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# On Self-Declared Caliph Ibrahim's December 2015 Speech: Further Evidence for Critical Vulnerabilities in the Crumbling Caliphate

Paul Kamolnick

*East Tennessee State University*, [kamolnp@etsu.edu](mailto:kamolnp@etsu.edu)

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# SMALL WARS JOURNAL

## On Self-Declared Caliph Ibrahim's December 2015 Speech: Further Evidence for Critical Vulnerabilities in the Crumbling Caliphate

By *Paul Kamolnick*

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### On Self-Declared Caliph Ibrahim's December 2015 Speech: Further Evidence for Critical Vulnerabilities in the Crumbling Caliphate

Paul Kamolnick

#### Introduction

On December 26, 2015 a 24-minute audio message was released by the Islamic State Organization's (ISO) official media arm al-Furqan.[1] This is only the third message by Ibrahim bin Awwad Ibrahim Ali Muhammad al-Badri al-Samarrai (aka: Caliph Ibrahim; Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi) delivered in the past 13 months: previous audio messages were uploaded November 14, 2014,[2] and most recently, May 14, 2015.[3] This latest message, like his May 2015 message, again supplies telling evidence that the ISO is doomed to suffer a self-inflicted extinction event. Key motifs and critical vulnerabilities earlier identified by the present author[4] reappear here, as is evidence of Al-Baghdadi's apocalyptic worldview. Let us now examine select critical vulnerabilities, and in conclusion, offer select pointers for United States government (USG) strategy.

#### The Caliph's 'Islam' Problem--Again

Like his May 2015 address, al-Baghdadi again illogically and illicitly reduces the entirety of Islam as a religious faith to a single act--*fighting*. While fighting, defensive *and* offensive, are indeed obligatory,[5] he is completely silent on the essential conditions and restrictions Islam places on legalized military jihad, but also, he utters not a single reference to other equally core fundamental Islamic religious obligations such as prayer, alms, fasting, and pilgrimage, let alone the chief virtues of character deemed essential to righteousness such as honesty, charity, forgiveness, sincerity, and compassion. Al-Baghdadi's unconditional, ultra-jihadism is warranted, he believes, by the barest citation of select decontextualized verses (*ayat*) from the *Qur'an*. These appear immediately after the introductory invocation.

O Muslims, indeed we fight in obedience to Allah and as a means of coming closer to Him. We fight because He – the Glorified – commanded us with fighting, encouraged us towards it, and made it the best means of coming closer to Him. We praise Allah for commanding us with fighting and promising us one of the two good ends, for He has not made us responsible for victory. Allah (the Exalted) said, “And he who fights in the cause of Allah and is killed or achieves victory – We will bestow upon him a great reward,” [4:74]. So it is only upon us to fight and be patient, and upon Allah is the victory. For this reason, we should not let the mobilization of the nations of kufr against us alarm us, frighten us, or break our resolve, for we will be the victors in any case, with Allah's power and strength. Allah (the Exalted) said, “Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah, so they kill and are killed. [It is] a true promise [binding] upon Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur'an. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah? So rejoice in your transaction which you have contracted. And it is that which is the great attainment,” [9:111]. And Allah (the Exalted) said, “And [He promises] other [victories] that you were [so far] unable to [realize] which Allah has already encompassed. And ever is Allah, over all things, competent. And if those who disbelieve had fought you, they would have

turned their backs [in flight]. Then they would not find a protector or a helper. [This is] the established way of Allah which has occurred before. And never will you find in the way of Allah any change,” [48: 21-23].

It is one thing to proclaim fighting obligatory. It is one thing to proclaim fighting a superlative means of displaying loyalty to Allah’s cause and Word. It is quite another to illogically and illicitly reduce the entirety of one’s means of achieving the Divine purpose to this singular act. Baghdadi’s reduction of Islam to fighting is essential not to attain Divine purposes, but because the ISO has in fact proclaimed itself at war with virtually the entirety of existing humanity, all existing Islamic societies and governments included, and al-Baghdadi’s ISO stands or falls on this claim that not only is fighting the exclusive means of serving Allah, but that this fighting has been forced on Allah’s beloved and exclusively chosen soldiers. We shall return to this theme in a subsequent section. Let us now examine a chief device by which al-Baghdadi attempts to persuade those he has determined must die for his ISO that it is absolutely guaranteed, whether victorious or defeated, that one has in fact triumphed mightily.

### **Baghdadi, Unfalsifiability, and ‘Begging the Question’: “In Victory, and Affliction, is Proof of Allah’s Favor!”**

Baghdadi’s sleight of hand here is a presumption without proof that no matter what his ISO does--no matter what, how, or why--his mission has been especially selected by Allah as the singular vehicle for realizing Allah’s will. That Allah has definitely chosen the ISO as His chosen vehicle must be presumed, of course, for this to hold, since without *that* assurance one can instead interpret ISO defeats as caused by Allah’s abandonment of an evil, immoral, irreligious, marauding terrorist army that inflicts unspeakable carnage on Allah’s Creation. This latter possibility is excluded, however, by the presumptive fallacy at the heart of al-Baghdadi’s argument, i.e. that he merely presupposes but does not prove that ISO is without question that vehicle for the realization of Allah’s Will on earth. So, now convinced of al-Baghdadi’s presumptive fallacy we now ‘know’ that winning is winning, losing is winning, glorious victory is winning, and inglorious defeat is winning. All is winning, by definition, by prejudgement, therefore all must follow al-Baghdadi into the fight he claims has been imposed by the entire unbelieving world, on the believing elect ISO.

So if we persist in the face of the world and fight all its armies with all their capabilities and then triumph, it will be of no surprise. It is Allah’s promise to us. “And [you will obtain] another [favor] that you love – victory from Allah and an imminent conquest” [61:13]. And if we are afflicted with killing, and our wounds become many, and the storms rage against us, and our adversities become great, then it would also be of no surprise. It is Allah’s promise to us. Rather, affliction is an inevitable decree. Allah (the Exalted) said, “Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while such [trial] has not yet come to you as came to those who passed on before you? They were touched by poverty and hardship and were shaken until [their] messenger and those who believed with him said, ‘When is the help of Allah?’ Unquestionably, the help of Allah is near” [2:214].

### **The World Mobilizes Against the True and Final Victorious Group (*al-taifa al-mansura*) versus a Fanatical Terrorist Army Wages War on the Islamic World**

A rational, empirical, factual history would conclude that the present mobilization against the ISO is the logical consequence of the ISO’s ultra-sectarian violent *takfiri* terrorist modus operandi that has placed the entire world, including the Muslim world, in its crosshairs. A rational, reasonable mind would conclude that violent confrontation, intra-salafi jihadi warfare, and a violent will to subdue all persons, groups, organizations, and tendencies outside its self-proclaimed right to monopolize the path to Allah’s promised salvation, are signature elements of the ISO from its Zaraqawist origins to the present. The ISO is and has always been at war with the world. This war is premised in its belief that it and it alone is the destined victorious group (*al-taifa al-mansura*) that will fight until the Day of Final Judgment. Added to this belief in destined victory for the ISO, is a presumption that it is only through the crucible of war and annihilation of all weakness, moderation, vacillation, trepidation, and hypocrisy, that the final ISO-based *übermenschen* shall emerge.

O Muslims, do not be amazed at the gathering of the nations and religions of disbelief against the Islamic State, for this is the condition of the victorious group in every era. This gathering will continue and the trials and tribulations will intensify until the two camps are completed, such that there does not remain in this camp hypocrisy, and there does not remain in that camp faith. Furthermore, have certainty that Allah will aid His believing slaves. And rejoice and be at ease, for your state continues to do well. And the more the nations

increase in their frenzied mobilization against it, the more it increases in its certainty of Allah's victory and that it is upon the straight path, and the more severe its tribulations become, the more it casts out the enemies and hypocrites and the more pure, firm, and steadfast its ranks become. . . . The test must be severe and the trials must be great, until hypocrisy surfaces and faith takes root, in order for victory to descend. And truly, Allah (the Blessed and Exalted) supported us over these ten years. The day we announced the establishment of the Islamic State, the trials increased and the ordeals became great, to the point that the Islamic State left many of the areas that it had conquered and taken control of. The earth became constricted for us despite its expanse, such that the enemies of the Islamic State thought they had eliminated it, and such that the hypocrites and the sick-hearted said, "Allah and His Messenger did not promise us except delusion" [33:12], and the believing, patient mujāhidīn said, "When is the help of Allah?" [2:214]. Then as they stood firm and persevered, and Allah made the hypocrites manifest and the believers evident, Allah's support came nearer and faster than the believers had expected. The State returned – by Allah's grace – much stronger than ever before.

### **The ISO versus the Actually Existing Sunni Muslim World: "This is *Your* War Against Unbelief! Why Do You Not Fight for *Your* Caliphate! For *Your* Religion!"**

Al-Baghdadi's message was uploaded December 26, 2015, and it makes reference to the December 14, 2016 announcement by Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) Deputy Crown Prince (and defense minister) Mohammad bin Salman of a supposed 34-nation Islamic military alliance.[6] On December 28, 2015, a mere two days after al-Baghdadi's speech, the black flag of the ISO was lowered and the official Iraqi government flag raised in Ramadi, the provincial capital city of Sunni-majority Anbar province. This recovery of Ramadi, first seized by the ISO nearly seven months ago, follows a string of important tactical reversals for the ISO, for example, having in recent months also lost Tikrit, Baiji, Hawija, the logistically-key Tishrin Dam, and Sinjar, amounting to a loss of approximately 30-40% of ISO's previously conquered territories.[7]

What is really outstanding here is al-Baghdadi's repeated pleading, requesting, admonishing, lecturing, commanding, and demanding that Sunnis mobilize *en masse* to defend the ISO's self-declared 'State' of Islam. Whether explicit, or implicit, this is the ultimate reason--if judged by the quantity of verbiage dedicated to this theme--for this reclusive leader's latest communique. This theme was also dominant throughout the May 2015 communique. It speaks to the failure of the ISO--a grand strategic failure--to anchor their violent terrorist state and army in the actual lives and aspirations of the Sunnis they claim to represent. But again, as in the first 'Sahwah' or Awakening led by Sunnis and US Special Forces, the tide has most certainly turned. The violent imposition of alien customs; the liquidation of and terror meted out to tribal opponents; forced marriages of daughters to so-called mujahidin; the alien ultra-sectarian hatred; all of this--along with enduring governmental reforms that must be enacted to create a genuine security and new social compact for Sunnis-- ensures the ISO will again, sooner rather than later, be eliminated from Iraqi and eventually Syrian soil. Let us now however listen to the Caliph admonish his wayward Sunnis.

O Muslims, indeed the battle today is no longer merely a crusader campaign. It is but the war of the nations of disbelief altogether against the Ummah of Islam, and it has not occurred before in the history of our Ummah that the entire world gathered against it in one battle as is occurring today. Indeed, it is the battle of the disbelievers altogether against the Muslims altogether, and indeed every Muslim is intended by this war. And he is obliged to execute Allah's command to him by carrying out the obligation of jihād for the cause of Allah. So if he obeys, then for him is good, salvation, success, nearness to Allah, and the attainment of His pleasure, and if he disobeys, then for him is destruction, loss, and the attainment of Allah's anger and wrath. Indeed, every Muslim is intended by this war. And he is obliged to defend the religion of Allah and His Sharī'ah and to support the oppressed men, women, and children, for this war is every Muslim's war. Indeed, it is upon him to engage himself in it in order to defend his religion, defend himself, defend his wealth, and defend his honor and dignity. . .

So prepare yourselves for your war, O Muslims everywhere. Prepare yourselves while being confident of Allah's victory. Prepare yourselves, and do not weaken and do not grieve. Indeed, your Lord (the Mighty and Sublime) has said to you about the disbelievers, "You [believers] are more fearful within their breasts than Allah. That is because they are a people who do not understand. They will not fight you all except within

fortified cities or from behind walls. Their violence among themselves is severe. You think they are together, but their hearts are diverse. That is because they are a people who do not reason” [59:13-14].

[T]here remains among the Muslims he who doubts and thinks that it is not a war against Islam and the Muslims. There remains among the Muslims he who thinks that the gathering of the nations and religions of disbelief upon waging war against the Islamic State is not to wage war against the Sharī’ah of Allah and the Ummah of Muhammad (may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). So what level of misguidance has been reached by he who believes this, and upon what religion is he who stands in this coalition’s trench against the Islamic State, and upon what religion is he who incites against the Islamic State night and day and calls for it to be fought – rather for fighting it to become the priority – while it is taking this stance, fighting all the armies of disbelief alone! . . .

O Muslims, indeed engaging oneself in this war is obligatory on every Muslim, and no one is excused concerning it. And indeed, we call on you altogether in every place to mobilize, . . . “O you who have believed, what is [the matter] with you that, when you are told to go forth in the cause of Allah, you adhere heavily to the earth? Are you satisfied with the life of this world rather than the Hereafter? But what is the enjoyment of worldly life compared to the Hereafter except a [very] little. If you do not go forth, He will punish you with a painful punishment and will replace you with another people, and you will not harm Him at all. And Allah is over all things competent” [9:38-39]. And He (the Glorified) said, “Go forth, whether light or heavy, and strive with your wealth and your lives in the cause of Allah. That is better for you, if you only knew” [9:41].

And O soldiers of the Islamic State, be patient – indeed you are upon the truth. Be patient – indeed Allah is with you. He is your protector and supporter. So what an excellent protector and what an excellent supporter. Be patient, for it is only a new Battle of al-Ahzāb (the Factions). And as for the near future, by Allah’s permission, their tents will be uprooted, their plots will be overturned, and Allah (the Glorified) will vanquish them, and thereafter we will raid them, by Allah’s permission, and they will not raid us. So be steadfast, and be certain of Allah’s victory. And indeed this gathering against you and this tremor is Allah’s promise to the believers, for Allah has promised His pious slaves victory after poverty, hardship, and tremors.

### **The “People of the Book” are Your Enemy! Not.**

The self-proclaimed Caliph Ibrahim again, as in May 2015, rails against what he claims are the demonic, satanic, evil propensities of Jews and Christians. In line with the hardline salafī doctrine of *al-wal’a wa’l bar’a*, which demands that a believing Muslim openly express disavowal and enmity toward unbelievers, and love and amity toward believers, today’s Sunni Muslims are warned against the very possibility of co-existence, common interests, and potential alliances against common foes.

For indeed, your Lord (the Mighty and Sublime) has said to you, “And never will the Jews or the Christians approve of you until you follow their religion” [2:120]. “And they will continue to fight you until they turn you back from your religion if they are able” [2: 217]. “If they gain dominance over you, they would be to you as enemies and extend against you their hands and their tongues with evil, and they wish you would disbelieve” [60:2]. “They do not observe toward a believer any pact of kinship or covenant of protection. And it is they who are the transgressors” [9: 10]. “They wish you would have hardship. Hatred has already appeared from their mouths, and what their breasts conceal is greater. We have certainly made clear to you the signs, if you will use reason” [3:18]. “If good touches you, it distresses them; but if harm strikes you, they rejoice at it. And if you are patient and fear Allah, their plot will not harm you at all. Indeed, Allah is encompassing of what they do” [3:120]. “Neither those who disbelieve from the People of the Scripture nor the pagans wish that any good should be sent down to you from your Lord” [2: 105].

Caliph Ibrahim can never entertain the thought, however, that the violent persecution of Sunni Muslims is far more likely at the hands of the ISO than these supposed eternal enemies. It is never conceded that the criminal, inhumane, terrorist modus operandi of a fanatical sect possessed of a formidable marauding army and police state would and should lead to an inter-civilizational front against zealotic terror. And, that it is not the lack of belief or Islam, but precisely its presence, that would

lead observant Sunni Muslims to ally with those who, like them, genuinely sanctify in word and deed, the lives, honor, dignity, wealth, and posterity of others.

### **Apocalypse and the End Times Saved Sect (*al-Firqa al-najiya*)**

Al-Baghdadi's brief but telling reference to apocalyptic prophesies confirm that the ISO imagines itself, in Caliph Ibrahim's mind at least, as a divinely-sanctioned vehicle destined to participate in a series of prophesied End Times battles (*Al-Malahim*). He bizzarely interprets the USG's deep reluctance to deploy conventional military forces to fight against the ISO as either cowardice, or more importantly, as a fear-based means to postpone the final grand battle on the plains of Dabiq between the forces of Christianity and those of Allah's salvific warriors.

They don't dare come, because they know with certainty what terrors and calamities await them in Shām, Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, Sinai, Africa, Yemen, and Somalia. They know what awaits them at Dābiq and Ghouta of defeat, ruin, and devastation. They know that it will be the final war, and thereafter – by Allah's permission – we will raid them and they will not raid us, and Islam will lead the world once more until the establishment of the [Final] Hour.

### **On Allah's Divine Names: Allah as “War God” versus the Allah of Compassion and Mercy**

The Caliph of all Muslims, one would suppose, would at least once in a speech directed at the world's 1.4 billion Sunni Muslims, invoke two ennobled terms used throughout the *Qur'an* and in Muslim life generally: compassion, and mercy. The 'basmala' --“In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful”--provides the opening words of every chapter (*surah*) of the *Qur'an* except the ninth, which is generally regarded as an extension of the eighth. Allah's Divine names are found in the *Qur'an* and *ahadith* (traditions of Prophet Muhammad), and are essentially adjectival nouns that more fully capture the various dimensions of omniscience, omnipotence, and ethical perfection. Some examples include: The King/Sovereign (Al-Malik), The Peace (As-Salam), The Almighty (Al-Aziz), The Repeatedly Forgiving (Al-Ghaffar), The Bestower (Al-Wahhab), The All-Aware (Al-Khabir), The Judge (Al-Hakam), The Utterly Just (Al-'Adl), etc.[8] Chief of these Divine Names, however, are the very first two--*Ar-Rahman* (The Exceedingly Compassionate, Beneficent, Gracious); and, *Ar-Rahim* (The Exceedingly Merciful).

These two most humanly-human needs, for grace, and mercy, are truly essential to a creature that walks, breathes, lives, works, loves, and therefore also fights, hurts, falls short, sins, and harms others. A god of unadulterated pure justice, without grace, compassion, and mercy, is not a God that humans could ever imagine or at least, would ever will to be: especially, a God who is also always Ever-Watching (*Ar-Raqib*), the Truth (*Al-Haqq*), the Giver of Life (*Al-Muhyi*), and Bringer of Death (*Al-Mumit*).

For our self-appointed Caliph Ibrahim, however, compassion and mercy receive not a *single* mention; instead, Allah is invoked as essentially a God that shall subdue, conquer, destroy, and compel. Though Al-Baghdadi's Divine names do include the trait of All-Knowingness, as he does refer to Allah as Sublime, Knowing, and Wise, it is in the final passages of this speech that Baghdadi's Allah is fully recognizable as the ISO God of War; one that ensures ISO domination and all others' humiliation.

Indeed, our Lord (the Mighty and Sublime) – the Forceful, the Subduer – told us, {Fight them; Allah will punish them by your hands and will disgrace them and give you victory over them and satisfy the breasts of a believing people} [9: 14].

Indeed, our Lord (the Great and Competent) – the Glorified – told us, “And Our word has already preceded for Our servants, the messengers, [that] indeed, they would be those given victory and [that] indeed, Our soldiers will be those who overcome” [37: 171-173].

So our Lord (the Glorified) promised us one of the two good ends. He promised us victory and triumph. But He promised you – O disbelievers – humiliation and punishment from Himself or at our hands. He promised you disgrace and defeat, and Allah does not go back on His promise – Glorified is He. And so we promise you, by Allah's permission, that every person who participates in this war against the Islamic State will pay a heavy price. . .

O Allah, revealer of the Book, mover of the clouds, defeater of the factions, defeat them and shake them.  
Defeat them and support us against them.

## Discussion

Al-Baghdadi's 24-minute audio recording December 26, 2015 shall in the not too distant future assist jurisprudents seeking to establish culpability for mass murder, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and possibly the crime of genocide.[9] Supposing it represents the considered thoughts of an ultra-sectarian salafi-jihadi *takfiri* terrorist, it also supplies important evidence of Al-Baghdadi's critical vulnerabilities, and also considerable optimism for USG strategists.

The self-appointed Caliph's chief premise is that the entire world is now arrayed against Allah's singular vehicle for universal Muslim salvation--the ISO--yet the opposite is closer to the truth: Muslims throughout the world are revolted by ISO terrorism committed in the name of their faith and further, believe Islam's reputation has suffered immeasurably.[10] The ISO's version of Islam ensures that it shall until its demise remain a marginalized, ever-shrinking entity, barred from Islam and Islam's inter-civilizational allies now arrayed in a cooperative alliance, it shall however certainly continue to carry out merciless terrorist attacks in the name of Sunni Islam.

It is critical to keep the ISO's marginality from Sunni Islamic life always in mind, and realize that many, many Sunni Muslims are at wits end trying to constantly reassure a mostly ignorant public that terrorists who act in the name of Islam represent an infinitesimal proportion of Muslims in any given nation, and that terrorist methods are *not* sanctioned by this faith. A Muslim-non-Muslim alliance is the key to the expedited demise of this latest reincarnation of ultra-sectarian Zarqawism. Let us finish the task.

## End Notes

[1] Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri al-Samarrai [aka: Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi/ Amirul-Mu'minin Abu Bakr al-Husayni al-Qurashi al-Baghdadi], "So Wait, Indeed We, Along with You, Are Waiting." December 26, 2015, Available at <http://pietervanostaeyen.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/al-baghdadi-english.pdf>, accessed on December 30, 2015.

[2] An Address from Amirul-Mu'miniin [Commander of the Faithful], the Khalifah of the Muslims Abu Bakr al-Husayni al-Qurashi al-Baghdadi, "Even if the Disbelievers Despise Such," 13 November 2014, available at [www.gulfup/NuPaRN](http://www.gulfup/NuPaRN), accessed on 14 November 2014.

[3] An Address from the Khalifah of the Muslims, Ibrāhīm Ibn 'Awwād al-Husaynī al-Qurashī, "March Forth Whether Light or Heavy," available at: <https://pietervanostaeyen.wordpress.com/2015/05/14/a-new-audio-message-by-abu-bakr-al-baghdadi-march-forth-whether-light-or-heavy/>, accessed 18 May 2015.

[4] See: Paul Kamolnick, "On Self-Declared Caliph Ibrahim's May 2015 Message to Muslims: Key Problems of Motivation, Marginalization, Illogic, and Empirical Delusion in the Caliphate Project," June 4, 2015, available at <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/on-self-declared-caliph-ibrahim%E2%80%99s-may-2015-message-to-muslims>.

[5] See, for example: Paul Kamolnick. "The Egyptian Islamic Group's Critique of Al-Qaeda's Interpretation of Jihad. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, , October 2013, Vol. 7, No. 5, pp. 93-110. [www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/293/591](http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/293/591).; Paul Kamolnick "Al Qaeda's Shari'a Crisis: Sayyid Imam and the Jurisprudence of Lawful Military Jihad." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, May 2013, 36(5): 394-418. DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2013.775478.

[6] For this curious, unexpected, and mostly toothless development, see: Editorial Board, "Doubts About Saudi Arabia's Antiterrorism Coalition," December 18, 2015, available at [www.nytimes.com/2015/12/19/opinion/doubts-about-saudi-arabias-antiterrorism-coalition.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/19/opinion/doubts-about-saudi-arabias-antiterrorism-coalition.html?_r=0), accessed on December 22, 2015; Robert Mackey, "Pakistan Surprised to Be Included in Saudi-Led Alliance it never heard of," December 16, 2015, available at [www.nytimes.com/2015/12/17/world/middleeast/pakistan-surprised-to-be-included-in-saudi-coalition-against-isis.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/17/world/middleeast/pakistan-surprised-to-be-included-in-saudi-coalition-against-isis.html), accessed on December 22, 2015; Robert Fisk, "Why is Indonesia Not in the Saudi-Led Sunni Coalition Against Terror?," Independent Online, December 15, 2015, available at [www.independent.co.uk/voices/why-is-indonesia-not-in-the-saudi-led-sunni-coalition-against-terror-a6774551.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/why-is-indonesia-not-in-the-saudi-led-sunni-coalition-against-terror-a6774551.html), accessed on December 16, 2015; Editorial, "Saudi Arabia: The Desert Kingdom's Coalition is Symbolic Not Substantial," December 15, 2015, available at [www.independent.co.uk/voices/saudi-arabia-the-desert-kingdom-s-coalition-is-symbolic-not-substantial-a6774811.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/saudi-arabia-the-desert-kingdom-s-coalition-is-symbolic-not-substantial-a6774811.html), accessed on December 16, 2015.



[7] See, Editorial Board, “The Importance of Retaking Ramadi,” December 28, 2015, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/29/opinion/the-importance-of-retaking-ramadi.html>, accessed on December 30, 2015.

[8] See, for example, George Braswell, *Islam: Its Prophet, Peoples, Politics, and Power*, Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publications, 1996, pp 46-48; “Names of God in Islam,” available at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Names\\_of\\_God\\_in\\_Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Names_of_God_in_Islam), accessed December 30, 2015;

[9] See, Marslise Simons, “Veteran International Prosecutor Foresees War Crimes Trials for ISIS,” December 26, 2015, available at <http://nyti.ms/1ZuR2bP>, accessed on December 30, 2015.

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## About the Author



### Paul Kamolnick

Paul Kamolnick is professor of sociology at East Tennessee State University. He has published articles and reviews in *Perspectives on Terrorism*, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, and *Small Wars Journal*. Kamolnick has also authored three monographs through the Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College, Carlisle, PA: *De-legitimizing Al-Qaeda: A Jihad-Realist Approach* (April 2012); *Countering Radicalization and Recruitment to Al-Qaeda: Fighting the War of Deeds* (June 2014); and, *The Al-Qaeda Organization (Tanzim Qa'idat al-Jihad) and the Islamic State Organization (Tanzim al-Dawla al-Islamiyya): History, Doctrine, Modus operandi, and United States Policy to Degrade and Defeat Terrorism in the Name of Sunni Islam (Ahl-us Sunnah)*. (Forthcoming, Spring/Summer 2016).

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