "nations mobilized on behalf of a religious community far less commonly than religious communities mobilized on behalf of their nation."

According to Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011:27), "a set of ideas that a religious actor holds about what is legitimate political authority" can be defined as "political theology." Religious actors (Toft, Philpott, & Shah, 2011:27) "arrive at their political theologies through reflection upon their religion's texts and traditions" and that "in any particular context, political theology translates basic theological claims, beliefs and doctrines into political ideals." Further, Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011:29) make the case that "through disputes and developments over the course of history—in which partisans argue out of convictions about what they believe to be steady and eternal—political theology continually arrives at new syntheses and consensuses." In teasing out the essence of the faith narrative in relation to terrorism, it is useful to consider Toft, Philpott,



and Shah's (2011:46–47) argument that “the relationship of a religious actor to a state's national identity” is a complex influence and “in politics, religion matters but is far from all that matters.” Gregg (2009:197) describes the battle as one with “earthly goals” and “everlasting objectives.”

Claiming divine authority, according to Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, and Lindsay (2004:39-40), within this context is not useful and “is designed to silence opponents and critics; it is the discursive equivalent of crusading warfare.” Common weaknesses exist in the differing perceptions of just war theory, argue Hehir, et al. (2004:39–40): “they are human weaknesses;” that is, “the tendency toward accommodation and rationalization, on the one hand, and the tendency toward absolutism, on the other. Right now, secular thinkers are probably more likely to display the first of these and religious thinkers the second, but these associations are temporary and uncertain.” As for shared knowledge through traditional conceptualization and categorization, Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, and Lindsay (2004:44) speculate uncertainty regarding one's ability to “understand our obligations within the available moral or religious tradition” in that “moral understanding is a deep subject” and the route for arriving at moral understanding is unknown; however, “we explain our obligations to one another within the traditions, and we argue about their extent and about exactly what actions they require, individually and collectively.” Faith is more than exegesis of sacred text as traditions [narratives] offer interpretation, too (Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, & Lindsay 2004:95). The question here, according to Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, and Lindsay (2004:95), becomes “which religious tradition and which strain are guiding adherents” and more importantly within the context of this research, who speaks for Islam?” Toft, Philpott and Shah (2011:45) propose that “political theology shapes and is shaped by a religious actor's activities” and further, they contend that “given certain political theology and a certain degree and kind of independence between religious authority and political authority, a religious actor will tend to adopt a certain kind of politics.”

In seeking to summarize the narration of historical perceptions contextually, Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, and Lindsay conclude (2004:12) that

“the seventeenth-century origin of the story was a fault line. Participants stepped beyond the remnants of the medieval order of politics and explicitly recognized the emergence of the modern sovereign state. That might be called the secular side of the narrative. The religious fault line was the effort to move decisively beyond the century of religious warfare that had ravaged European politics. The decline of medieval patterns of political authority and the consequences of the Reformation had created a religious—political struggle that took thousands of lives without restraint.”

Many attribute freedom of religion and religious tolerance as a Western construct; however, Shattuck (2002:184) declares that the “modern idea of religious tolerance grew not out of the West, but out of a universal revulsion after World War II towards genocide and crimes against humanity, which had been committed against, or in the name of religion.” In surveying human rights abuses connectivity to terrorism, Shattuck (2002) characterizes the 1990s and the post-Cold War environment as the era of development of opposing forces of integration and disintegration. Forces of integration are categorized as global economic growth, cross-border development, the communications revolution and the spreading of democracy. Forces of disintegration are identified by Shattuck (2002) as religious and ethnic conflict, religious fundamentalism and terrorism. The magnitude of these forces Shattuck (2002:184) states is “captured” by Samuel Huntington’s phrase “Clash of Civilizations.” Shattuck (2002) does not concur with Huntington’s conclusion of inevitability, but does agree that the words adequately reflect the significance of the forces at work and the resultant conflicts.

Aslan (2009:84) claims that “in throwing off the yoke of an institutional church, the new nation gradually developed into a kind of church itself. Patriotism became a form of religious devotion. The flag was transformed into a totem. The Declaration of Independence was cast as a covenant between God and his new chosen people. The Constitution took on the patina of divine scripture. From Manifest Destiny to the war on terror, the American experience has always been infused with a sense of sacred purpose, a conviction that America’s values were God’s values, meant for the whole of the world. If, after all, the principles upon which the country was founded are not just universal, but

self-evident, grant by God to all men yet established in only one nation, then it must be the task of that nation to deliver those principles to all other nations; to, in effect, carry out God's will on earth—by force if necessary.”

Other dichotomies exist as Shattuck (2002) highlights diverse leadership response to the war against terrorism—as democratic world leaders seek to increase security in response to public fear while many authoritarian world leaders seek to increase their own power through the terrorism crisis. If we endeavor to know the enemy, we should note as Appleby and Marty (2002:128) state, “fundamentalists perceive a need to fight a godless, secular culture—what fundamentalists everywhere have in common is the ability to craft their message to fit the times.” Religious congregations have traditionally depended on religious leaders to interpret and present scripture—“Islam too is a village religion - . . . of leaders who are tagged as authorized agents of God because they properly interpret ‘the word’” (Marty and Appleby, 2002:22). However, according to Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011:156) in consideration of Islam's history of warfare, “it is far too simple to look only at the text of the Quran, as many analysts do”; rather they advise that one should consider “processes of democratization and globalization,” technological means facilitating spreading of “ideas,” and “co-location of Islamic holy sites.”

American diplomacy can engage in meaningful dialogue related to religion by focusing on “who we are rather than who God is” according to Farr (2008:20). Farr further interprets Pope Benedict's 2006 infamous speech to an academic audience in Regensburg, Germany, as influencing meaningful dialogue between Christians and Muslims. A source of interpretative controversy, Pope Benedict's speech primarily addressing faith and reason surveys the will of God and the role of reason in man's interpretation of the will of God (Benedict XVI, 2006). Likewise, Farr's (2008) interpretation of James Madison's portrayal of a duty to religious freedom, based on individual natural, inalienable rights to seek truths related to the origin, meaning and destiny of life, is essential to human well-being based on natural and powerful human inquiry. Farr (2008) notes that Madison believed these natural rights came from God. Man's religious quest is defined by Farr (2008) as the need to know and communicate with God after individual conclusion that such a transcendent being exists.

American faith narratives (Aslan, 2009: xii) include “the habits, standards, tastes, and customs” combined creating “the elusive American ethos”—“what everyone everywhere strove to emulate.” However, as Aslan (2009:xii) admonishes, “a nation of immigrants cannot fashion a collective identity by appealing to a shared heritage, nor can it merely rely on adherence to a set of principles. Rather it must forge for itself a new kind of national narrative, one shaped by the myths and memories, customs and traditions of each new generation of immigrants (or converts), whose cultural, religious, and ethnic affinities, when combined make, and then continually remake, the ever-evolving American identity.”

Bergen, Hoffman, and Flynn (2010) testified before the U.S. Congressional Homeland Security Committee that terrorism in America is increasingly intense and diversified, and does include “immigrant and indigenous Muslims, as well as, converts to Islam.” Islamic extremists (Ayoob, 2008:37) through “militant transnational group activity” have constructed the perception that they speak for Islam. From a theological perspective, war is a requirement of Jihad. According to Akins (2007:66), Americans have difficulty accepting certain proclaimed (external) requirements of Jihad, likely due to “an arrogant form of ethno-centrism”—believing that everyone wants to be a middle-class American, assuming that freedom, religious freedom, democracy, peace, dialogue, and negotiations that lead to compromise are desirable. Sayyid Qutb, well known in the Muslim world and a “major ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood” taught before his death that Muslims had fallen from the pure state of Islam as prescribed and he therefore taught that all Muslims had to “pass litmus tests designed to separate the true believer from the infidel in order to wage war against the latter (Appleby & Marty, 2007:21). Appleby and Marty (2007:21) further suggest that Qutb “thereby displaced the concept of jihad as a believer’s internal struggle against his profane passions with jihad as an external war against the unbeliever.” However, Ayoob (2008:34) informs that “although committed in theory to transforming their politics into Islamic states through the Islamization of society and the eventual enforcement of sharia law, the modern Islamists are adept at making compromises and working within the national frameworks and the constitutional constraints imposed on them.” Therefore, the ‘war’ required of Jihad

within Islamic doctrine requires further examination of the internal spiritual struggle of the individual, as well as the external struggle—thereby offering differentiation between a legitimate spiritual journey as opposed to terroristic justifications. Aslan (2009:xvii) notes that “despite its fixation on jihad, Global Jihadism is less a religious movement than it is a social movement, one that employs religious symbols to forge a collective identity across borders and boundaries.”

The U.S. State Department listing of international terrorists' organizations in 1980 barely noted religious organizations, according to Juergensmeyer (2003:6), and by 2000, more than fifty percent of the organizations listed were religious. Juergensmeyer (2003) surmises that there is not research to suggest that people are terrorists by nature. Extremists or terrorists can be subjective terms and are often labels applied by the misinformed. Juergensmeyer (2003:9) writes that the old adage “one person’s terrorist is another person’s freedom-fighter” may prove true and that determination is likely more dependent on one’s world view than the nature or intensity of the act. Hewitt (2003:44) highlights *Jihad in America*, a 2003 publication by Emerson, emphasizing that most Muslims in America are peaceful, law-abiding, and do not condone violence; but, since 9/11 a sect of Islamic extremism appears to be taking root in the United States. In consideration of the majority and within the context of social identity and the “multiple voices” (Ayoob, 2008:23) of Islam, we should take care not to “stereotype” (Brannan, Esler & Strindberg, 2001:18) any or all group members as identical to other group members. Aslan (2009:xv) claims that the United States is guilty of creating a Western “master narrative,” specifically “by lumping the disparate forces, movements, armies, ideas, and grievances in the greater Muslim world into a single category (enemy), assigning them a single identity (terrorist), and countering them with a single strategy (war).”

When asked to reveal observations about suicide terrorist attacks in relation to secular and religious terrorism, Bruce Hoffman (2002) advises that the terrorists attempt to portray that there are “brigades, battalions, even companies of suicide terrorists, when in fact there are only platoons.” Some attribute religious violence to political ideology or to fundamentalism, while Juergensmeyer (2003) suggests that it may be attributed to

religious people and their moral worldviews. According to Shattuck, (2002:188), the causes behind 9/11 were the “hijacking of a religion and the suppression of human rights in the Islamic world.” Hoffman (2002) claims that bin Laden’s basic message centered on revolution in opposition to the perception of the West and religion serves as the vehicle to deliver that message. Aslan (2009:4) tells us that “the 9/11 hijackers were carrying out a liturgical act . . . they framed the event in cosmic terms, as a battle for the sake of God . . . their faith was their strength . . . no religion is inherently violent or peaceful; people are violent or peaceful.” A cosmic war is not a holy war, fought over land or politics; however, it is a religious war and is fought over identity (Aslan, 2009). A cosmic war is “a conflict in which God is believed to be directly engaged on one side over the other . . . there is no middle ground; everyone must choose a side” (Aslan, 2009:5). Aslan (2009:6) instructs that the requirement for taking of sides—the forced separation—“dehumanizes” and “demonizes” the enemy and frames the enemy as Satan; thereby produced a war that is “absolute, eternal, unending, and ultimately unwinnable.” Further (Aslan, 2009:153), “Jihadism is more than an alternative form of identity—it is a reactionary identity, a means of social rebellion . . . it is an identity formed through the deliberate linking of local and global grievances—both real and perceived—to create a single, shared narrative of suffering and injustice. And only by severing that link, and disrupting the narrative, can Global Jihadism be defeated.” Aslan (2009:165) agrees that President George W. Bush was on target, stating that “only through genuine democratic reform can the appeal of extremist groups be undermined and the tide of Muslim militancy stemmed . . . but [Aslan asserts] this task will require more . . . it will require vigorous and sustained pressure on U.S. allies in the region . . . to concede to the growing demands of their populations for a voice in government, to put a stop to arbitrary imprisonments and the silencing of political opponents, and to allow for greater political participation, especially by religious nationalist groups that are willing to commit to responsible governance.” Interestingly, “if the answer to religious violence were truly to be found within religion itself, we would do well to pay more attention to a strand of Islam that more often than not serves as a voice of moderation: Sufism” (Toft, Philpott & Shah, 2011:173). Jenkins (2010:1) contends that “where Islamists rise to power, Sufis are persecuted or driven

underground; but where Sufis remain in the ascendant, it is the radical Islamists groups who must fight to survive.” Aslan (2009:168) states that . . . “religious nationalism—whether Zionist, Christianist, or Islamist—is unavoidable in a globalized and increasingly borderless world. But that may not be such a bad thing. Between the extremes of secular authoritarianism and Jihadist fanaticism (often the only two options in this challenging and dangerous region), Islamism may be the preferable middle ground. It may in fact be the antidote to Jihadism.”

Hoffman (2002) perceives some good from the September 11 attacks, specifically, the recognition of both Islam and the Muslim peoples. He (Hoffman, 2002) provides examples of the positive impact including President George W. Bush’s feast to celebrate Ramadan and the U.S. postal stamp featuring Arabic calligraphy. Personal security and public order cannot be assumed in an environment of terror or fear (Juergensmeyer, 2003).

Aslan (2009:7) notes that “despite the West’s anxious cries of alarm about an impending global takeover by radical Islam, it is remarkable how infrequently the Jihadists themselves make such claims.” Aslan (2009:7) further ascribes that “Jihadists know they are incapable of erasing all borders and reestablishing a worldwide Caliphate” and he asserts “that these absurd ambitions have been embedded in our public consciousness, despite their sheer lunacy,” and have “far less to do with the Jihadist’s capabilities than with the awe-inspiring efficacy of the so-called terrorism industry.”

In *From the Terrorist’s Point of View*, Moghaddam (2006:4) describes a “rational strategy to achieve its [Al Qaeda] publically stated goals”—a strategy that is not apparent to Westerners since these publically stated goals do not make the headlines and are not common in public discourse but are overshadowed by terrorist’s acts or threats to act. Simply stated (Moghaddam, 2006) these goals are to (1) drive all U.S. forces from Muslim lands; (2) cease U.S. support for Israel; and (3) cease U.S. support for corrupt governments such as Saudi Arabia.

Globalization is not the sole contributor to contemporary religious violence; however, it is overwhelming identified as one reason for the surge and extent of religious

violence today. It is worth noting that bin Laden, Aum Shinrikyo, as well as Christian militia all have cited “international political conspiracy and an oppressive economic new world order” as causation (Juergensmeyer, 2003:xii).

Since 9/11, reactive responses to Islamic extremism in America are on the rise. The evidence of this escalation is exemplified in current events including, but certainly not limited to: Chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security U.S. Rep. Peter T. King’s commitment to investigate and conduct hearings on Muslim radicalization in the U. S.; former Chairman U.S. Rep. Bennie G. Thompson’s response to King requesting that he broaden the scope of his examination of ideological-based violence to include domestic extremists other than and in addition to Islamic extremists; the Center for Security Policy’s publication of *Sharia: The Threat to America* lead by very prominent national leaders; Daniel Pipes’ publication of *Militant Islam Reaches America*; Oklahoma’s amended state constitution opposing sharia law and the subsequent ruling by a federal judge to block the state amendment; and, the recent Ground Zero Mosque debate. Other sources, including Cincotta’s *Manufacturing the Muslim Menace* expose prejudice in communications and training related to Islam. There is a wealth of source material on the subject matter and current events - such as the United States attempting to engage the Afghani Taliban leadership in dialogue; the legitimacy of drone killings including the killing of Anwar as-Awlaki; and, the execution of Osama bin Laden. Hearings, legislation, claims of violation of rights, and public discourse in general inherently integrate the role of faith into the discussion of religious extremism and terrorism. Regarding the “obligation of religious people to engage the world,” Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, and Lindsay (2004:9) cite anti-Nazi theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s harsh criticism of “those who retreat into the ‘sanctuary of private virtuousness’ when confronted with hideous injustices around him,” noting further Bonhoeffer’s warning that “responsible action involves contamination—one cannot altogether avoid getting ‘dirty hands’ when acting in the political world in responsible ways.”

Hoffman (2002) asserts that education is the key to countering terrorism—education in the form of public diplomacy. The scaling back of U.S. diplomacy and



cultural activities in the aftermath of the Cold War allowed various militants to mature their forces (Hoffman, 2002). However, as Farr (2008:14) notes, even elite academic institutions like Harvard acknowledge that educational curriculum is not addressing “the role of religion in contemporary, historical, or future events.” United States “ignorance, indifference, or confusion about the impact of religion on the moral and political norms necessary to protect the nation’s security” does not serve a 21st century America (Farr, 2008:16). According to Hoffman (2002), education will require caution regarding labeling individuals and groups, those who are religiously devout, who may interpret their Scripture literally. Hoffman (2002) especially advises against the label of “fundamentalist” which in this context is a negative term. Simultaneously, Aslan (2009:xvi) suggests that since the technical definitions of al-Qa’ida include terms such as “the rules” or “the fundamentals” referencing basic tenets of Islam, it may be “appropriate to consider al-Qa’ida a form of Islamic fundamentalism, insofar as that word implies puritanical adherence to the elemental doctrines of a religion . . . at most, al-Qa’ida is an ideological nerve center propagating a series of simple propositions that classify the world into Good and Evil, Friend and Foe, Us and Them.”

Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, and Lindsay (2004:39) note that since 9/11 America is “a little leery about holy wars” as evidenced in the response to former President George W. Bush’s “crusade” remarks. However, they (Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, & Lindsay, 2004) further note that many Americans are receptive to that terminology, preferring “biblical literalism and dogmatic conviction” over mediation “by natural law or universal reason.” Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, and Lindsay (2004:57) point to evolvment of nuanced and diverse ideological American narratives on the “role of morals and foreign policy” and reveal that Americans are “perfectly prepared to accept these nuances in our own faiths but tend to assume a uniformity of view among those we know less well. As on other issues, simplicity of interpretation tends to increase with distance from the case.”

Shattuck (2002) suggests that in addition to military action against terrorism the United States must 1) systematically engage with moderate Muslim voices; 2) build support for civil society in Islamic countries; and, 3) protect the rights of Muslim

Americans which includes a demonstration of adherence to international law and our Constitution—even in the war against terrorism. “There is no central front to the war on terror because their identity cannot be confined to any territorial boundaries,” (Aslan, 2009:121) and terrorism will not be defeated by military might, it demands an understanding of the “forces that have made global Jihadism such an appealing phenomenon, particularly to Muslim youth” (Aslan, 2009:122). Gregg (2009:204) proposes that militaristic response is not the solution, but holds that first giving “individuals and organizations the necessary public space to present their ideas and, hopefully, promote dialogue, debate, and moderation within the faith”; and second, to make “governments accountable for the standards that the United States holds dear—freedom of speech, assembly, and association—would make it look more consistent in its message to support democratization abroad and could offer the United States a chance to improve its image and credibility with the Muslim world.” Aslan (2009:122) warns that “this battle will take place not in the streets of Baghdad or in the mountains of Afghanistan but in the suburbs of Paris, the slums of East London, and the cosmopolitan cities of Berlin and New York. It is a battle that will be waged not against men with guns but against boys with computers, a battle that can be won not with bullets and bombs but with words and ideas.”

