



STRATEGIC JIHAD

Threatens the United Kingdom and the West

THE BARONESS CAROLINE COX

The British people have had an august and splendid influence on several key freedoms which have spread throughout Western Civilization, and this historical contribution dates to at least the Magna Carta 800 years ago. Our forbears have given us a rich political inheritance, including freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and equal access to the law.

Alarminglly, today there are militant Islamists who are using ‘Strategic jihad’ to threaten our fundamental freedoms and rights. Most of the world’s 1.2 billion Muslims, including those in the United Kingdom, are very hospitable and law-abiding, and the Christian community should encourage those Muslims who are developing theological and political interpretations compatible with religious tolerance and democratic freedoms. Nevertheless, the West must remain vigilant against those militant Islamists who would use our freedoms in order to destroy our democracy through military, political, legal, and cultural jihad. Once

we are able to recognize these and other versions of ‘Strategic jihad’, our civil societies and governments will be better able to protect our freedoms so that future generations may enjoy the rich heritage with which we have been blessed.

Perhaps the most obvious version of ‘Strategic jihad’ that citizens have seen is ‘Military jihad’, including Islamic terrorism. Nearly every day our television screens and newspapers show Islamic extremists’ carnage against those who do not follow their beliefs and interpretations. Abroad, the Islamic State, or IS, and Boko Haram have carried out crimes against

humanity, including the enslavement of Christians and other minorities. Yet ‘Military jihad’ has continued as well to threaten our peace and security at home. In the United Kingdom, two Islamist Nigerians murdered a young British soldier, Fusilier Lee Rigby, on the street in broad daylight. His murderers carried pieces of paper with Quranic verses which they claimed legitimized their actions. These acts of Islamic terrorism seek to weaken our resolve, whether we are at home or abroad, but our governments must continue to provide vigilant security in order to protect our citizens and our freedoms.

Though 'Military jihad' may be quite visible for many citizens, other versions can be quite pernicious, if also pervasive, such as 'Political jihad'. This form of 'Strategic jihad' can occur when Islamists seek to reduce our political freedoms. During Prime Minister Tony Blair's administration, a piece of legislation that would have dramatically reduced British citizens' freedom of speech was progressing through the British Parliament. The wording in this legislation would have made it a serious crime to make any criticism about Islam, to promote any faith that could 'give offense', or to make jokes about Islam. The punishment for breaking this law could have been six years imprisonment. In the House of Lords, we discerned these provisions and possible interpretations of the law, so we then included amendments that guaranteed British citizens' freedom of speech. Yet Tony Blair's administration sought to remove these 'freedom amendments' as the legislation moved through the House of Commons. Despite the opponents' lobbying efforts, the amendments survived, but they survived by only one vote. The United Kingdom almost lost one of its fundamental freedoms.

Though the 'Freedom amendments' survived to protect our freedom of speech, in the United Kingdom there is still a 'Legal jihad', specifically through the imposition of Sharia law through Sharia Council/courts. Today there are at least 80 known Sharia Councils/courts operating in the United Kingdom and serving the Muslim communities. These courts pose a serious

threat to our values. Not only do Sharia courts violate the democratic principle that there should be 'One Law for All', but the courts also promote religiously sanctioned gender discrimination. Under Sharia law, girls and women only receive a one-half share of any inheritance that is given to boys or men. These laws allow men to have polygamous marriages and easily divorce their wives (often just by saying 'I divorce you' three times), but a wife has a much more difficult experience. She must often pay a hefty fee to have a divorce, but sometimes she may not have the money without her husband's permission. Through these means and others, the Sharia courts promote gender inequality, even though as a nation, we are committed to the promotion of gender equality, which is essential for our democracy.

The Islamists have not only imposed their will through Britain's Sharia courts, but they have also used 'Cultural jihad' to promote their agenda. This form of 'Strategic jihad' manifests in massive investments in cultural institutions, such as universities. Many centers for Islamic studies and schools receive substantial financial support from places like Saudi Arabia, and this financing can help to hinder professors or students who may have ideas which go against the Islamists' agenda, as described in Douglas Murray's publication appropriately named 'Degrees of Influence'. One should seriously question whether or not a Department of Theology that depends upon Islamists' financing is able to make unbiased appointments or can encourage serious, balanced

discussions about sensitive issues. As long as 'Cultural jihad' keeps a firm grip on our universities, those Muslim scholars who wish to promote theological interpretations that are compatible with religious tolerance and democratic freedoms may struggle to find traction within the Muslim community.

These aforementioned versions of 'Strategic jihad' along with other versions such as 'Demographic Jihad' pose a serious threat not only to the United Kingdom but also to Western Civilization as a whole because they threaten the freedoms that serve as the foundation to our society. Recognizing this jihad and then resisting it can help us to preserve those freedoms. If we are afraid to fight this Islamization, then our grandchildren may have to fight the battles we did not have the courage to fight. We have received a rich inheritance. We have an obligation to pass on our spiritual, cultural, and political heritage and freedoms undiminished to our children and to our children's children. ■

Baroness Caroline Cox joined the United Kingdom's House of Lords in 1983 as a Life Peer and has traveled extensively while helping conduct humanitarian aid in conflict zones. She has also been awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons of England and Honorary Doctorates by universities in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, the Russian Federation, and Armenia. She is also the founder of Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART).