

**GLOSSARY OF ARABIC,  
ISLAMIC & AFGHAN TERMS**

Ahl al Kitab	"People of the Book" meaning Christians and Jews who follow the teachings of the Old Testament
Al-Qaeda	"The Base" – Osama bin Laden's extremist Islamic terrorist group that has spread laterally as a global movement (also written as al Qa'ida)
Allah	God
Allahu akbar	"God is great" used as praise and a jihad war cry
Ayatollah	Senior Shi'a cleric with the authority to make religious rulings
Al-Quds Force	Iranian military insurgent force
Ansar al-Islam	Sunni group affiliated with al-Qaeda that infiltrated Iraq through the mountainous northeastern border with Iran. Jordanian born Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was the key player in this group
Al-Tawhid Wal-Jihad	"Monotheism and Holy War" insurgent group led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi until his death in June 2006
Apostate	One who has abandoned the faith. Sunni fundamentalists consider Shi'a to be apostates or any Muslim who does not follow strict Islamic beliefs or practices
Badr Brigade	Iranian linked Shia militia from southern Iraq
Baksheesh	Tips, gifts, bribery and required kick-backs
Burqa	Garment that covers a woman completely with a small mesh eye slit; commonly blue or white in Afghanistan
Caliph	One of a line of successors to the Prophet Mohammad (also <i>Khalif</i> )
Caliphate	Islamic state or empire. The last caliphate ended in 1918 with the Ottoman Empire
Deobandism	Fundamentalist Islamic movement in western Pakistan that influences many of the madrassas that educated the Taliban
Emir	Commander or chief
Extremist	Violent fundamentalist
Fatwa	A legal declaration or edict made by a recognized Muslim cleric/jurist
Fedayeen	"one who is ready to sacrifice his life;" Palestinian suicide squads
Fedayeen Saddam	Militant supporters and irregular troops of Saddam Hussein and the Ba'athist government
Fundamentalist	One who believes in the strict literal interpretations of the written word (of the Koran) and rejects modern interpretations
Hadith	Stories, words and actions of the Prophet Mohammad that in addition to the Koran form a guide to Muslim lifestyle
Hajj	Pilgrimage to Mecca
Haram	Forbidden in Islam
Hawalas	Traditional Middle Eastern system for transferring funds between money lenders or business men. Funds given to one party in one country could be collected from another in another country.
Imam	A divinely inspired Shi'a community leader and cleric
Innovators	Muslims who interpret the Koran and hated by fundamentalists
Insurgent	Political activist who violently resists the government or ruling administration
Islam	"Submission"
Jaish	Army
Jaish al Mahdi	Mahdi Army, the militia loyal to Shi'a cleric Moktada al-Sadr
Jihad	Struggle. The greater jihad is internal personal improvement while the lesser jihad is considered external war and fighting. However the term jihad has become synonymous with Islamic terrorism
Jihadi	Used to describe one who is fighting for Islam
Jirga	Tribal meeting

Kajir	Infidel
Koran (Qur'an)	Islamic holy book and the word of Allah
Madrassa	Islamic school
Malik	Tribal leader
Mehdi Army	Shi'a militia loyal to radical cleric Muktada al-Sadr
Mu'askar al-Battar	"Camp of the Sword" Al Battar Training Camp paramilitary jihad publication
Muhammad	Founder of Islam (also spelled Mohammed)
Mujahid	Holy warrior (singular)
Mujahideen	Holy warriors – "those who wage jihad"
Mullah	Sunni cleric or leader learned in Islamic religious law
Muslim	Follower of Muhammad and Islam
Pir	A Sufi master (also known as Shaykh or Friend of Allah)
Qur'an	Islamic holy book containing the word of Allah
Pushtunwali	Tribal code of the Pushtuns found in south-eastern Afghanistan and western Pakistan
Sahwa	Awakening Council (Iraq)
Salafi	Fundamentalist Islamic reform group
Sawt(Sout)al-Jihad,	"Voice of Jihad" online publication of the Mujahideen of the Arab Peninsula
Shahid	Martyr for Islam
Shari'ah	Islamic law
Shaykh or Sheikh	Honorific for a chief that literally means the "old man"
Shi'a	Break-away Islamic sect and followers of Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law. Shi'as make-up 15% of the world's Muslims
SIIC	Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (controls Badr Organization militia)
Shura	Tribal council meeting
Sunni	Mainstream orthodox branch of Islam
Surah	A passage from the Koran
Takfiri	Fundamentalists who do not accept any deviation from the Koran and accuse moderate Muslims of apostacy. Takfiris are not bound by religious constraints such as wearing beards and drinking alcohol when such restrictions interfere with waging jihad.
Taliban	"Students" trained in Pakistan and led by Mullah Omar who came to power in Afghanistan in 1996 and governed until being defeated in November 2001. Talib is the singular.
Terrorism	The use of violence and terror against government and civilian targets to achieve political goals
Ulema	The body of scholars knowledgeable in Islam
Ummah	"the people" and greater Muslim community
Wahhabism	Puritanical sect of Islam founded by Muhammad ibn Adb al-Wahhab (1703-1792) on the Arabian Peninsula. Continues to be the official form of Islam in Saudi Arabia.
Zakat	Required annual donation for charity but also used to refer to the "tax" charged on drug cultivation in Afghanistan