## **E. SUMMARY**

The importance of inquiry into the influence and implications between democracy and faith is summarized by Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011:84-85) as first a way to understand global “strides toward democracy”; secondly for understanding secularism’s categorization of religious resurgence as “fundamentalism”; thirdly, for predicting the “trajectory of global politics” and for determining whether “religion and democracy are natural allies”; and finally, “understanding the relationship between religion and democracy is crucial for addressing urgent and contemporary policy debates.” Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011:98) queried the “big picture” or “striking patterns” between religion and democratization, and suggest that “in most cases where democracy was on the march between 1972 and 2009, freedom had a friend in religion.

In consideration of the influence of American faith narratives one must also consider the trajectory of faith in this context, and therefore it is useful to review Toft, Philpott and Shah's (2011:48-49) claim that "major religious actors throughout the world enjoy greater capacity for political influence today than at any time in modern history—and perhaps ever." At the same time, "seeing the world and depicting the enemy in black and white terms is a common practice in wartime. Americans have tended to do so too when the war has been cold and the enemy much less than a state. Throughout the Cold War, America perceived the world as divided between evil communist and moral democrats. In this way, we completely blinded ourselves to the complexities of the world in which we lived. We repeatedly saw communism when we should have seen nationalism, and we allied ourselves with brutal regimes, who daily transgressed the norms in which we believe because they were anticommunist." (Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, (Krauthammer, & Lindsay, 2004:59)) Further, "we seem to be repeating the pattern. We have replaced communism with Islamic fundamentalism as our bogeyman. In so doing, we completely fail to perceive the very real differences between these groups and between these terrorists and others" and more importantly in discovering how American narratives, specifically American faith narratives, influence counterterrorism efforts; "the ability to understand and exploit these differences is one of the keys to the success of our counterterrorist campaign" (Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, & Lindsay, 2004:60).

For America now, the critical question according to Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, and Lindsay (2004:57) may be "what are we to do in the face of an enemy whose actions violate every norm of what we consider civilized behavior, and who, like the previous terrorists, are clearly trying to kill as many innocent noncombatants as possible? This is an enormously difficult question. It is rendered more difficult by the absence of a body of international law that can guide us through our campaign against terrorists. The first thing I believe we have to do is to understand our opponent. There is a tendency to see all religious terrorist groups as an undifferentiated mass of religious fanatics. In fact, there are very real differences among terrorist groups and even among religious terrorist groups." Understanding the opponent may require

broadly employing a scholarly approach to analysis based on a combination of sociology and religion, resulting in what Juergensmeyer (2010:1) describes as “worldview analysts.”

Juergensmeyer (2003:xii) encourages “appreciation of the power that the religious imagination still holds in public life and the recognition that many will find in it a cure for violence instead of a cause.” The United States has defended Muslim peoples against secular regimes multiple times, yet the positives fail to dominate the discussion which suggests that the United States needs to be better at communicating the good things that we do (Hoffman, 2002). Hahir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, and Lindsay (2004:14) surmise that “there is little support for a collapse of the distinction between the political and religious domains of life” advising that “crossing of the fault line” rests in a balanced approach recognizing and weighting the “public and social significance of religion” and its capacity to influence politics. However, according to Farr (2008), U.S. policy must engage and influence religious traditions, globally. The starting point as asserted by Farr (2008:15) is not “any particular religious tradition or any particular secularist philosophy” but should be American national interests, religious realism, religious freedom properly understood and reflected through U.S. policy. Learning to engage in meaningful dialogue with “religious actors and their political theologies” is critical to American democratic policy and national security (Farr, 2008:16). Rapoport (1984:660) acknowledges that we tend to view terror as “crime for the sake of publicity,” but he explains further that “for the holy terrorists, the primary audience is the deity, and depending upon his particular religious conception, it is even conceivable that he does not need or want to have the public witness his deed.” Aslan (2009:11) goes further, admonishing that “it is time to strip this ideological conflict of its religious connotations, to reject the religiously polarizing rhetoric of our leaders and theirs, to focus on the material matters at stake, and to address the earthly issues that always lie behind the cosmic impulse. For although the grievances of the hijackers may have been symbolic, though they may have been merely causes to rally around, to the hundreds of millions of Muslims around the world who watched the towers fall—who were, in fact, the intended audience of that theatrical display of violence—they are nonetheless legitimate

grievances and must be addressed as such.” Aslan (2009:11) argues that even though “addressing these grievances may not satisfy” cosmic warriors, “it will bring their cosmic war back down to earth, where it can be confronted more constructively.”

Regarding the consequences of a shift from secular to religious ideologies, Juergensmeyer (2010:1) contends that whether Marxist or Muslim—both are “ideologies of order,” both “justify a challenge to power, authority, and order”—a key consequence or differential may be the timeline, as the religious struggle may be eternal. As Strindberg and Wörn (2011) remind, recognizing that a multitude of voices, identities, and sects constitute Islam as well as Christianity, Judaism and every other religion of the world is essential. Men live by presuppositions, that is, “the basic way an individual looks at life, his basic world view, the grid through which he see the world. Presuppositions rest upon that which a person considers to be the truth of what exists . . . the basis for their values . . . the basis for their decisions. People are apt to look at the outer theater of action, forgetting the actor who ‘lives in the mind,’ and who therefore is the true actor in the external world.” (Schaeffer, 1976:19–20) In Allen’s (1902:21) classic, *As a Man Thinketh*, Allen notes that “men are anxious to improve their circumstances, but are unwilling to improve themselves, they therefore remain bound.” Schaffer (1976:227) purports that “the majority of the silent majority, young and old, will sustain the loss of liberties without raising their voices as long as their own life-styles are not threatened.”

When queried on how to respond to another’s cosmic claims—specifically whether one should ignore the claims and focus on other issues such as politics or economics or whether one should respond in like manner; Juergensmeyer (2010:1) replied that there exists a third alternative: “a conversation from within the religious community, one that persuades people that they are not engaged in a cosmic war and should redirect their activities.” Juergensmeyer (2010:1) also advises that a combination of focusing on other underlying conditions and initiating dialogue is optimal.

Guiding principles, according to Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, and Lindsay (2004:69), of “restraint, noncombatant immunity, and belief in the rule of law, are all derivable from many religious traditions.” The challenge is to rally Americans from all religious traditions as well as secular traditions behind these

principles (Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, & Lindsay, 2004). “The critique that standard versions of international relations theory or diplomatic engagement have ignored religion is not sufficient. There is now a need for the constructive work of relating religious traditions to world politics in a systematic fashion. It has begun to some degree, but we are in the early stages of the enterprise. The fault line has been crossed in many quarters, but the work ahead is greater than what has been accomplished thus far” (Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, & Lindsay, 2004:15). However, time is of the essence as, according to Schaeffer (1976:23), “culture and the freedoms of people are fragile,” noting that the Greek and Roman cultures evidenced that under pressure, “only time is needed—and often not a great deal of time—before there is a collapse.” Schaeffer (1976:227) concludes that “it all sounds too familiar. We have come a long road . . . and, we are back in Rome.”

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### **III. METHODOLOGY**

#### **A. TEXTUAL ANALYSIS DEFINED**

Textual Analysis may be defined most simply as analysis or interpretation or meaning of something (McKee, 2003: Kindle location 59). According to McKee, “the word ‘text’ has poststructuralist implications for thinking about the production of meaning” (2003: Kindle location 59). McKee succinctly explains three methodological approaches or responses within the textual analysis framework: (1) “a realist response: my culture has got it right. It simply describes reality. Other cultures are wrong”; (2) “a structuralist response: all these cultures seem to be making sense of the world differently; but really, underneath, they have common structures. They’re not all that different; people across the world are basically the same”; and (3) “a poststructuralist approach: all these cultures do indeed make sense of the world differently; and it is impossible to say that one is right and the others are wrong. In a sense, people from different cultures experience reality differently” (2003: Kindle location 132).

Textual analysis and content analysis are often used interchangeably. However, it should be noted that the methodology applied here is not the methodology described by Krippendorff (1980). Krippendorff’s content analysis measures relative space generally assigned to printed text. That is, it measures, generally by comparison, textual real estate consumed on specific issues. The method seems to employ a type of quantitative analysis within a broader qualitative methodology. However, Krippendorff (1980:10) states that “content analysis is developing a methodology of its own that enables the researcher to plan, to communicate, and to critically evaluate a research design independently of its results.” Therefore, one may assume that McKee built upon Krippendorff’s original methodology.

Further research regarding textual analysis (Fairclough, 2003) evidences a trend to broaden textual analysis to integrate social processes and sociological theories. For example, Fairclough (2003:6) states that “there is a need to develop approaches to test analysis through a transdisciplinary dialogue with perspectives on language and discourse



within social theory and research in order to develop our capacity to analyze texts as elements in social processes.” Fairclough (2003:7) suggests that social research themes should include “legitimation of social action and social orders” with themes designed to “give a ‘universal’ status to particular discourses and representations, ideologies, citizenship and ‘public space.’” Further, Fairclough (2003:160) acknowledges, regarding social identity, that “poststructuralist and postmodern theory has closely associated identity with discourse.” However, Fairclough (2003:160) argues that the association is “problematic partly because people are not only prepositioned in how they participate in social events and texts, they are also social agents who do things, create things, and change things.” Within the scope of the methodology applied to this research, one could argue that Fairclough’s (2003:206, 208) concluding comments on textual analysis support McKee’s methodological framework, as well as the application of that framework within the context of this research. For example, Fairclough (2003:206) states that “discourses are diverse representations of social life which are inherently positioned” and “one of the mysteries of the dialectics of discourse is the process in which what begins as self-conscious rhetorical deployment becomes ‘ownership’—how people become unconsciously positioned within a discourse” (Fairclough, 2003:208).

The methodological framework of the textual analysis applied herein is based on historical evidence of, or contributions to, American faith narratives; theoretical influences and implications of those particular narratives as related to countering Islamic terrorism; and development of both historical narratives as well as emerging narratives that will impact the future and securing of American faith and freedom. The method employed herein should not be viewed simply as either an analysis of historical and academic facts or truth claims, but rather uses existing narrative traditions as a foundation for constructing American faith narratives of today both as a means to preserve essential historical narratives and to effectively contribute to the creation of the ever-evolving American faith narratives.

McKee differentiates between cultural “value judgments” and “sense-making practices” (McKee, 2003: Kindle location 75), noting that sense-making practices go deeper than value judgments; that is, “people from different sense-making systems can

literally see the world differently” (McKee, 2003: Kindle location 125). For example, within the context of this research and specifically in terms of Social Identity Theory and the Mediterranean region, a more group-oriented culture may influence group extremism more than an individual-oriented culture (Brannan, Esler, & Strindberg, 2001).

## **B. INTEGRATING SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY AND POSITIONING THEORY**

Given the very nature of post-9/11 American reactions to Islamism, along with common acceptance of differing religious views between international and intranational cultures and sects, the poststructuralist approach to textual analysis is the most appropriate methodological treatment for this research. This approach to textual analysis, according to McKee (2003: Kindle location 281), does not imply that “anything goes”; rather it gives reason to “what were and what are the reasonable sense-making practices of cultures: rather than just repeating our own interpretation and calling it reality.” That is where for purposes of this particular research analyses Social Identity Theory and Positioning Theory apply. The researcher views Social Identity Theory as a specific analytical model fitting under an umbrella of post-structural textual analysis. Further, for purposes of this research, Social Identity Theory provides the framework for Positioning Theory and its application herein. Simply put, Social Identity Theory becomes the “what” and Positioning Theory the “how.” McKee (2003: Kindle location 247), describes the “interesting part of the analysis” as “how these texts tell their stories, how they represent the world, and how they make sense of it.”

## **C. TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: WHAT, HOW, AND WHY**

The methodology goes beyond identifying “lessons learned” and making subsequent recommendations; specifically, textual analysis is a method for on-going analyses informing real time the what, how and why of narrative development and exchange.

Samples of claims and counter-claims are depicted through application of textual analysis, Social Identity Theory and, more specifically, Positioning Theory. The method

weaves lessons learned based on narrative samples within a particular context and time frame with lessons learned or to be learned based on questions yet to be asked or yet to be analyzed within same contexts or temporal considerations. For example, in 2001 immediately following the terrorist attacks of 11 September, former U.S. President George W. Bush's approval rating soared. However, as temporal and contextual conditions changed—that is, memories shortened, time passed, U.S. soldier casualties mounted, Osama bin Laden was elusive—in a very few months, his approval ratings plummeted. The following narrative claims and counter-claims are supported by positions, speech acts, and story lines for each sample scenario.

As the literature reveals, American speculation and reaction to the catalyst(s) in the war on terror is diverse. Further, America's response to Islamic terrorism has been more aligned with traditional warfare response tactics, as is evidenced in America's current pursuit for dialogue with the Taliban. The associated ideologies and subsequent response to a war as declared by the enemy and involving truth claims espoused by the enemy will require a grand strategy designed to change hearts and minds—one that must consider faith narratives and sufficient counter-claims to same. It is suggested, therefore, that textual analysis, Social Identity Theory and Positioning Theory are excellent tools for developing a grand strategy. Specifically, these tools are appropriate for developing scenario based strategic plans, a strategic methodology recommended by many experts within the field. Scenario based strategic planning in this context probes and queries the “what if.” Strategically probing “what if” and analyzing American faith narratives through textual analysis, Social Identity Theory and specifically, Positioning Theory proffers significant contributions to more positive perceptions of the United States; to a more informed public; to a more skilled national analytical capability; and ultimately, to a more secure nation.

## **IV. RESULTS**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

This research uses textual analysis, Social Identity Theory and Positioning Theory effectively to explore the parameters of the cosmic nature of, and American response to, Islamism. It also compares and contrasts diverse American reactions to Islamism in a cosmic context and provides analyses based on emerging themes, such as: (1) the origins of American faith narratives and their place in the public square, as well as their contributions or implications related to the longevity or perpetual nature of terrorism; (2) sample narrative applications based on proposed existing world views depicted through Social Identity Theory and Positioning Theory; and (3) future storylines or positions that may contribute to countering terrorism.

### **B. ORIGINS OF AMERICAN FAITH NARRATIVES**

The first theme, origins of American faith narratives, is analyzed including factors contributing to the establishment of the country through to recent history as recorded through the United States' participation in the global community. The analysis includes separation and integration of church and state, a significant contributing factor as a foundational catalyst on one side and a guiding parameter in the response on the other side.

On one side, the foundational role of religion in establishing the United States of America is complex. The profound foresight exhibited by the nation's founding fathers is evidenced in their unsurpassed ability to step outside of their personal beliefs in envisioning and constructing the framework that would become our rule of law. The record indicates that many, if not a majority, of those men were deists. Yet, they saw that in a new and difficult terrain the hope in preserving liberty for each man to openly and publically proclaim and interpret his faith was based solely on preserving that same liberty for all.

Yet, on the other side and in time, man has sought to simplify the complexity. For example, Appleby (2000:1) highlights the “development and institutionalization of the ‘public’ and ‘private’ realms of life as separate cultural and social spaces. The public-private distinction informs the way many Americans understand and practice religion,” based on an assumption that “the principle of church-state separation dictates” that religion is private “in the strictest sense.” Appleby (2000:1) further notes the irony in the “minimalist approach,” citing the involvement of “religiously motivated individuals and communities” in making “important contribution to the public debate about a range of contested issues.” The complexity is obvious as Appleby (2000:2) aptly observes that “billions of people structure their daily routines around the spiritual practices enjoined by a religious tradition, and they often do so quite ‘publicly.’ Dress, eating habits, gender relations, negotiations of time, space, and social calendar—all unfold beneath a sacred canopy.” The following analyses, through sampling of select American faith narratives, compare and contrast strengths and weaknesses of relevant social constructs and positions representing these practices.

### **C. SAMPLING AMERICAN FAITH NARRATIVES**

Faith narratives as positions, the second theme, highlighting select scenarios depicting American faith narrative issues, are given significant weight as faith, fear and underlying ideologies emerge through identity constructs and positions. Specifically, truth claims associated with American faith narratives are analyzed from contradictory perspectives, offering advantages and revelations associated with understanding the mind and heart of the actors in the theatre called terrorism. These analyses compare and contrast diverse views with each scenario viewed temporally and contextually.

The story lines that frame this subject are many. Only a few are provided herein. First, an example of the narratives that defined American origins from a group perspective or that of the founding fathers is reviewed. Secondly, an example of an individual perspective is analyzed depicting the negative and positive consequences of a particular position taken by former U.S. President George W. Bush. Thirdly, a hermeneutic perspective is explored through a turn of the twentieth century, secular

application of sacred text. The following narrative examples are not proffered as unique to other story lines nor are they proffered as summative—only as exemplary to understanding the nature and dimensions of relevant and influential narratives. Again, each story line or positioning scenario has a themed analytical frame based on time or context.

**1. Positioning Scenario 1**

Positioning Scenario # 1: Group Perspective—America’s Founding Fathers

Analytical Continuum = Temporal

Position (s)

*Founding Fathers right to establish  
governance structure of a new nation  
with a basis of religious freedom*

Illocutionary force(s)

*Rule of law will support individual  
freedoms, without national religion*

Story line(s)

*(Positive) America—land of the  
free, home of brave  
(Positive) Agreement on guiding principles  
with Biblical basis  
(Positive) Agreement that state run religion  
imposed on religious freedom  
(Positive-Negative) Freedom of religion for  
the Christian, the Jew, the Gentoo, and the  
Mahamdan*

Analytical Continuum = Contextual

Position (s)

*Founding Fathers right to establish  
governance structure of a new nation  
with a basis of religious freedom*

Illocutionary force(s)	Story line(s)
<i>Rule of law will support individual freedoms, without national religion</i>	<p><i>(Positive) America—land of the free, home of brave</i></p> <p><i>(Positive) Agreement on guiding principles with Biblical basis</i></p> <p><i>(Positive) Agreement that state run religion imposed on religious freedom</i></p> <p><i>(Positive-Negative) Freedom of religion for the Christian, the Jew, the Gentoo, and the Mahadam</i></p>

## 2. Scenario 1 Analysis

The Founding Fathers are identified or positioned as part of a very unique, small group of individuals. For example, they were all white males, immigrants or direct products of immigrants to a new land, and many were deists. They employed Biblical principles in establishing the framework for rule of law in their new nation. The living history, the narratives of their tradition, provided for them knowledge of the ills and limitations associated with state run religion. They fought for their lives and their liberties and seemingly found great commonality in moving from a not so distant past. A commonality that allowed the deist, the Christian and those of other faith orientations to accomplish in unison a monumental enduring legal framework, while contemplating the future—a future of freedoms that would enable religious equality for all Americans.

America’s founding fathers acted on their perceived “right” to establish a governance structure based on rule of law inscribed in the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution and its Amendments. A rule of law based on Biblical principles and shrouded in an idea of individual freedoms, including religious freedom. The founding fathers assumed their positions in these episodes constituting national origins. Many would describe these “positions” as roles—roles assigned to leaders. However, it is argued herein that these examples constitute positions rather than roles; as by definition, roles are more stable and fixed than positions and most of these leaders had other fixed or

stable roles, such as professional responsibilities that would last much longer, consuming much more of their lives. The positions of each member of the group constituting the ‘founding fathers’ could obviously be analyzed individually, but that is beyond the scope of this work in this scenario. The reference provided in this analysis is best suited to the group as the accomplishments evidenced through the story lines were products of group performance and many times of group consensus.

The sample story lines likely did alter and become refined as a result of the temporal dimension of positioning. For example, the narratives that contributed to the values associated with the desire to sacrifice as necessary to form this nation were years in the making—yet there prevailed a consistency in the consensus of the direction for a new nation. The formation of the guiding documents took years and there was not always consensus; however, there was a guiding commonality based on inalienable rights that again provided consistency in the story lines. An interesting observation is offered as the temporal dimension of the development of the group story lines did not impact the endurance of the story lines. However, one difference is highlighted based on the temporal dimension of positioning analysis—that is, one particular story line in the group positioning analysis—freedom of religion for the Christian, the Jew, and the Gentoo, as stated by the founding fathers—indicates a positive connotation at the time and over time, and based on current attitudes regarding Islam and American fear associated with sharia law the story line is acknowledged but is highly questioned and perceived negatively, often referred to as “Islamophobia.” The research suggests that the meaning of this story line is currently questioned or has changed to a negative based on a response referred to as social competition (Strindberg & Wärn, 2011). The original positive connotation of that story line combined with the commonality imbedded within their group identity contributed to the lack of competition. Conversely, with the much increased diversity of the American population at present and with the negative American connotation associated with freedom of religion, by many, for the “Gentoo” or more specifically for the “Mahomitan,” the result has been a resistance—an act of social competition—by many Americans to accept that the same American foundation for freedom of religion for the Christian, the Jew, or the atheist applies equally to the Muslim.



The land established as the land of the free and the home of brave is still regarded as such. The guiding principles have endured with little modification and interestingly, the process for modification has endured as well. More importantly, the Biblical basis for these principles has yet to be replaced by any competing ideology, whether secularism, communism, atheism, Islamism or any other.

Classics, such as the McGuffey readers, were used by the new nation to teach its young academics, relying on Biblical text to do so; however, there is no evidence that the founders ever considered claiming a national religion and certainly did not, according to record, confuse the issue of a state run religion or a state sanctioned religion with the religious freedom they fought to secure. It is not suggested in this research that teaching religion(s) in public schools is a solution. However, it is clearly suggested that America has failed to teach generations “about” religion, specifically the impact that religion had on American origins and the commonly accepted national faith narratives. Teaching or transferring of these narratives as “living history” is critical in countering religiously motivated terrorism, or claims of such. Simply put, understanding faith narratives is critical to developing strategies, offering accurate and in-depth intelligence analyses, and for seeking peaceful solutions in the global challenge that is terrorism.

### 3. Positioning Scenario 2

Positioning Scenario # 2: Individual Perspective—George W. Bush (2001)

Analytical Continuum = Temporal

Position (s)

*Bush’s duty as Commander in Chief to respond to 9/11 attacks on U.S. soil*

Illocutionary force(s)

Story line(s)

*Warning: We will find you, kill you*

*(Positive-2001) America—land of the free, home of brave*

*(Negative-post-2001) Question of ability/inability to find bin Laden*

*(Negative-Positive post-2001) Bush's response equivalent of like (cosmic) rhetoric*

*(Negative-Positive post-2001) response based on Bush's evangelical convictions*

Analytical Continuum = Contextual

Position (s)

*Bush's duty as Commander in Chief  
to respond to 9/11 attacks on U.S. soil*

Illocutionary force(s)

*You are with us or against us;  
Choose us or them*

Story line(s)

*(Positive-2001) America—land of the free, home of brave  
(Positive-2003) America will not tolerate terrorism or supporters of terrorism  
(Negative-post-2004) Question of WMDs in Iraq  
(Negative-Positive 2011) We did what we could with the information we had*

**4. Scenario 2 Analysis**

George W. Bush, the 43rd President of the United States, was positioned on 11 September 2001 to lead America through the most devastating attacks against America since Pearl Harbor. Within the framework of this analysis, however, one must remember that Bush's assigned 'position' as Commander-in-Chief was not the only facet of identity relevant for analyses. George W. Bush was the President of the United States, but he was also known as a Texan, a veteran, a Christian, a patriot, and a white male husband and father, etc. Former President Bush's specific 'position' discussed here was assigned through his duty as Commander-in-Chief, but it can be noted for this discussion that the 'position' assigned resides at the nucleus of concentric circles which include each element of his social identity.

Bush's assigned duty as Commander-in-Chief constituted, in this scenario, a duty to respond. A duty couched in chaos as the nation scrambled to discover what was happening and who was behind the attacks. The chaos extended to the rubble that was the Twin Towers. Heroic efforts to rescue survivors and recover the thousands of citizens and responders missing amongst the rubble saturated the global media.

America, land of the free and home of the brave, called for a response—a reckoning—in the immediacy. Bush's initial response came in the form of a warning: “we will find you—we will kill you.” Americans appeared to accept, even admire, the initial response. It may be said that Bush “acted” when the nation called for action. He appeared to bring order to the chaos—his approval ratings soared.

However, as time passed and bin Laden and his comrades were not captured or killed immediately, the nation began to question the response. Shortly, the nation appeared divided—divided over Islam and American Muslims; divided over strategy for capturing or killing the terrorists; divided over a strategy of a “war on terror”—some arguing that one cannot wage war against a tactic. One could argue that Americans demand instant gratification and tolerate little other; others could argue that the politics and rhetoric were short-sighted, simply countering cosmic rhetoric with cosmic rhetoric. The cosmic rhetoric found its origin in the terrorist's claims of honoring “God's will” and carrying out jihad against the “infidel.” The counter rhetoric has been criticized as counter productive and some argue that it was based on Bush's evangelical faith rather than his “duty” as Commander-in-Chief.

Contextually, the Bush approval ratings soared as Americans were expressing patriotism, concern for others, and even faith more than had been evidenced since World War II. Bush's support was recorded in Congressional voting to call on nations to side with the United States—to choose “us or them.” However, the pendulum increasingly swung from the positive, approving frame to the negative, disapproving frame. The nation moved from the renewed patriotism in all that was American frame of mind to a questioning frame. Specifically, one can trace the origin of the questions to a point when allies began to question their role(s) and commitment to a “war on terror.” More specifically, questions mounted as consideration of Iraq's possession of weapons of mass

destruction (WMDs) surfaced. Chaos again battled order and with the confusing public statements regarding the Iraqi WMDs, Bush lost voter confidence. Bush’s “action” began to be framed as “reaction.” Insiders are divided. Rice, as Secretary of State at the time, publically and emphatically states that the administration acted based on the intelligence provided and in the best interest of quashing terrorism. Others argue that the Iraqi invasion was nothing less than a political move centered on U.S. economic interests. Contextually, Bush’s options for action may have been limited, as it is not known whether the nation would have tolerated a less forceful response.

The record speaks and in modern times it speaks more rapidly than ever before. Technological capabilities enabling instant sharing of information globally have altered that landscape. Foregone incidents of such national significance took years to frame, analyze and critique. Only further time or future attacks and subsequent response will tell whether temporal demands held other options for George W. Bush.

## 5. Positioning Scenario 3

### Positioning Scenario # 3: Sacred Text/Hermeneutic Perspective—Allen (1903)

Analytical Continuum = Temporal

Position (s)

*Allen’s right as individual to interpret sacred text  
seeking a pure, enlightened, godly state of being*

Illocutionary force(s)

*Observation: Freedom of thought & freedom of expression there is much controversy and much confusion—  
Never were religious sects so numerous*

Story line(s)

*(Positive-1903) Offered relief from the complexity and chaos of traditional religion  
(Positive-1903) Integrated multi-religious texts offering simple, purist solutions  
(Negative- 2011) Claimed goal of dominance or competition or traditions  
(Positive-2011) Evidenced timeless observation of religious struggle*

Analytical Continuum = Contextual

Position (s)

*Allen's right as individual to interpret sacred text  
seeking a pure, enlightened, godly state of being*

Illocutionary force(s)

Story line(s)

*Admonishment: As a Man Thinketh,  
so is he*

*(Positive-1903) using Biblical references  
oft quoting Jesus and Buddha  
(Positive-1903) Offered relief from the  
complexity and chaos of traditional religion  
(Negative- 2011) Questionable relevance in  
era of resurgence of religion  
(Positive-2011) Evidenced as proof of  
peaceful integration of religious ideologies*

**6. Scenario 3 Analysis**

James Allen, author of the classic “As a Man Thinketh,” was born in Leicester, England, in 1864 and died there in 1912. Allen was orphaned at age 15 with the unexpected death of his father, and he began to work to care for his family. Allen abandoned his career in business before the age of 40 and dedicated his life to contemplation and writing. In a short ten-year writing career, he produced 20 titles. Allen’s parents were protestant Methodist, but Allen approached his contemplation, study and writing from a secularist perspective, obviously highly influenced by the concept of Enlightenment. For reasons unknown, maybe an internal struggle to reconcile his parent’s faith with his own, Allen often used sacred text as foundational or thematic ideologies for his writing and often quoted Jesus and Buddha.

