

Chapter Five

Global Terrorism and the Conventional Argument: Exploring the Flaws

Chapter Aim: This chapter aims to present and challenge the conventional argument, as promulgated by the Bush Administration, against global terrorism and to explore the flaws that are inherent in this argument.

Introduction

Understanding global terrorism is not as simple as has been depicted by the powerful elites in political circles and thence reflected by the media. The primary thrust of the conventional argument is that militant Islam seeks to remake the world through the means of the instrument of global terror, setting up the dynamic of the good, the democratic West of which the United States (US) is the most exemplary representative, versus the evil, the tyrannical Islamic Fundamentalists. The conventional view of terrorism has been responsible for launching a coalition in support of waging a global war against terrorism, the global war on terror (GWOT), and for the invasion of the nation states of Afghanistan and Iraq with the resultant deaths of many people. This is despite the fact that terrorists form *networks* to fight a non-conventional war and not armies. It will be shown how the GWOT, launched in response to the terrorist attacks of 9/11, has an unusually staggering range of objectives. Such objectives are seen to embrace a more inclusive umbrella than the simple targeting of Al-Qaeda, the terrorist net held responsible. It will be shown how the GWOT in effect can be seen as a convenient platform from which the Bush Administration and its neoconservative support could launch its own remake of the world, its aims of American hegemony and control of the post Cold War world. This control included a pre-emptive strategy concomitant with the shoring up of new nuclear weaponry even despite the loss of some international legitimacy for the US. This chapter thus both presents and challenges the conventional view of global terrorism during the George W. Bush Administration.

Encapsulating the Conventional View

As a starting point I propose the following hypothesis to encapsulate the conventional argument:

Global terrorism is authored by Islamic fundamentalist leaders in order to project their value system in its entirety on to the free world.

This was the view projected by the conservative right, by the Bush administration and its neoconservative support. Frum and Perle (2003: 42), close to the administration, enunciated this view very clearly:

... a radical strain within Islam has declared war on us. This strain seeks to overthrow our civilisation and remake the nations of the West into Islamic societies, imposing on the whole world its religion and its law. To achieve these cosmic ambitions, Islamic terrorists wish - and are preparing- to commit murder on a horrific scale.

The conventional argument sees in militant Islam an aggressive ideology that seeks world domination. As a result there exists a dangerous possibility for all Islam to be construed as militant. Within this proposed ideology, the values of Islam are directly opposed to the democratic West. The nation that poses the most far-reaching challenge to the aspirations of militant Islam is, of course, the United States, a nation that is not only democratic but is of Judeo-Christian heritage, secular and lays claim to being the world's only superpower. Global terrorism has thus become the evil of our time, replacing that of Communism and Nazism. To those fighting this evil, it is an all-consuming concern. There are no half-measures. As Frum and Perle (2003: 9) declared, it was 'victory or holocaust'²².

President Bush reflected these sentiments in his speeches. Although careful not to implicate mainstream Islam, he accused the terrorists, principally al-Qaeda, of hijacking Islam itself and imposing its radical beliefs on people everywhere, i.e. 'remaking the world' (Bush 2001a: 2). Bush (2001a: 3) explained to the American people that the reason they (the terrorists) hated them was because they hated their democratic freedoms – of religion, of speech, to disagree with one another. His recipe for winning the war on terrorism was to direct every available resource to that end: diplomacy, intelligence, law enforcement, financial influences and every necessary weapon of war. Adopting the world domination theme, Bush emphasised that it was not just America's fight - it was the 'world's fight', it was 'civilisation's fight'²³ - and asked all nations to join America to defeat the global terror network:

Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbour or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.

(Bush 2001:3)

On September 12, 2001 the United States consequently began building a coalition in support of the global war on terrorism. That coalition consisted of roughly 70 nations, 'one of the

²² Such a viewpoint provokes the question, Does the US need an "enemy" to maintain its national identity as the global force fighting to maintain a "free world" and with it its own dominance?

²³ This philosophical outlook invokes Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilisations".

greatest coalitions in history' (Taylor 2002: 1)²⁴. In November 2003, the Bush administration officials pointed out there had been major successes against al-Qaeda since this coalition was formed. It was claimed the network's operational leadership was dead, captured or on the run. More than 3,400 terrorist suspects had been detained by over 100 countries and more than \$200 million in terrorist-related finances had been seized (Strobel 2003: 3). Saudi Arabia had begun a major crackdown on the group and its associates. The terrorist network, in response, was believed to have fragmented into localized centres whose focus appeared to be attacks in the Middle East (Strobel 2003: 3). The US invasion of Iraq, however, has muddied the waters considerably on several fronts. As well as the aspect of the legitimacy of the Iraq invasion, it has been argued that the Iraq war diverted resources from the GWOT (Strobel 2003: 1). The repercussions do not stop there. Since 2002-2003, according to Martinage (2008: 5), the overall US position in the GWOT slipped. While the US made some progress building counter-terrorism capabilities which were responsible for capturing or killing terrorist leaders and operatives, disrupting terrorist operations and seizing assets, such gains were offset by the metastasis of the al-Qaeda organisation into a global movement. This has meant the spread of Salafi-Jihadi²⁵ ideology, the resurgence of Iranian regional influence and the growth in terms of number and political influence of Islamic fundamentalist political parties throughout the world (Martinage 2008: 5-6). Martinage (2008: 6) claims that the continued presence of US military forces in Iraq has been a windfall for the jihadi movement's propaganda effort and reinforced the legitimacy of its call to defensive jihad. In short, the US is losing the long war in the madrassas, on the air waves, in cyber space and during Friday prayers in mosques around the world. Herman and Peterson (2008: 3), controversial voices themselves critical of the concept of the War on Terror, do present a realistic picture of how most people see this war as at the start of 2008. In this view it is thought that Afghanistan and Pakistan rather than Iraq ought to have been the War on Terror's proper foci. It is generally accepted in this view that the US attack on Afghanistan from October 2001 on was an admissible and necessary stage in the war. The Bush Administration made a tragic error, however - it lost sight of the priority that Afghanistan

²⁴ It is necessary to understand that many of these nations depend on the US in economic or strategic defence terms.

²⁵ The word "Salaf" refers collectively to the companions of Muhammad, the early Muslims who followed them and the first three generations of Islamic scholars and leaders. The terms "Salafist" and "jihadist" are often used interchangeably because most jihadist groups advocate a return to the practices of the early Islamic society of the Salaf and many self-described Salafists believe that some form of jihad is needed to restore the original purity of Islam (Martinage 2008: 5).

represented, and diverted US military action to Iraq and other theatres, cutting back on commitment where it was needed.

The demonstration that the US was prepared to use force against regimes that support terror, however, was a message for state sponsors of terror. In the wake of Afghanistan and Iraq, states such as Sudan and Syria worked to impress the US of their good intentions vis-à-vis their own situation regarding state sponsoring of terror. For example, in more recent years, Syria, long blamed for creating Middle Eastern havoc seems to have bowed to US led international pressure to cast off its image as a sponsor of regional instability – it handed over Saddam Hussein’s half brother, Sabawi Ibrahim al-Hassan. US officials praised the assistance they received from Syria in tracking and catching other members of bin Laden’s al-Qaida network (NewsMax.com Wires 2005: 1). While the Sudan appeared to remain more recalcitrant in this respect, it cooperated enough for the US State Department to have removed the government of Sudan from a list of countries considered “non-cooperative” in the war against terrorism. State Department Spokesman Richard Boucher stated that “Sudan has taken a number of steps in cooperation against terrorism over the past few years” (Dagne 2004: 10-11).

Despite protests and opposition from sections within the American population, the Bush administration had much support. A large following believed that Bush delivered in the war on terrorism. In the first few years of the commencement of the War on Terror, outlooks such as the following appeared regularly in American newspapers:

Since the horrific events of Sept.11, the main power behind Al-Qaeda has been neutralized, the Taliban and terrorist training camps in Afghanistan destroyed and Osama bin Laden has been put to flight. The brutal regime of Saddam Hussein was brought down and Saddam himself arrested. We’ve seen numerous occasions where increased American intelligence has prevented any number of further acts of terrorism against our people and elsewhere.

