**Huma 1100—“War” or “Death” News Article Assignment Name: Paul English**

**Due Tuesday 26-March**

Find a current news or magazine article that relates in some way to the readings that we have done for *either* the “War” section *or* the “Death” section. Type straight into this form (single space), print it off, and bring it to class. Your answers should be thorough and meet the minimum word requirements. This assignment is worth 6 points.

1. **What is the title of the news article and where can I find it?**

It Ain’t Easy Being a Jihadi Middle Manager

https://www.nsfwcorp.com/dispatch/jihadi-middle-manager/

1. **Which reading in the textbook does it relate to? (Pick only one)**

Nineteen Eighty-Four

1. **Give a summary of the article. (100-150 words)**

The Author summarizes the story behind documents found in Timbuktu, Mali that relate to an Al Qaeda leader, Abdelmalik Droukdel, and his strategies in conquering & holding the West African area of Mali. The Author makes a point that the news has been sensationalized, that Droukdel is little more than middle-management in an organization that no longer has any semblance of organized structure or strong leadership, and lastly that his techniques though logical don’t fit in with the extremist views of the typical Jihadi.

The letters that were found attempt to correct some of the quick behaviors that the fighters took in applying their laws. Taking the approach that they would be better off in the reason by easing into the Islamic law of Shariah, otherwise their entire “experiment” might be at jeopardy.

1. **Pick one of the readings from (the one you listed for question #2) and describe how the news article and the textbook reading are related. Make specific references to the textbook reading. (200-250 words)**

Though the article isn’t at all written in the manner of Nineteen Eighty-Four, the parallels can be seen. It’s a structured attempt to explain a sensationalist series of news responses about these newly discovered documents, in the terrorist war we’ve been fighting over and over for the past few years. We find a leader and we dehumanize them into the something we can rally against and hate.

Also the way the relationship between the leader, and the Al Qaeda soldiers seems similar to the class separation found in the book. The leader has a very rational viewpoint, whereas the soldiers are very uncontrolled and indoctrinated by their extremist viewpoints. In Nineteen Eighty-Four the inner class monitors, and censors, and corrects the behaviors and thoughts of the middle class group that Winston belongs too. His story is particularly about his own struggle to have freedom, and free-thinking amongst this situation of extremism, so his particular part doesn’t exactly fit into how the news article relates. Instead you look at the general extremist conditions that most of the middle class faces. They are indoctrinated just like many of these terrorist groups, they are vehemently opposed to a group that doesn’t share their rigid belief system, and they are taking a totalitarian approach to trying to maintain their order. In contrast their leadership understands that if they are to succeed they still have to be somewhat rational about how they go about their purpose. Though the book might say they need to go raise Jihad, they know that they must use strategy of some kind. In the book the situation is different in that the totalitarian group has apparently become one of only a few very large super-powers, but the leadership still must assert control over the people who are unfortunately a part of the group.

1. **What are your thoughts on this article and the ideas and/or issues it raises? (100 words)**

It’s a unique perspective on the situation. It certainly adds some rationality to the argument in a good way, but it may be a bit biased in general. I think it’s very important to avoid getting caught up in the headlines that most news organizations throw out there to get publicity and readers. It can sometimes distract from what the real content may be, or what the real situational gravity is. In this case, it would seem from the viewpoint of many of the news organizations that what was found were “secret documents,” “a terrorist manifesto,” or in general some kind of big deal. The author makes the case that this is little more than a parallel to a middle-management memo to a group of unruly subordinates. It’s a region that they were forced to flee, and worded in a sense that tries to maintain political favorability of the people of the region.

1. **Come up with two questions on the news article and the textbook reading that you think are important to ask. (Come up with one question for each, but don’t answer them.)**

**News article question:**

Why would an Al Qaeda leader present documents similar to the ones mentioned in the article to a group that isn’t necessarily likely to follow its advice?

**Textbook reading question:**

Why do the people get so riled up against Goldstein, and his ideas?