Allen’s “As a Man Thinketh,”—his most famous work,—depicts well his interpretation of the power of man’s thought. For example, Allen states that “man is made or unmade by himself; in the armoury of thought he forges the weapons by which he destroys himself; he also fashions the tools with which he builds for himself heavenly mansions of joy and strength and peace. By the right choice and true application of

thought, man ascends to the Divine Perfection; by the abuse and wrong application of thought, he descends below the level of the beast. Between these two extremes are all the grades of character, and man is their maker . . . They themselves are makers of themselves. By virtue of the thoughts, which they choose and encourage; that mind is the master-weaver, both of the inner garment of character and the outer garment of circumstance, and that, as they may have hitherto woven in ignorance and pain they may now weave in enlightenment and happiness” (1902:8).

Specifically, the title “As a Man Thinketh” is influenced by a verse in the [Bible](#) from the [Book of Proverbs](#) chapter 23 verse 7, “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” The full passage, taken from the King James Version, is as follows: “Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats: For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee. The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up, and lose thy sweet words.” The passage seems to suggest that one should consider the true motivations of a person who is being uncharacteristically generous before accepting his generosity—while seemingly the same in the title and content of Allen’s work; the passage is interpreted by Allen in a different context. The Biblical passage is commonly interpreted as referring to another person; in Allen’s work the passage is interpreted to refer to the reader himself.

In a 1912 publication, “Light on Life’s Difficulties,” Allen states that “when freedom of thought and freedom of expression abound, there is much controversy and much confusion. Yet it is from such controversial confusion that the simple facts of life emerge, attracting us with their eternal uniformity and harmony, and appealing forcibly to us with their invisible simplicity and truth. We are living in an age of freedom and mental conflict. Never were religious sects so numerous. Schools—philosophical, occult, and otherwise—abound, and each is eager for the perpetuation and dominance of its own explanation of the universe.”

Ironically, over a century later, “never were religious sects so numerous” is restated and reemphasized, but primarily at this time from a position of evidencing the error of the secularism thesis. Temporally, Allen’s work suggests that freedom of thought and freedom of expression could tend to result in confusion or controversy. Allen’s work

therefore sought to offer relief from the complexity and chaos of traditional religion by integrating religious texts into his work and subsequently producing simple, purist solutions to the issues of life. Allen's work appears to embody the timeless, ongoing contemplation, as well as the more traditional religious struggle associated with man's quest to understand the meaning of life and to reach the ultimate position of Enlightenment.

American faith narratives for analysis in this context are limitless. For example, the position of the American female Muslim wearing the hijab offers an excellent scenario. History indicates that in ancient Muslim tradition the hijab was seen as a status symbol and then was later converted to a religious symbol. Another interesting scenario is presented through the recent debates over the Ground Zero Mosque in New York City. Finally, one could explore the multitude of positions apparent in the public memorial service held in the aftermath of the 2011 Arizona shootings that killed and injured many, including the critical injury of former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords. In the memorial service, President Obama read scripture from Psalm 46:4-5 and Job 30:26-28; Secretary Napolitano read from Isaiah 40:1-5 and 40:26-31; and Attorney General Holder read from 2 Cor. 4:13—5:1. Interestingly, specifically within the scope of this research, the service began with a traditional Native American Blessing. Media reports, or the lack thereof, indicate no significant backlash for the religious nature of the public address. This example leaves one to question whether Americans are more accepting of religion in death than in life.

#### **D. FUTURE IMPLICATIONS OF AMERICAN FAITH NARRATIVES**

The final theme analysis offers implications for the future of public discourse, specifically as related to countering terrorism, and policy through the integration of American faith narratives. Dialogue, communications, identity, and positioning in this environment explore possibilities and opportunities for the future American faith narratives, as well as implicit and explicit implications enhancing (1) an internal (national) faith literacy; (2) a positive and relevant global perception of American faith constructs; and (3) a reduction in terrorists' threats and attacks on the United States and

its citizens. The ultimate challenge is highlighted herein based on America's tendency to segregate faith from national dialogue and policy, and, more importantly, based on the jihadist's insistence on integration of the same. The significance of this research is discovered in the very nature of the American counter to Islamism, specifically (1) the religious claims made by Muslim extremists; (2) an increase in primarily negative reactive American responses to Islamic extremism; (3) the 9/11 attacks on American soil and threats of future attacks on the United States and U.S. interests; the impact of American military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan; and (4) ever evolving evidence through storylines.

If only future story lines and narratives could apply lessons learned from the past. If Americans could approach or make sense of religion and faith narratives as they have baseball or music narratives. Baseball and music have great "living histories" and subsequently, rich narratives. Both are studied in varying degrees in educational environments, but primarily kept alive through cultural narratives—rich narratives that are transferred from one generation to the next. Music identifies generations often known (identified) by "their" music. With baseball, social identity associations are apparent as fans exhibit diverse demographic divides of geography, race, gender, economics, etc. Baseball (American as apple pie), known as the nation's pastime by the 1860s (long before video games, etc.), brought diverse immigrant populations together in ball parks across the nation in communal fashion to simply enjoy the sport. The race barrier with ball players was broken in baseball long before it was even challenged on American streets.

Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, and Lindsay (2004:18) surmise that Americans "will pursue their policies of reducing terrorism and spreading democracy more successfully the more they come to understand the following: that religious communities are most likely to support democracy, peace, and freedom for other faiths, and least likely to take up the gun or form dictatorships, when governments allow them freedom to worship, practice, and express their faith freely and when religious communities in turn renounce their claims to permanent office or positions of policy-making authority." Evidence supporting this argument is found in national and



international law and policy; reliable surveys indicating American's identity with faith; historical evidence of narrative foundations; theoretical evidence; and, subject matter experts on faith and terrorism.

The basic strategic requirement of war—to know the enemy—according to Hoffman (2010) is a U.S. strategic failure. This lack of knowledge precludes penetration and destruction of the enemy from within. According to Hoffman (2002), an effective counterterrorism strategy, including anticipation, preemption, prevention, and deterrence, requires knowing the enemy and is critical to interrupting terrorists' recruitment and radicalization. It seems logical that to know an enemy requires some degree of knowing self and on that basis, this work explores history, social constructs, and the subsequent development of American faith narratives. Understanding the roots of terrorism requires a willingness to learn and know the motives and goals of terrorism (Schwartz, Dunkel, & Waterman, 2009), even if learning and knowing makes one uncomfortable; results in challenging discourse; and alters approaches to waging war.

## V. DISCUSSION

### A. INTRODUCTION

Addressing American fear of faith and related discourse, as indicated through the evolving national faith narratives, is essential in effectively countering modern day terrorism and to sustaining and securing the republic founded upon unique and enduring democratic principles. It is proposed herein that the “fear” of public discourse on faith is manifested as uncomfortableness related to the unknown. The unknown in this context is described by Prothero (2007) as illiteracy. Faith, today, is cited as a conversation stopper—inappropriate subject matter in social and political settings. However, America, and the world, is now at a crossroads—what to do with faith. We have been taught to integrate the secularism thesis into public life and simultaneously taught that religion was a private matter, yet in reality the resurgence of religion contradicts the educationally and philosophically established frames. Not only will America choose now how to handle faith in the American public square, but America will now choose how to handle international policy to support unique foreign democratic environments, to include supporting human rights and religious freedom.

Scholars (Hehir, Walzer, Richardson, Telhami, Krauthammer, & Lindsay, 2004); (Juergensmeyer, 2010); (Toft, Philpott, & Shah, 2011) claim that the secularism thesis had it right for a time, but that time is past; that the secularism thesis was simply misguided; that it is falling apart; and, that a new, grand thesis emerges in the modern day resurgence of religion. Further, research indicates that globalization and the advent of rapid and advanced communications technology combined lend themselves to more rapid and advanced promulgation of ideas and beliefs. No longer confined to philosophical time frames of old or to ivory towers and religious organizations—but open to the Internet and instant messaging—ideas and beliefs will now be molded and influenced as never before. Evidence of these emerging technologies and their global implications are readily apparent in the Arab Spring. Further, as Aslan (2009) purports and countless others agree, America’s reaction to 11 September 2001 was to counter cosmic rhetoric

and action with like rhetoric and action—actions and rhetoric that became widely known, interpreted and analyzed nearly instantaneously. Kimball (2008:186) warns that Americans should use caution to avoid the pitfall of “interpreting the larger religious tradition through the narrow lens of extremists’ behavior.” Therefore, how America frames her faith narratives is an urgent issue and no longer confined to the private lives of individuals or groups, but now center stage in the broader public arena with global implications.

## **B. LIMITATIONS**

This research serves to fill a gap in the American public discourse on Islamism as related to the developing American faith narratives, specifically as related to framing the U.S. response in a cosmic context. The literature on the independent topics, religion, terrorism, Social Identity Theory, and Position Theory, is vast; but integrated analyses of the specific subject matter within the discipline of homeland security have heretofore been limited. Further, there does not appear to be a significant body of literature that addresses more fundamental questions such as how America positions herself within this context. The limited body of literature that compares and contrasts the different dynamics of a global war, a holy war and a cosmic war is even more dramatically limited regarding the various approaches to waging a successful campaign against radical Islam.

The U.S. ideology of the separation of church and state is challenged through exploration of the intent of the Establishment Clause and related misinterpretations. As has been tested and ruled on in the highest courts, it is acceptable within the confines of the U.S. Constitution and its Amendments to teach in public settings “about” religion—it is not acceptable to teach religion. Religion and terrorism are complex and controversial. In anticipation of challenge based on the controversial nature of the subject matter, this research addresses claims and counter-claims neutrally and attempts to offer diverse samples to support conclusions and recommendations.

The conclusions will not be narrow and will likely not reveal an easily acceptable solution to complex and controversial underlying faith issues evidenced through

storylines, but will present options for discourse in securing the U.S. homeland and preserving the freedoms set forth by the founding fathers, enabling every American freedom of and freedom from religion.

### **C. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

(1) Preservation of constitutionally guaranteed freedoms of and from religion—rule of law—is essential to U.S. efforts in countering cosmic terrorism claims and the ability to advance faith narratives. According to Kimball (2008:209), many of these traditions “contain time-tested wisdom and provide the frameworks for ethical and legal systems.” In approaching “wars against terror in a strategic and legal context,” Bobbitt (2008:545) advises that “having prepared, however, we will act to preclude such tragedies; having acted in time, we will have preserved our liberties despite the historic suffering we could not in the end prevent; having protected our liberties while enduring such awful pain, we will have prevailed. We must each play our part as though the entire plot depended upon it, because it just might” (2008:547).

American fear of terrorism may be driven more by Americans divided over religion as an instrument or as a means to achieve their own personal or political ends than driven by radical Islamists. To this degree, America is poised to repeat the misguided history that contributed to the full blown development of secularism, which has now been abandoned by most, even its original proponents. This position is supported by evidence of Americans using faith/religion to argue and divide against one another over particulars of faith; not for the sake of belief or promotion of faith, but for the purpose of promoting political agendas. This evidence is often found not between faiths, or between faith and adherents to secularism, but among believers with faith as a common denominator. Further, it is proposed that Americans participating in these dividing tactics are not the majority of believers of any or all faith traditions but are instead the vocal faith minority. It is suggested that if the silent majority become passionate about preserving American constitutionally guaranteed freedoms to believe as they choose, they may have the capacity to educate the vocal minority and to clarify global misunderstandings about the American people as a whole.

(2) American faith narratives should be studied and explored in detail for understanding implications of particular positions expressed through scenarios and story lines in the global battle to counter terrorism. Appleby (2000:16) rationalized that “religious tradition is a vast and complex body of wisdom built up over many generations. Its foundational sources—sacred scriptures and/or codified oral teachings and commentaries—express and interpret the experiences of the sacred that led to the formation of the religious community. A religious tradition is no less than these sources, but it is always more.” It is the tradition and “more” in this context that becomes the teaching tool.

Faith narratives, specifically Islamophobic narratives and subsequent counter arguments, are evident in current publications offered by American think tanks. Americans, of all faiths, cannot ignore the power of religion at this point in American history. More importantly, it is critical that Americans understand the power that resides within the faith narratives. These narratives will continue to evolve with or without the accuracy that the majority can lend to the legitimacy or validity of the narratives. Therefore, it is suggested that overt strategies to guide the development and sustainment of American faith narratives begin first in the homeland as opposed to the acceptance of a foreign ascribed position or narrative as cosmically ascribed by bin Laden and al Qaeda—hijacking religion as justification for war. Social Identity Theory and Positioning Theory are excellent tools for developing a grand strategy encompassing the role of American faith narratives. Specifically, these tools are appropriate for developing scenario based strategic plans, a strategic methodology recommended by many experts within the field, designed to probe and query the “what if.”

Subsequently, the narratives must be thoroughly and effectively disseminated globally as America cannot afford to allow any radical minority, Islamic or other, to continue to drive American faith narratives. For example, the divide over Islamic intent to establish a worldwide Caliphate is promoted primarily by radicals on all sides of the issue. The majority of Islam makes no such claim. Likewise, continuing to ignore American faith narratives in the public square and in the educational environment may contribute further to the existing American religious illiteracy. Literacy, in this context, is

essential for adequate security and intelligence analyses (Juergensmeyer's worldview analysts); for a basic working knowledge of theological constructs useful in deconstructing truth claims; and for future development of related domestic and international policy.

(3) It is proposed that future research on the development of American faith narratives in countering terrorism give significant weight to integrating Juergensmeyer's "redirection of theology" and "worldview analysts," (2010:1), as well as Moghaddam's (2010:138) omniculturalism.

The divide over religious particulars is evidenced more prominently among faith traditions as opposed to between faith and secular traditions. Americans should not expect consensus for coexistence as proposed through assimilation or multiculturalism as that consensus is yet to be realized. Each of these frameworks for learning and relearning as proposed are relatively new. Redirection of theology is obviously not a new phenomenon in general. For example, in the absence of redirection of theology the Reformation and Vatican II would not have occurred. However, within the context of this research, Juergensmeyer's admonishment for redirection is noted as he states that "when a struggle becomes sacralized" and "the use of violence becomes legitimized," then an "inescapable scenario of hostility does not end until the mythology is redirected, or until one side or the other has been destroyed" (2003: 166.) Worldview analysts, as described by Juergensmeyer (2010:1), present a broader, well-versed approach to analysis within this context by combining social and religious studies, seeking to "understand the other person's frame of reference." Omniculturalism (Moghaddam, 2010:139) establishes a foundation for recognizing, understanding and appreciating individual and group, cultural "commonalities" first and then at an appropriate time in an individual's cognitive development, a second step is taken "highlighting distinctive features of each group." According to Moghaddam (2010:139), "the celebration of differences takes place only after people have appreciated and celebrated their commonalities."

(4) Whether redirecting theology, advancing worldview analysis, promoting omniculturalism, or defining futuristic approaches to peaceful coexistence among diverse religious adherents and abusers, Americans should recognize the power of American faith

narratives in global society. This recognition and subsequent strategic development may be, according to considerable research, best accomplished through scenario planning (Bobbitt, 2008). But how is this accomplished, and why dialogue? Dallmayr's response is sufficient: "The simple answer—but one that requires a great deal of unpacking—is that dialogue has been egregiously neglected in modern Western history" (Michael & Petito, 2009:31). "As Gadamer argues in *Truth and Method*, the essence of dialogue is the art of asking the right question and providing the appropriate answer, whereas the failure of conversation is often due to the fact that people who think they know better cannot even ask the right questions. In order to be able to ask, one must want to know, and that means knowing that one does not know." This self-consciousness of ignorance, which is so clearly demonstrated in the Socratic *Apology* and other dialogues, is not to be put to an end by a definitive answer. In fact, as Gadamer observes, in dialogue the appropriate answer always leaves the question open for further questioning. Thus dialogue as the exchange and development of questions and answers is an open-ended process. "The significance of questioning consists in revealing the questionability of what is questioned," says Gadamer (Michael & Petito, 2009:204–205).

Finally, education is essential. Americans learning or knowing themselves is a process that requires more than dialogue. This process requires reviving historical narratives in an attempt to refrain from repeating mistakes of the past. S. H. Tob (Michael & Petito, 2009:84) offers four pedagogical principles for this "necessarily complex" endeavor: (1) holism, integrating various levels and modes of education; (2) common values; (3) value and strategy for dialogue, e.g., one that does not present the teacher in a "role of authoritarian 'experts.'" A dialogical strategy, however, cultivates a more horizontal teacher-learner relationship that both educates and learns. The realities and voices of learners yield essential inputs into the learning process, and the learners have opportunities for critical reflection leading to transformation"; and (4) critical empowerment, as referenced by Freire, "conscientization"—e.g., "education must move not just our minds but also our hearts and spirits into personal and social action for peace-building."