(Hodges 2004:1)²⁶

However, even from amongst its supporters, the Bush administration which embarked on installing pluralistic democracies in both Afghanistan and Iraq met with great resistance, for the invasion and the resultant issues in Iraq. For Bush and his team, Iraq was portrayed as being at the centre of the fight against evil fundamentalism. Iraq, the clearly recognised prime political and military target of the US failed to yield up weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or was any credible connection established between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda.

²⁶As well as the very positive slant which has been placed on Bush’s efforts, of note also in this example is how Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden are placed under the same ‘terrorist’ banner.

There was not a clear and present danger. Fifteen out of the nineteen hijackers came from Saudi Arabia so why was Saudi Arabia treated with respect and Iraq and Afghanistan demonised and attacked? Frum (2004: 2) responded with alacrity to expose 'the real argument' over the war on terror:

Is the war on terror kind of glorified manhunt? Is the problem . . . these bandits who came into the Al-Qaeda training camps and they've scattered over the planet. . . Or is this a major ideological conflict where terrorism comes under a terror ideology connected to terrorist states? Is it a big problem that emanates from the crisis of the Middle East?

It is perhaps redundant but necessary to emphasise that Al-Qaeda is not a state. The terrorism that it has inflicted around the world could more appropriately be conceived as an armed-conflict driven by a particular form of social movement. Cold War mentality forced the US to conceive Al-Qaeda's attacks as a conventional war, however. Thus the US hunts for states to attack. Frum (2004:2) explained within a two dimensional model: one pragmatic and one ideological. Liberating Iraq brings it back into the world market vis-à-vis its oil supplies allowing the US to resume more accommodating terms with Saudi Arabia. This is pragmatic in vision. Transforming the Middle East by democratisation, beginning with regime change in Iraq, is ideological in vision. Part of the rationale is that people have a voice in their own fate. However, without solving the Palestine issue, the Middle East remains in an undemocratic spiral or never-ending circle that prevents the transformation of the Middle East situation from a culture of war to a culture of peace. Before exploring, therefore, the ideological dimension of the neoconservative vision, I will briefly discuss a central focus of US Middle East policy which engenders US-Arab relations increasingly problematic.

The US Relationship with Israel

Since the Six-Day War in 1967, arguably the central focus of US Middle East policy has been the US relationship with Israel. Israel is the dominant military power in the Middle East yet the level of material and diplomatic support given to Israel by the US is nothing short of remarkable. Mearsheimer and Walt (2006a: 30), leading and distinguished international-relations scholars, detail the concessions given to Israel by the US: \$3 billion in aid each year for the development in weapon systems, access to intelligence denied to NATO allies, the acceptance of Israel's acquisition of nuclear weapons. In addition, Israel receives from the US consistent diplomatic support. Since 1982, the US has vetoed 33 UN Security Council resolutions that were critical of Israel, an outstanding number. The US also readily comes to Israel's aid in wartime and takes its side when negotiating peace. Mearsheimer and Walt go

so far as to call US support for Israel 'unconditional' (Mearsheimer and Walt 2006b: 57) and 'unique' (Mearsheimer and Walt 2006a: 30).

An example of unparalleled support occurred in the war in Lebanon, July/August 2006. The war began on July 12th 2006 when Hezbollah fighters killed three Israeli soldiers and captured two more near the border between Israel and Lebanon. Israel responded with attacks throughout Lebanon from land, sea and air, killing some 1,000 civilians between 12 July and 14 August. Hezbollah counter responded launching thousands of rockets on northern Israel, killing some 40 civilians (Amnesty International 2006:1). During more than four weeks of ground and aerial bombardment, Lebanon's infrastructure suffered destruction on a disastrous scale (Amnesty International 2006: 1). Thus, although Hezbollah *triggered* the conflict, Israel initiated the population losses escalating the conflict into a war. What is more, