

**Wahhabi movement**  
**-with cases of Bosnia and Serbia-**

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*In this paper the topic that it is going to be discussed is Wahhabi movement, historical evolution from the eighteen century till nowadays, its connection with the global terrorism and the role of the Saudi Arabia in the expansion of the ideology worldwide. Moreover, the image of the Wahhabism in the Bosnia and Serbia is going to be shown.*

*Wahhabism, Saudi Arabia, terrorism, Serbia, Bosnia*

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## 1. Introduction

Wahhabi, almost 300 years old religion movement, gained global “popularity” after the terrorist attack that occurred on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. in the United States. After this event, West countries with US on the head started political and military campaign against terrorist organizations and the regimes that support them. This campaign is also known as “Global war against terror”.<sup>1</sup> The result of the investigation after the 9/11 stated that 15 out of 19 terrorist who participated in the attack were from Saudi Arabia. This country has two core elements in its grounds. First of them is authoritarian royal family al-Saud. This family founded and ruled Saudi Arabia continuously from the beginning till nowadays. Second core element of the Saudi Arabia’s ground is Islamic religion ideology, Wahhabism. It was also contributing factor for the creation of the state, together with the family al-Saud. Here lies the reason why Wahhabi movement started to be interesting to Western scholars, politicians and media. Suddenly, all or at least huge majority of Islamist terrorists or jihadists that were part of conflicts around the globe, such as ones in Azerbaijan, Chechnya and Bosnia, were labeled as followers of the Wahhabi movement. In my opinion, this generalization created false image and I will try to elaborate why in this paper. In order to succeed in my intentions, I start from the very beginning, so the first part is about the evolution of Wahhabism, from eighteen centuries when Muhammad bin Abd al Wahhab started his teachings over his alliance with the Ibn Saud, founder of the modern Saudi Arabia till nowadays. Circumstances that caused expansion of this ideology are explained. Even though I have pointed out that image of Wahhabi movement is generalized in the eyes of the West when it comes to the assumptions of direct link between the violence and the movement, that does not mean that there are not elements in this ideology that are contributing factor to the jihad in the name of the Islam. Still, this does not necessarily mean that Wahhabism is core element in the Islamic violence and extreme radicalism. Further on, it is presented that Wahhabism, as many religious movements, was also divided into couple of sub-movements or wings. Some of them were more radical, while others were moderate, which means that not all followers of the Wahhabi ideology were in favor of using violence in order to achieve goals. Not all Wahhabis are in favor of the using violence in order to achieve goals, but because of those who are, and they are minority inside the group, whole dogma is labeled in a wrong way.

Second part of this paper is concerned about the role of the Saudi Arabia state in the spreading of Wahhabi ideology worldwide. Scholars invented phrase “export of the Wahhabism” and it defines political, financial and military aid from official Riyadh

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<sup>1</sup>This phrase was used first time by the president of the United States of America George Bush on the September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2001.

using various mechanisms. If Wahhabism should not be considered as the most responsible element for the terrorist acts worldwide, those who spread it definitely should be blamed. With big appetites for the primary role in the Muslim world, Saudi Arabia after expansion of petrol industry did not spare sources to achieve its goals. They used Wahhabi ideology as the perfect mask. However, their actions allowed extreme radical organizations to find a way how to take advantage of these funds in financing terrorist attacks over the globe.

In the third and last part, role of Wahhabism in Bosnia and Serbia is explained. Followers of this ideology came to this region in the beginning of the civil war that occurred in Bosnia from 1992 till 1995, as military support for the Muslims. After the conflict, some of them returned homes, while the others settled in Bosnia and Sandzak<sup>2</sup> region in Serbia. Wahhabis in this region were not exception from their companions around the world. Larger attention on them was brought in the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century. They consider their role in this part of the world very complex and important. The atmosphere that was constant from the moment when Wahhabis came to this region till nowadays was constant clashes between them and local Islamic community<sup>3</sup>. Thus, their relations in the Muslim society and the influence of Saudi Arabia are going to be presented. I will try to approve or disapprove following statements. First is that Wahhabi movement is considered as core element for global jihad. Second state that is going to be elaborated is the role of Saudi Arabia in the support of terrorism. Finally, I explain whether Wahhabism is a potential treat to the security in Bosnia and Serbia or not.

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<sup>2</sup>**Sandžak** is a historical region divided along the border between Serbia and Montenegro. The name Sandžak derives from the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, a former Ottoman administrative district. It stretches from the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina to Kosovo on an area of 8,403 square kilometers. Six municipalities of Sandžak are in Serbia (Novi Pazar, Sjenica, Tutin, Prijepolje, Nova Varoš, and Priboj), and five in Montenegro (Pljevlja, Bijelo Polje, Berane, Rožaje, and Plav). With the a calculation of the two censuses from Serbia and Montenegro total Sandzak's population is around. 390,000. The relative majority is held by Bosniaks with 48.4% of the region's population, then Serbs form 33.9% , while Montenegrins 7.25%, Ethnic Muslims 6.11% and Albanians with 1.04% of Sandzak's total populace.

<sup>3</sup> The most of Muslims in Bosnia and Serbia are prophesying Sunni form of Islam, which Wahhabism recognize as turning from the orthodox path of Allah.

## 2. Background of Wahhabism

This, almost 300 years old religion ideology got the name from its founder, Muhammad bin Abdal Wahhab(1703-1792). The followers of this movement are labeled by the others as Wahhabis. However, they do not call themselves like this, because they think that this term carries negative connotation. Instead, they use term “muwahiddun”, which means “those who profess God’s oneness” or monotheists or “Salafiyyun”<sup>4</sup> -a reference to the followers of Prophet Muhammad. At the beginning, this ideology was considered as reform religious movement with the goal of returning Muslims to the only true path of the Islam. The faith in one God is the fundament of Islam. According to M. bin Abd al Wahhab, believing in Allah is not sufficient. The real Muslim needs to live his life based on the rules that the holy book Qur’an and the hadiths require.<sup>5</sup> Abd al Wahhab had very strict criteria for deciding who are Orthodox Muslims and who are not. He was born in the town of Uyayna in the region Najd, the central part of Arabia peninsula. His father, Abd al Wahhab bin Sulaiman was judge in the Hanbali orthodox school (mazhab), one of the four existing schools that Sunni Muslims recognize.<sup>6</sup> Here I will make a small digression for better understanding the reasons for existing of these schools. Sunni ideology under the Islam is considered to be the most Orthodox of all and it is definitely the most numbered one of all that had been created since the emergence of the Islam in the seventh century. Considering the fact that Islam was founded in the region of Hijaz<sup>7</sup>, which was primitive in social sense, the Qur’an provided satisfactory religious system for that time. However, when Islam started to expand together with the conquests of the neighboring countries, Muslims find themselves in the contact with far more developed societies. In order to correspond better with them, Islam needed social code that would be appropriate and should not go against the religion. The solution was invention of **hadith**-norm, formula or activity of the Prophet Muhammad in everyday situations. The universal group of these codes is known as **Sunna**. Again, these codes could not answer to all questions that were coming with the changes in the everyday life as the time was passing. Islam

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<sup>4</sup> There is also another fundamental Islamic group that is known as Salafism. Despite the fact that they share same beliefs with the Wahhabis, they should be marked differently. The methods that these groups are using to achieve goals are different.

<sup>5</sup> Hadith is a collection of the Prophet Muhammad’s statements and actions coupled with the statements and actions of his companions. They are believed to have been collected beginning 150 years after Muhammad’s dead in 632 C. E, and it is the basis of jurisprudence for Sharia law.

<sup>6</sup> Four mazhabs are the following: Hanbali, Hanafi, Maliki and Shafi’i

<sup>7</sup> Hijaz is a region of present-day Saudi Arabia. It is bordered on the west by the Red Sea, on the north by Jordan, on the east by Nejd and on the south by Asir. It is known for the Islamic holy cities of Mecca and Medina. As the site of Islam's holy places, the Hijaz has significance in the Arab and Islamic historical and political landscape. The region is so called as it separates the land of Najd in the east from the land of Tihamah in the west.

introduced mechanisms that were able to correspondance “new” with the Sunna. These mechanisms are known as **ijma** and **qiyas**. Another mechanism was introduced-**bida**. While ijma and qiyas are some kind of bridge between traditions and modernity, bida is tool used to imply opinion, mode or action that is not known by hadiths. Until it is approved by ijma, it contradicts the Sunna. Bida is the main reason for separation of the four orthodox schools. On the one side, Hanafism was the most tolerant towards the bida, while on the other the most strict was Hanbali. They rejected the bida and claimed that only the holy book and the Sunna were legitimate sources in religious and social matters. Even though Muhammad bin Abd al Wahhab’s teachings do not approve existing of any of these schools, the strong influence of Hanbalimazhab is seen in the Wahhabi movement. Another factor that influenced on the founder of the Wahhabism was the fact that he was traveling widely to the countries that were surrounding Hajd. Among them were holy cities Mecca and Medina, Basra(strong base of the Shi’ism), Baghdad, Damascus, Jerusalem and couple of more places in Iraq, Iran, Syria, etc. In most of them he spend at least one year of his life. This was more than enough time for him to get to know the religious custom, rituals and traditions on the Arabia peninsula and to take position towards them. Moreover, he had studied theology and the interpretation of Quran, so in the combination with his knowledge collected from these journeys he evolved arguments for his teachings. As I already said, he was very rigorous when deciding who true believer is and who is not. He claimed that whole society has returned to the pre-Islam time, also known as Jahiliyya. According to him, most of popular Islamic religious traditions and rituals had supporting polytheism. For example, celebration of Prophet’s birthday and prays on this day is nothing else then distraction from the true path of Islam. Holy trees and stones, building mosques over the graves of Prophet and his companions are considered as heresy. M. bin Abd al Wahhab was teaching that Islam has been corrupted by innovations that Quran and the Sunna do not recognize. Moreover, people should strive to the model of living that first three generations of Muslims have created. He labeled popular branches of Islam as false. For instance, Sufism is strongly rejected by Wahhabi ideology because all mystic and transcendental rituals were considered as opposite to Allah<sup>8</sup>. For Wahhabists, there should not be any mediator between Muslim and the God. Further on, the strongest attitude Muhammad bin Abd al Wahhab had against Shi’its. There is couple of reasons for this. First is that, as mentioned before, he was under the strong influence of Hanbalimazhab. The truth is that all four orthodox schools had attitude against the Shi’ism, but as in everything, Hanbalists were the strictest. Second reason lies in the fact that M. bin Abd al Wahhab was also under the strongest influence of the medieval scholar IbnTaymiyyah (1263-1328). We could say that Wahhabism is extension and institutionalization of the IbnTaymiyyah’s teachings. They shared attitude towards the Suffi and Shi’i ideologies,

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<sup>8</sup> Sufism was also popular in the Balkans, especially its form known as Baktashi. Here we can also find a reason that could explain disputes between two groups that had occurred from the arrival of Wahhabis in the Bosnia and Serbia.

which considered as infidels and pagans. Next, IbnTaymiyyah also did not approve popular trend of idolatry of holy Muslims. Finally, the third factor that, in my opinion, is the most important reason why Wahhabi ideology is the loudest against Shi'I is that M. bin AbdWahhab during his staying in Basra was trying to preach and persuade people to reject their believes and rituals and to embrace true Islam. He found himself in front of strong resistance from the locals. Finally, he was expelled from the town under the threats for his life. Followers of the Shi'I were not the only one that had been outraged with Wahhabism. Even the closest M. Abd al Wahhab's relatives were against his teachings. Sulayman Abdul Wahhab, the brother of Muhammad was openly against Wahhabi ideology. He wrote a critical review of his brother's book "Kitab al-Tawhid" (the Book of Monotheism) entitled "Divine Flashes in the Refutation of the Wahhabis". This is not a surprise, knowing the fact that Wahhabi propaganda was forcing the formula "If you are not with us, you are unbeliever, pagan or polytheist". His father lost his position as a judge, which was punishment for his son's acts.

Activities of the Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab can be divided into two periods-before and after the dead of his father. Before this even, Muhammad was using the power of words as the only tool to prove his points. "You cannot be Prophet in your own village" could be applied in his case. He was sharing his ideology everywhere outside Uyayna. This was until the year of 1740. After the death of Abd al-WahhabibnSulayman Al Musharraf, Muhammad had returned to his hometown. Here the second part of his actions started. He had realized that words are not enough. Still convinced that worshiping of holy Muslims, including Prophet, building tombs and shrines in their name is an act of idolatry, and that these are features of the pre-Islam period and pagans, he managed to convince the ruler of Uyayma 'UthmanIbnMu'ammara to adopt his ideas. This resulted with ruining of the dome of the grave of Zaydibnal-Khattab, one of the brothers of the second caliph, Umar Ibn al Khattab. Moreover, they had destroyed others holy shrines, and according to some sources, Muhammad himself was cutting holy trees. Even though this was terrifying for the locals, actions supported by Wahhabi ideology continued until one event. This was the stoning to death of young girl that confessed adultery, ordered by Muhammad bin Ibn al-Wahhab. It was demanded to IbnMu'ammara to kill Muhammad, but instead of that, he forced him to live the town, which was another turning point in the history of Wahhabi movement.

To sum up this chapter, Muhammad bin Abd al Wahhab's teaching that people once again have returned to the Jahiliyya and that popular religion rituals, such as celebration and worshiping of Prophet's birthday, building mosque in the name of holy Muslims, celebrating holy trees and stones, Sufizm and Shi'I ideologies are acts of unbelievers, polytheist and that they should be rejected. He rejected even orthodox Sunni Islam, stating that they are all wrong. Moreover, he and his followers demanded that real Muslim is only

the one that live life based on Quran and hadiths, as first three generations of Muslims were living.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Most of the Wahhabis beside the Quran and hadiths use book of al Wahhab "Kitab al-Tawhid"- "The book of oneness". Basically, the book consist out of quotations from the holy book.

## 2.1. M. bin Abd al Wahhab and Muhammad bin Saud

After expulsion of the founder of Wahhabi ideology from his hometown, he had moved the market town of Diriyya. The ruler of this town was the founding father of the Saudi Arabia-Muhammad bin Saud, who had the crucial effect on M. bin Abd al Wahhab and on the evolution of Wahhabism. Two of them met on the insistence of the M. bin Saud's wife. According to ShaykhSeraj Hendricks, they created alliance that was strengthened with two factors. First of them is the essay that M. bin Abd al Wahhab entitled "Clarifying the Obscurities Surrounding the Creator of the Heavens and Earth", which was attack on the Iman and the Islam of Muslims in previous 600 years<sup>10</sup>. Second contributing factor to the strong alliance was the marriage between Abd al Wahhab and the daughter of Ibn Saud. The final outcome was that Bin Saud had accepted ideas of Wahhabism and declared all Muslims apart from themselves as unbelievers and polytheists. Both of them gained huge crucial benefits from this partnership. On the one hand, Bin Saud, who was on the top of the ruling tribe in Diriyya, had limited influence outside his own town. First reason for this is the fact that Saudis did not have strong position inside the tribal confederation in Arabia peninsula. Second is the lack of money that could provide them capabilities to expand their influence outside the settlement. Muhammad Bin Abd al Wahhab assured Bin Saud that he will help in developing necessities for expanding influence trough the collection of zakat (Islamic tax that is paid to the community's ruler). Moreover, Wahhabism justified Jihad<sup>11</sup> in the name of true faith, which brought legitimacy for following conquest of the Saudis. Muhammad bin Abd al Wahhab allowed violence, not just against not-Muslim, but also against other followers of the Islam faith. In fact, he was more rigorous towards Muslims. He considered that those sons of Allah who did not accept his teachings should be forced to accepting "the only truth" by all necessary means. This was useful tool for both M. bin Abd al Wahhab and M. Bin Saud, because they could carry out jihad against those either Wahhabi ideology or Saud's authority. Needless to say that founder of Wahhabism had control over all religious community. As we can see, both of them found what they were looking- Bin Saud had found legitimacy for future conquests and the collect of taxes trough religion and M. bin Abd al Wahhab had found strong support in spreading his ideology trough Arabia peninsula.

The history of the Saudi Arabia can be divided into three parts. First of them is the period from 1744 till 1818. This epoch is known as The First Saudi State. During this time the Saudi-Wahhabi alliance managed to expand its power trough large part of Arabia peninsula. First factor that help them succeeding was recruiting sedentary and nomad

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<sup>10</sup> Hendricks, S. S., "Mahammadibn Abdul Wahhab and the origin of the Wahhabite movement"

<sup>11</sup> This was also legacy from the IbnTaymiya's teachings.

population of southern Najd necessary for spreading of Wahhabism and the influence of the Saudis. They were attracted relatively easily to accept new ideology and to recognize Bin Saud as supreme ruler. The reason for this lies in the Wahhabism dogma that looks on every true believer equally. There are no differences between poor Bedouin and upper class in the eyes of Allah. The newcomers that embraced Wahhabism were source of the fighting force and of funding because they were obliged to pay zakat. The outcomes were annexes of Riyadh, Kharj and Qasim by 1792. following the conquests of Hasa, Qatif, Qatar and Bahrain by 1797. After conquering central and south Arabia, they turned towards Hijaz, the region that was under the Ottoman control and that that contained the two holiest Islam cities, Mecca and Medina. By the 1804 Hijaz was under the control of the Saudi-Wahhabi alliance. However, after the years of successful expansion, the Ottomans send troops in 1811 with Ibrahim Pasha, the son of Muhammad Ali. He completely destroyed Saudi-Wahhabi forces and capital of the Saudi state Diriyah by 1818. Also, members of Wahhabi Ulama and the Saudi emir were executed. With these events, Saudi state stopped to exist.

Period from 1824 till 1891 was the epoch of the Second Saudi state. Turki Ibn Abdullah, the son of former Saudi ruler took advantage of the fact that Ottoman forces remove from the Najd in 1824 to capture Riyadh, Arid, Khajr, Mahmal, Sudayr and Aflaj. He was not aggressive in his campaigns as previous Saudi rulers because he didn't want to repeat same mistake and to challenge Ottomans. However, the Second Saudi State failed because of the internal problems inside the Saud family caused by the political struggle. Murders, expulsions and instability marked this period until another Najd emirate did not bring the fall of the Saudis in 1891.

The time between 1902 and 1932 is known as the period of the Third Saudi State, when the base for creation of modern Saudi Arabia was created. Abd al Aziz Ibn al Rahman al Saud was on the head of military actions that started with the occupation of Riyadh. He organized the Ikhwan<sup>12</sup> military troop from Wahhabi Bedouin tribes. He intended to make them into a reliable and stable source of an elite army corps. Even though, Ibn Saud had huge benefits from having Ikhwan soldiers by his side, it was difficult to control them. Most of them become religious fanatics who embraced Wahhabism in the original form that Muhammad bin Abd al Wahhab was professing. They were extreme against all of those who did not share their religious beliefs. This eventually created problems and first schism in the Wahhabi movement. Once again, Saudis managed to conquer regions of Qijas, Najd and Hasa by 1906. First dissatisfaction of Ikhwans with Bin Saud occurred

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<sup>12</sup>Seeking to win over Bedouin tribal leaders and obtain their loyalty to him and his cause, Abd al Aziz established Ikhwan communities in which the Bedouin tribesmen could settle and adopt a sedentary way of life. The Ikhwan were supported by Abd al Aziz with land, seed, tools, and money, as well as arms and ammunition. A mosque was built in each community, and these mosques also served as military garrisons. By 1915 there were more than 200 settlements and in excess of 60,000 men in readiness to heed Abd al Aziz's call for warriors in his continuing battles to unite the peninsula.

after he decided to allow the Shi'ites, that have been majority in the region of Hasa, to maintain their religious freedom. This decision left permanent consequences on the relationship, because Wahhabis considered this as direct violation of their doctrine. Bin Saud continued his actions through the following years. He conquered regions of Ha'il, Khurma, Turaba, Asir, and finally in 1925 he managed to gain control over the Hijaz with both Mecca and Medina. Bin Saud had strong help from the Great Britain that had interests in the Middle East. In order to accomplish his goals, Bin Saud knew that the relations with the British must be as good as possible. The UK did not allow the Saudis to expand to the Gulf countries that were under protectorate by them. Once again, this was against the Wahhabi Ikhwan because they wanted to spread their ideology and wage jihad, especially to those Muslims that were surrounding them. Moreover, they rebelled against Bin Saud for introducing modern innovations as telephones, automobiles, and the telegraph, and because he had sent his son to Egypt, a country of unbelievers. The response of Bin Saud to these growing accusations by the Ikhwan was confrontation in 1929. He defeated them and transformed Wahhabism into a state institution. According to Ahmad Moussalli "Wahhabism was then forcefully changed from a movement of a revolutionary jihad and theological takfiri purification to a movement of a conservative social, political, theological and religious da'wa and to a justifying the institution that upholds loyalty to the royal Saudi family and the King's absolute power."<sup>13</sup> On September 22, 1932, Bin Saud declared the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the country that spreads almost over entire Arabia peninsula<sup>14</sup>.

On the one side, the positive outcome of the Saudi-Wahhabi alliance is the Monarchy that managed to expand political and religious influence over the whole Arabia peninsula. Both sides in this partnership brought crucial elements for this successful expansion, and as I have already stated, they could not do it without each other. On the other side, while the time was passing, some disputes among the Saud family and some of Wahhabis started to create a gap between them which resulted with the violent conflict and schism between state Wahhabis that were supporting Al-Saud and non-state Wahhabis that were against the state Wahhabi ulama and the royal family. This schism created base for something that it is named neo-Wahabism, the sub-movement that is discussed in the following chapter.

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<sup>13</sup> Moussalli, A. (2009), "Wahhabism, Salafism and Islamism: Who is the Enemy?", American University of Beirut

<sup>14</sup> Saud royal family named their country by its last name. This example, together with Liechtenstein was the only one in the world.

### 3. Wahhabism and global terrorism

In this part is going to be discussed whether or not Wahhabi ideology is the core element for the spreading of global terrorism, as labeled from the Western scholars, media, experts and politicians. Most of terrorists groups, on the top with al-Qaida, are supposed to use Wahhabi doctrine as the source of the inspiration for the jihad or holy war in the name of the true. First that needs to be noticed here is that Wahhabis are not inimitable. After the battle between Abd al Aziz Ibn al Rahman al Saud's troops and the Ikhwan in 1929 brought separation inside the Wahhabi movement. The Wahhabi Ulama was institutionalized and from that point till nowadays is the supporter of the royal family. Even though during the 20<sup>th</sup> century there are some decision made by Official Riyadh that were opposite to the Wahhabi doctrine, the Ulama still was supporting them and even declaring fatwas to legitimize them. AhamadMousalli uses example of IbnBaz, Saudi mufti that was spreading Wahhabi ideology in original form. He labeled all non-Wahhabi Muslims as pagans, unbelievers and attacked all scholars that did not agree with Wahhabi doctrine<sup>15</sup>. IbnBaz was declaring fatwas, prohibiting Muslims to have cooperation with non-Muslims(The Soviets in the 1960s). However, in the 1990s he agreed and allowed by fatwa for US troops to enter the Saudi Arabia so they could invade Iraq from there. This presents clear example where politics was in front of religion, but still supported by Ulama. On the other side, after the 1929, the non-state Wahhabis continued to act against the Ulama and the regime of Saud's family. They created a base for sub-group of the ideology that wanted to remain loyal to the genuine Muhammad bin Abdibn al Wahhab's teachings without any deviations. This group is known by the name of neo-Wahhabism. Beside the Wahhabis that remained outside the state Ulama, another fundament out from which neo-Wahhabism had developed was one of the strains of the Saudis Islamism. There are three of these sub-groups: the reformist's strain, the rejectionist's strain and the jihadi strain.

First group was created under the religious activism in the 1970s and 1980s influenced by the members of the Muslim Brotherhood that migrated into Saudi Arabia. Reformist used Wahhabism in the combination with the Muslim Brotherhood approach for reaching their goals. Opposite to the Wahhabi Ulema, they used rhetoric in solving the social, cultural and political issues rather than involving themselves in abstract theological debates.

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<sup>15</sup> Moussalli, A. (2009), "Wahhabism, Salafism and Islamism: Who is the Enemy?", American University of Beirut

Second group of rejectionist has different approach. Unlike the reformist, their concern was concentrated on the questions of individual faith and moral. They insisted that Ulama should be divided from the state institutions. This does not mean that they wanted eliminate nation-state, but to have an option to disagree and oppose to it in some questions that are not in the same level with the religion. They rejected religious schools and the mosques and were favoring informal studying of religion.

Third strain of the Saudi Islamism is jihadist. It developed as a result of a Saudi Arabia's support of the Afghan in their war against the Soviet Union. After the conflict they returned to the Saudi Arabia and had created doctrine that all goals, social and political are reachable only by using violence. They gained the freedom to move in and out their country, as reward to their contribution in the conflicts. This allowed them possibility to recruit young people and to train them for the future combats. The results of mobilization were young Islamic soldiers involved in the Al Qaida terrorist organization.

Neo-Wahhabism had evolved out from all three of these groups, but mostly out the last one. If we want to look for the source of the inspiration for terrorism, stating that Wahhabi ideology is responsible is wrong. There are couple of factors that are supporting this claims:

First, interpretations of one ideology, as old as Wahhabi, can be different among people. This creates wings or sub-groups/strains. Even though neo-Wahhabi and state Wahhabi share the same fundamental belief, doctrine, objectives and practices, they do not share methods to meets these goals. Neo-Wahhabis, for example has different sub-groups that exercise both violent and non-violent methods in order to achieve their different goals in the issues that are connected to Islam. Among many groups, one led by Muhammad al Mas'ari is interesting. He went to London after the dispute with the authorities in the Saudi Arabia and established group by the name "Salafists' first public tribunal". Later, this group was divided into three wings:

1. The Sa'd al Faqih group, that was under the influence of Muslim brotherhood
2. The Muhammad al Mas'ari group that formed the Legal rights Committee in London
3. The Osama Bin Laden group that was calling people to join in the revolution. This wing is result of thousands of Muslims that returned from Afghanistan to Saudi Arabia to find out that their country had accepted non-Muslim to their ground. Bin Laden sent a letter in 1997 to the Saudi's government expressing their discontent. This letter became foundation for the revolutionary movement, al Qaida. In 1998, he announced the birth of The Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and the Crusaders and issued a fatwa that dictate to all Muslims to kill Americans and all those who were their allies. Al Qaida is responsible for numerous terroristic

attacks, and the most famous was against the Pentagon in Washington and the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001.

Second reason why we can mark Wahhabism as a core contributing factor to terrorism is because these terrorists groups, such as al Qaida, consist out of people that had different ideological background. The war in Afghanistan collected Muslim from three major Islamic trends:

Neo-Salafizm, which is sub-group of major Salafist ideology and, as Neo-Wahhabism is also divided into three strains. First of them are purist who use non-violent methods in propagation and purification of Islam. They consider politics as a deviation from the true religion. Second are known as politicos who favor politics as a tool for implementing the Salafi beliefs. The final group consists of jihadis, who share the similar evolution as neo-Wahhabi jihadists. They are result of the conflict in Afghanistan and use violent methods to reach their goals.

Islamism-primary goal of this ideology is establishing an Islamic state as the first step of implementing the shari'a. Like Wahhabi and Salafi ideologies, they teach returning to the fundamental Islam, but unlike them, they adopt Western mechanism, such as constitutional rule and the democracy. Again, there are sub-groups with different methods, but same beliefs: the moderates and the radical Islamist. Moreover, radical Islamist strain is divided to three groups. First are internals who wage jihad against corrupt Muslim states. Second are irredentists, who want to reclaim former Muslim lands being ruled by non-Muslims. Final group are globalists who are waging jihad against the West. The latter are one of the postulates of al Qaida.

We can conclude that al Qaida and similar organizations are result of the combination of radical strains inside the popular Islamic ideologies, among which is Wahhabism. Even though these religious trends are considered to be interchangeable ("All Wahhabis are Sufists"), this is not true. The fact is that they all have similar doctrine to return to the fundamental Islam based on Quran and the Sunna, but the methods that they use in order to reach this are different. They all interpret the same source differently. Terrorism is the final product of the worst and the most extreme interpretation out of these ideologies.

## 4. Export of Wahhabism

Even though Wahhabi ideology is not followed by many Muslims (around 1% of all population), the influence that it managed to accomplish across the Muslim world is huge. Reason for this is the fact that Saudi Arabia gained power by the exploitation of petrol. Before the 1950s the Saudi's government was leading politics of apologies to the other Muslim countries because of the strict Wahhabi's propaganda in order to maintain good relationships. However, after these years, the Saudis took totally different approach. With the petrodollars they earned in the following years and the alliances with Western countries (US, UK), they were no longer in subordinate position, so the politics of apologies for the Wahhabism was rejected. Moreover, since they had control over the two holy cities, Mecca and Medina, with new order of power holders, they were free to profess genuine Wahhabism over the holy land without any modifications. This was one form of creating influence over the other Muslims outside the borders of Saudi Arabia. The second method of spreading Wahhabi ideology over the Muslim world was assistance to numerous groups and organizations. This campaign was aggressive during the 1970s and the boost was financial. With the following years, policies of help become more sophisticated. The Saudis were creating organizations in order to provide literature translated into local dialects, they were building madrasas, mosques. In order to come under the protection and supports of the Saudis, lots of Islamic movements and groups modified their ideologies to bring them closer to Wahhabism. If we look at the statistics, the Saudi Arabia spent over the 70 billion dollars before the 2002 for the development and spreading outside the country. The private donations are not included in these sums. This money was transferred through the numerous charity organizations that were officially independent from the government, but the reality was totally different. The largest of these charities are Islamic International Relief Organization (IIRO), the Al Haramain Foundation, the Medical Emergency Relief Charity (MERC) and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY). According to the Ain-Al-Yaqeen, the Saudi's newspaper), the Al Haramain funded printing of 13 million Islamic books, launching of six internet sites, employed more than 3000 callers, founded 1100 mosques, schools and cultural Islamic centers and posted more than 350,000 letters of invitations to convert to Islam. Moreover, IIRO completed 3800 mosques, spent 45 million dollars for Islamic education and employed 6000 proselytizers.

Even though I stated that Wahhabi ideology is not main element for the spreading of jihad terrorism, the Saudi's method of spreading Wahhabism certainly one of the most contributing factors. The support of the Saudi Arabia can be divided into two periods: pre and after the 9/11. In first period, Saudi Arabia was supporting jihadi movements in their struggle against Soviets in Afghanistan. Invasion of Soviets in 1979 and the following

conflicts are considered to be a starting point of the global terrorism. The reasons of the Saudis for supporting jihad in Afghanistan are that they gained good relations from the US with interference. The cold war was still on during this period, so the United States were considering positively on jihadi groups opposite to the Soviets. Second reason why official Riyadh was supporting jihadist was the fact they could sent away lots of young militants outside their country. There were approximately around 12,000 Saudis that were participants of the combats in the Afghanistan. After the Soviet retreated in 1989, the Taliban movement had raised in the Afghanistan. They created government in the 1996 that have features of the rigid rule based on Islamic law commonly associated with the Wahhabism. The Taliban government was recognized only by three countries. One of them was Saudi Arabia. The Saudis benefited out from this alliance because they had another partner in anti-Iranian campaign. Moreover, Al Qaida, that had stronghold in the Afghanistan, was openly against the cooperation between the US and the Saudi Arabia. The Taliban played important role of suppressing the propaganda against the official Riyadh in the Afghanistan. The situation drastically changed after the September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. The Saudi Arabia's government broke all connections with the Taliban and the jihadi movements. This reaction was expected because the Saudis wanted to maintain good relations with the White House. This is visible in the invasion on Iraq in 2003. There were significantly less Saudis that had participated in this war than the one in Afghanistan. Those determined to go and support help Muslim brothers found big difficulties to accomplish this. The control on borders in Saudi Arabia was stricter than usually in order to prevent the migration.

We can conclude that Saudi Arabia used Wahhabi ideology in order to gain power and dominance across the Muslim world. Money gained from petrol allowed them to accomplish their goals. The Saudis were supporting various groups and organizations, building mosques, madrassas, schools, everything that was necessary for the Wahhabism to be adopted. Huge amounts of money were spent trough different charities in order for this to happen. However, this aid was also used for supporting of terrorist organizations. This resulted with the fact that the Saudis financing world widely was not being controlled by any govern\*ent regulation, so the Islamic groups, such as Al Qaida were provided with the necessary means for their objectives. Intentionally or not, the Saudi Arabia was responsible for the evolution of Islamic jihadi groups, so their need for political power could be labeled as the main reason for the raising of global terror, not the ideology of Wahhabi.

## 5. Wahhabism in Bosnia and Serbia

The Wahhabi ideology came to the region of the Balkan during the war in Bosnia 1992-1995 and settled mostly in the Bosnia and in the region of Sandzak, Serbia. Despite the fact that the pre-war Muslim society was mostly secular, Alija Izetbegovic, leader of the Muslim party for Democratic Action (SDA), together with the Serbian and Croatian propaganda, shaped new identity for the Muslims, more conservative and religious one. The images sent to the Muslim world have found reactions which had resulted with the support of money, weapons and militants willing to fight for their Muslim brothers. Around 3000 Volunteers fled to Bosnia and created military unit “Al Mudzahideen”, as legal fraction inside the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was based largely in the central Bosnian towns of Tuzla, Zenica and Maglaj. The unit consisted mostly from the foreign fighters who had experience gained during the fights in Afghanistan. In many reports, they were described as ruthless killers who were destroying whole Serbian and Croatian villages, leaving anyone alive. Methods invented by this unit brought fear for the enemies of the Alija Izetbegovic’s army which allowed them to accomplish victories during the war. However, Al Mudzahideen’s group was problematic for the following reasons. First, it was hard to control by the elders in the army. They did not respect domestic authorities. Second, Muslims in the Balkans drastically different form the newcomer’s jihadists. On the one side, Bosnian Muslims were mostly secular. They did not follow the religious rules strictly. On the other, most of the jihadists were followers of Wahhabis, who were professing strict form of Islam. When they saw their Muslim “brothers” eating pork and drinking alcohol, they were shocked. The communism had created society where Muslims were wearing crosses over their neck without knowing what does it means. Abu Jandal, who was personal bodyguard of Bin Laden, was one of the arrivals in Bosnia and he stated that Muslims in Bosnia are related to Wahhabis mast the Church of England gardener had to a Bible Belt evangelist. This was one of the main reasons why they decided to stay in Bosnia and to spread over the region after the end of the conflict. They found themselves in a new role to try to lead people on the right path. Even though the jihadist’s help in the combats was huge, their attempts to impose Wahhabi ideology upon the local Muslims trigger off clash inside the Islamic community. The disagreements between Wahhabis and locals started during the war and they exist till nowadays. Muslims in Bosnia strongly opposed to the implementation of the Sharia law that foreigners wanted to introduce. For example, in the town of Zenica, jihadists were burning licker markets, forbidding pornography materials, harassing men and women who were rejecting to follow the norms. Moreover, Muslims that came in the Bosnia from abroad were fighting for the creation of the pure Islamic state in the Europe. The politics of the local Muslim authority was the opposite, at least the official one. They wanted to keep

the Bosnia as it used to be during its whole history-multicultural. This politics has changed during the conflict and it went towards the idea that jihadist had in mind, but they were never on the same level. After signing of Dayton agreement that marked the end of conflict, the Al Mudzadideen unit stopped to exist. However, Bosnian authorities awarded most of the jihadist with passports, which allowed them opportunity to stay in this region and to spread theological ideas. Many of those who stayed moved to the Bosnian village Bocinja, which became center of Wahhabis in Bosnia. Jihadist that stayed in the region did not have problems with authorities until September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. Even the visits of high-members of the Al Qaida to the Bosnia such as Aiman Al Sawahiri have been tolerated from the officials before the 9/11. In the period that followed terrorist attacks on the US ground have resulted with the pressure on the governments worldwide to start battle against terrorism. Bosnia was not exception, so the officials started numerous actions in order to demonstrate their Western demonstration. First action resulted with deportations of the foreign fighters from Bosnia. Those who stayed in the country decided to leave Bocinja under pressure of the locals. First leader of the Wahhabis was Jusuf Baracic. He had radical attitudes and was constantly in the clash with the Islam community. He tried to forcibly enter the Tsar's Mosque in Sarajevo, as well as building in the belonging of the Islamic community. This all resulted with the violent conflicts between two Muslim communities. Jusuf Baracic died in the car accident in 2007. After the Wahhabis were expelled from Bocinja, they chose Gornja Maoca as new center. New community created here did not recognize Bosnian laws. Instead, they lived under sharia. Islamic community in the Bosnia knew about the situation in this village, but they didn't react. Mosque was completely outside their control. New leader of the Wahhabis in Gornja Maoca was Nusret Imamovic. He called himself "a member of the independent autonomous area of Gornja Maoca". He had radical teaching and was openly supporting Bin Laden's activities. In the night between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> February, Bosnian police entered Gornja Maoca in order to retain this territory under control of the Bosnian authorities. Nusret Imamovic along with other 6 Wahhabis accused for threats for territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, attacks on Constitution and inciting racial, national and religious hatred. Imamovic was also accused in 2008 for teaching about fifteen children by the Jordanian teaching system, but the accusations were rejected because of the lack of the evidence.

The atmosphere of the disagreement between Wahhabis and other Muslims were common from the beginning of their coexistence. Wahhabis had been harassing women who would not wear the veils. Moreover, they were ordering people to stop playing music in their homes. As stated in the previous parts, this was not exception for the Wahhabism. The followers of the ideology have been always more keen to the Muslims than to the non-Muslims.

First Wahhabis started to arrive in Serbia in 1997. They settled in the region of Sandzak, the region that have the biggest Muslim population in the country. During the Yugoslav

wars, situation in Sandzak remained peaceful, despite the big tensions that existed between Orthodox Serbs and Muslims. This region turned out to be favorable for the Wahhabis to share their teachings. First reason lies in the fact that Muslims here were more conservative than those in Bosnia. Second reason is more complex. Sandzak region has big problems with drugs. The number of heroin addicts in this region is the biggest in the Serbia. Those who decided to search for help with their addiction turned to the Wahhabis who would help them. The price for this support was almost in every case conversion to Wahhabism. This was successful method for expansion of the ideology. Citizens of Novi Pazar, the center of Sandzak region, became active of the Wahhabis in the 2002. They were involved in initiatives such as cleaning public spaces and offering help to drug addict, as already stated. In the October 2002 Wahhabis distributed leaflets in front of the University building with instructions not to participate in Christian religious festivals and to use Christmas greetings. Their radical activities included breaking-up a concert of the Belgrade group Balkanika in the Novi Pazar. They recognized this music as a “Satan’s work”. Moreover, they were disrupting post-prayer lectures in local mosques, demanded for stopping of projects such as AIDS awareness and sexual health promotion. All this was seen as immoral by Wahhabis. First event that brought bigger attention on the Wahhabis in Sandzak occurred in October, 2006 when they organized protest because of the publication of cartoon that showed Prophet Muhammad in the Danish newspaper. They burned Denmark and Israel flags in Novi Pazar. The event that followed this protest was in November same year when fight broke out in the Arap mosque in Novi Pazar that resulted with the murder of the two Wahhabis by IzetFijuljanin, supporter of the local mufti MuaremZukoric<sup>16</sup>. Soon, the confrontations between Wahhabis and the supporters of the mufti became common. These conditions dragged attention of the official Belgrade. This resulted with broader examination of the Wahhabis. Investigation discovered a “terrorist training camp” in the village of Zabren, 30 kilometers from Novi Pazar. Here, police found big quantity of weapons, food rations and other equipment. A month after discovery of the camp, Serbian police arrested SafetBecovic and SenadRamovic and killed Ismail Prentic, who was labeled as leader of the Wahhabis in Sandzak. All of them were accused of establishing the camp and planning to kill religious leaders of the Muslim community and the Muslim politicians in Novi Pazar. After these events, Wahhabis did not bring any attention on them. There hadn’t been any incidents since then. The reason lies in the fact that they are under surveillance of foreign and domestic media, politicians and diplomats. Still, their activities are visible. According to RadeBozovic, Serbian orientalist, Wahhabis can be defined as “police of sharia”. They have strict rules about moral, behavior, and the dressing, both men and women. It is easy to recognize Wahhabi when you see him. They all wear beard and pants that do not go under the ankles. Their wives wear burkas, dresses that cover whole body apart from eyes. There is some information that Wahhabis started to

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<sup>16</sup> He is also Bosniaks politician that since the fall of Slobodan Milosevic have aimed his goals towards achieving autonomy of the Sandzak region. There are lots of controversies connected with him.

pay to some women in the Sandzak to wear burkas even though they are not followers of the Wahhabi ideology. The reason for this is simple. There are not many Wahhabis, so this method can be seen as some kind of propaganda. Even though they put effort to attract more people to accept Wahhabis as the only right path, they remained in the number smaller than 1000 in the Sandzak.

Wahhabis in both Bosnia and Serbia have strong support of the Islamic governments, mostly from Saudi Arabia. The help was introduced through various social programs, such as building madrassas and helping reconstruction of the religious objects ruined in the war. Moreover, Saudi Arabia funded building new mosques in the Bosnia and Sandzak. However, new mosques had completely new form than typical for this region. All of 550 that have been built in the period after the war have been created in the Wahhabi style. For example, King Fahd Mosque in Sarajevo was built along the stylistic lines of a Saudi Wahhabis mosque. Typically for this type of the mosques, every wall was whitewashed. This meant that all original interiors and decorations were destroyed. Many experts shared opinion that Saudi Arabia's well intentions to help their Muslim brothers had effect of importing new architecture in the region, together with the new interpretation of Islam and that is Wahhabism. Saudis used the same channels in order to expand Wahhabism for every part of the world. Islamic International Relief Organization was sending money to the Bosnia during and after the conflict. This lasted until SFOR<sup>17</sup> started an investigation in order to stop activities of the organization. However, financing continue through other channels. Most of money that Saudis were implementing into the Bosnia came from the organizations that were operating from Vienna. This all resulted with the pressure from the West governments on the Officials in the Bosnia to expel foreign fighters from the state. The reason for this reaction lies in the fact that they couldn't control money entering Bosnia and because of that fear of using that money for funding potential terrorists was justified. Money in Sandzak entered mostly by the programs that were helping drug addicts.

Despite the facts that authorities in Bosnia and Serbia have found camps created by Wahhabis that have role to train prepare new jihadist, I do not think that they present the threat for the stability of the region. The reasons for this opinion are following. First is the fact that Balkan isn't legitimate target of the global terrorist. They do not consider countries in this region as the part of the West, even though these countries are desperately trying to become part of it. Second reason why I think like this is the logic that they would not have attack targets that close to their camps. It is much better for them to keep the

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<sup>17</sup>The Stabilization Force (SFOR) was a NATO-led multinational peacekeeping force deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina after the Bosnian war. Although SFOR was led by NATO, several non-NATO countries contributed troops. SFOR was established in Security Council Resolution 1088 on December 12, 1996. It succeeded the much larger Implementation Force IFOR which was deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina on 20 December 1995 with a one year mandate.

“factory” for the soldiers safe and sound. Otherwise, if they, for example, attack embassy of the US in the Belgrade, this event would drag full attention on this region and this would mean that the camp would be discovered. In other words, regions that are marked as places with camp for recruiting jihadist have less chance to experience terrorism. The final reason why I think that Wahhabism is not threat for the security of the region is the fact that the number of Wahhabis is small. Moreover, as I already explained, not all Wahhabis are radical. Those that have extreme beliefs make small percent of all Wahhabis in the area. Even though I do not think that Wahhabis are threat for the region, this does not mean that they shouldn't be under the constant surveillance. The governments of Bosnia and Serbia could do huge favor to the global fight against the terrorism if they find and shut down at least one of these camps.

## 6. Conclusion

To summarize this paper, Wahhabi ideology has intrigued lots of people around the world to explore and to try to find out more about its origins and development through ages. Since the beginning, it has been controversial because of their rigorous attitudes toward the people that are supposed to be closer to them than any other religious ideologies. Today, Wahhabism is famous not because it has a huge number of followers, or because the dogma presented by it is something new or different. The reasons why Wahhabi ideology is interesting on a global scale are “wrong” and this is something that I tried to explain. First is the Saudi family and their state. There is no doubt that Wahhabism would not expand outside the Najd if there had not been Ibn Saud. Still, this situation is vice versa. Probably there wouldn't be Saudi Arabia without the Muhammad Bin Ibn Wahhab. Both sides took all the best that was offered to them in order to achieve their individual goals. On the one side, Ibn Saud gained religious legitimacy and on the other Bin Wahhab gained military power that helped him to expand the ideology. Second reason starts with the attack in the September 11<sup>th</sup> in 2001. Combination of false conclusions, weak journalistic investigations and generalizations brought attention of the world on the Wahhabism. Soon, all Islamic terrorists were considered as the followers of this ideology. Hopefully I have explained that not all Wahhabis were terrorists and that this image is not creating a problem just for the Wahhabis, but even for those who are fighting against the terrorism because this could easily mislead from the real threats. As many ideologies, this one also has certain sub-groups, and some of them are extreme, while others are moderate. Wahhabism has one radical sub-group, but this doesn't mean that all Wahhabis are like that. As stated, most of terrorist groups, such as Al Qaida present a combination of a couple of radical Islamic ideologies, not just Wahhabism. Even though Wahhabism is not directly responsible for terrorism, those who are trying to spread it as much as possible are definitely are. Terrorist organizations are using Saudi Arabia's money that is spent in order to export Wahhabi ideology outside the state. They were building mosques, madrassas and printing books in local dialects, everything in order to present Wahhabism. They used ideology in order to gain influence. Various official governments' channels used for transfer of the fund were and still are uncontrolled, so it was quite easy for the terrorist groups to get them, at least this was the case before the 9/11. Situation changed after this date. Under the pressure of

the West, especially the US, the Saudis tried to implement some control over their official funds, but still it is not sufficient. Private donations from these countries are still uncontrolled and the money they spent is not irrelevant. Finally, Wahhabism came to the Bosnia and Serbia with the Yugoslav civil war in the beginning of the 90'. Most of them came in order to help their Muslim brothers in Bosnia. However, majority decided to stay in order to try to convert local, mostly secular Muslim brother to the right path. This turned out to be a failure. Quite the opposite, since the end of the war, most of the incidents had to do with the Wahhabis and the Muslim community. Serbian and Bosnian officials did not pay big attention on this group until the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Despite the fact that extreme Wahhabis managed to create camp for recruit of jihadists and had several radical actions, police of both countries quite successfully opposed them and made arrests of the leaders. This means that Wahhabis in the region are maybe capable to create some problems in the small scale range, but for any bigger actions that could cause threat for security they do not have capacities. For the end, Wahhabism should not be viewed as one compact ideology. It has layers and most of them do not fit to the opinion that world share. Small percent of Wahhabis can be marked as terrorist. If they want to find other ideology to blame for terrorism, media, experts and politician should turn to some other group. Unfortunately, this way of operating by using tool of generalization instead of trying to identify individual person is far more common. This often creates stereotypes that are dangerous and they do not disappear easily. Quite the opposite, they could shape new identity which further on could become real threat. Future generations of Wahhabis could accept the image that their ideology is the carrier of the terror which could lead to the expansion of the violence.

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