## **D. CONCLUSIONS**

This research cohesively integrates the diverse source material addressing the issue of using American faith narratives to counter American consent to cosmic positioning in fighting terrorism. Specifically, the research surveys how (1) the origins of American faith narratives; (2) the application of textual analysis, Social Identity Theory and Positioning Theory in surveying American world views and faith narratives; and, (3) emerging American faith narratives' influence on America's quest to secure the homeland against the threat, real or perceived, of radical Islamism. With the drawdown of U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, the death of Osama bin Laden, and the unlikely ending of the war on terror (by any other name), how does America positively position herself to continue to counter terrorists and terrorists' claims? As such, this research is useful for the Office of the President of the United States, the United States Congress, the United States Department of Homeland Security, American education institutions, and the American citizenry in developing a more robust, realistic discourse on faith and a more effective American response through analyses of American faith narratives, to terrorists' threats and cosmic rhetoric. The central claim set forth in this thesis is that the United States can no longer ignore the role of American faith narratives in countering radical Islamic terrorism or in securing the homeland. Kimball (2008:7) states it well, noting that "although many of us have been taught it is not polite to discuss religion and politics in public, we must quickly unlearn that lesson. Our collective failure to challenge presuppositions; think anew; and openly debate central religious concerns affecting society is a recipe for disaster." Post-9/11, American reaction to Islam and the Muslim faith has been based on assumptions (1) that Islam is a monolithic faith with a single body of adherents all ascribing to the same faith tenets and (2) that a more familiar warfare against "terrorism" was possible; when in reality, the ideologies manifested through cosmic rhetoric present an asymmetric environment. Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair stated that "extremism is not the true voice of Islam. Neither is that voice necessarily to be found in those who are from one part of Islamic thought, however assertively that voice makes itself heard. It is, as ever, to be found in the calm, but too often unheard beliefs of the many Muslims, millions of them the world over, including in



Europe, who want what we all want: to be ourselves free and for others to be free also; who regard tolerance as a virtue and respect for the faith of others as part of our own faith. That is what this battle is about, within Islam and outside of it; it is a battle of values and progress; and therefore it is one we must win” (Blair, 2006).

Long-term victory against terroristic ideologies will require, as commonly suggested, “winning hearts and minds.” It is proffered herein that before American’s are equipped to win hearts and minds of others, further exploration and understanding of the relevance of faith in American narratives is necessary. Simply put, Americans must first know themselves, and understanding American narratives is an excellent place to begin the discovery. Because there is a multiplicity of American faith narratives rather than the perceived monolithic Western, American, Christian faith narrative, this research submits that sustaining and preserving the United States Constitution as designed offers optimal opportunities for developing novel peaceful alternatives to cosmic claims. Bobbitt (2008:542) argues that legitimacy, in this context, is founded in the union of law and strategy. Somewhat prophetically, Bobbitt (2008:545) stresses that his work in *Terror and Consent* “is ultimately about our unfinished present. It is about how we shall decide.” Ironically, Schaeffer (1976) admonished the same in his work entitled *How Shall We Then Live* some 32 years before Bobbitt.

Historically, civilizations come and go—nations come and go—languages come and go. The wonderment of the American republic is its seemingly durable, constitutional foundation based on the rule of law. However, it is not guaranteed. It is incumbent upon each generation to contribute to the sustainment of this great nation. Securing the homeland now will ultimately require Americans to step outside of learned comfort zones to face fears associated with discourse on faith.

Rigidity and bias amongst believers of all faiths, as well as nonbelievers, contribute to societal impasses and walls of division that impede social accord. Impediments to peaceful accord are usually aligned with “rigid doctrines,” which often are indicators of “corruption” in a particular faith (Kimball, 2008:49). Kimball (2008:50) advises that “the most basic truths in religion include many presuppositions and require considerable interpretation; and, sincere people can and often do appropriate truth claims

in substantially different ways.” Strindberg and Wörn (2011:26) explain that “the conflict between the West and Islam is a battle of ideas and ideals, fought on several fronts, both at home and abroad. In this context, it is relevant to note that within the intellectual climate of Europe and the United States, secular and faith-based self-understandings of what it means to be Western are engaged in a direct and highly visible struggle over the ability to define a cultural meta-narrative.” Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair (2006) noted that “we” is not limited to Western interpretations or definitions, stating that “‘We’ are as much Muslim as Christian or Jew or Hindu. ‘We’ are those who believe in religious tolerance, openness to others, to democracy, liberty and human rights administered by secular courts. This is not a clash between civilisations. It is a clash about civilisation. It is the age-old battle between progress and reaction, between those who embrace and see opportunity in the modern world and those who reject its existence; between optimism and hope on the one hand; and pessimism and fear on the other.”

Americans struggle to understand Muslims. Muslims do not fit into the box that popular media or political agendas build for them. Strindberg and Wörn remind that “today’s Muslims are not seventh-century people, and do not live in the seventh century either socially, technologically, intellectually, or theologically” (2011:21). Ideally, within the context of this research, focusing on recognizing the influence of American faith narratives in countering cosmic ideologies and terrorism offers the opportunity to recognize the legitimacy of the terrorists’—specifically the Islamists’—claims as related to faith.

Imagining the possibilities to ensure that future generations are afforded the American tradition of opportunity and freedom is paramount for the future of American faith narratives. This imagination must aggressively initiate public discourse on faith based upon securing diverse religious freedoms and beliefs and democratic principles, and must expand American faith narratives in such a way that the narratives position the United States as a positive global and social influence thereby impacting the global terrorists’ threat.

Michael and Petito (2009: 205-206) highlight Gadamer's astute observation that:

A sober-minded recognition of the political nature of traditions or civilizations, of the potential conflict of their 'different, often tensional layers or strands,' will better prepare us to face the challenge when we come to join a dialogue of civilizations. Of those potentially conflicting layers and strands, the exclusive claim to truth is probably the most challenging for a genuine dialogue. Here I believe that we need to have a truly global perspective in which religious faiths, moral codes, political systems, and other kinds of convictions and belief systems are all seen as different but essentially equal or equivalent expressions of human life, of which none should have the exclusive claim to absolute truth over others. This may be difficult for someone with a strong religious belief to accept, for a strong belief often means that the person in question believes that theirs' is the true religion, while that of others are not. To open up the rigidity of such a biased view, we may appeal to the sense of humility that is so central to all religions, namely, the idea that each individual believer acknowledges his or her own finitude and ignorance vis-à-vis the omniscience of the divine. God may know all, but each individual believer does not. As the acceptance of human finitude and humility in front of some superior being constitutes the core of religiosity, it is possible to appeal to that sense of humility in all believers, even the strongly committed ones.

In attempting to appeal to that humility, again, this research emphasizes that there is an urgent need for constructive work relating religious traditions to world politics in a systematic fashion. "The fault line has been crossed in many quarters, but the work ahead is greater than what has been accomplished thus far" (Heihr, et al., 2004:15). This research recommends understanding positions and identities driving faith narratives to better understanding both the self and others. Understanding that time is of the essence as (Schaeffer, 1976:23), "culture and the freedoms of people are fragile." Schaeffer (1976:23) aptly noted that Greek and Roman cultures evidenced that under pressure, "only time is needed—and often not a great deal of time—before there is a collapse." Bobbitt (2008:547) purports that "we have time" and we must "prepare our defenses, chief of which is our ingenuity and adaptability." Otherwise, as Schaeffer (1976:227) concludes, "it all sounds too familiar. We have come a long road . . . and, we are back in Rome."

## APPENDIX. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Al-wala' Al-bara'—an Arabic phrase. Al-Wala'u wa Al-Bara' is the creed that guides all the actions and sayings of a Muslim and it is by its practice and application that the ranks of the believers vary. It is imperative that this creed be unambiguous to the Muslim's mentality in order that it manifests and materialises correctly in his actions.

American Faith Narratives—generationally transferred living history of faith constituted by (1) story lines; (2) positions of others and oneself in story lines; and (3) illocutionary forces presented in the story lines—including not only events that occur (actions), but the meaning that these are given (acts).

Cosmic War—not just a fight fought for religious reasons, but the image of a broader conflict between good and evil.

Deist—an adherent to a movement or system of thought advocating natural religion, emphasizing morality, and in the eighteenth century denying the interference of the Creator with the laws of the universe.

Exegesis—an explanation or critical interpretation of text.

Gentoo—mid-19th Century term for “Hindu;” from Portuguese gentio “gentile.”

Hermeneutics—the study of methodological principles of interpretation.

Holy War—a religious war, such as the Crusades or the Arab-Israeli Wars; general English translation of jihad.

Ideology—a systematic body of concepts especially about human life or culture.

Islamism—An identity and an ideology. A position that asserts a native identity in confrontation with those who would subjugate it; using that assertion to elevate native consciousness and create an ‘Islamic man.’ A multidimensional paradox that does not conform to Western models of political behavior.

Islamophobia—Western fear of Islamism.

Jihad—a holy war waged on behalf of Islam as a religious duty; or, a personal struggle in devotion to Islam especially involving spiritual discipline

Mahamdan, Mahomitan, Mehometans—an archaic English term; a [Western](#) term for a follower of the [Islamic prophet Muhammad](#).

Positioning Theory—the study of local moral orders as ever-shifting patterns of mutual and contestable rights and obligations of speaking and acting.

Religion—comprised of (1) a belief in a supernatural being (beings); (2) prayers or communication with that or those beings; (3) transcendent realities, including ‘heaven,’ ‘paradise,’ or ‘enlightenment’; (4) a distinction between the sacred and the profane and between ritual acts and sacred objects; (5) a view that explains both the world as a whole

and humanity's proper relation to it; (6) a code of conduct in line with that worldview; (7) a temporal community bound by its adherence to these elements.

Religious Actor—people who have been formed by a religious community and who are acting with the intent to uphold, extend, or defend its values and precepts.

Religious War—a [war](#) caused by, or justified by, religious differences.

Social Identity Theory—a theory originally developed by Tajfel to understand the psychological basis of intergroup discrimination in an attempt to identify the *minimal* conditions that would lead members of one group to discriminate in favor of the ingroup to which they belonged and against another outgroup. Apart from the “level of self,” an individual has multiple “social identities.” Social identity is the individual's self-concept derived from perceived membership of social groups.

Shariah Law—Islamic canonical law based on the teachings of the Koran and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad.

Textual Analysis—analysis, interpretation, or meaning of something.

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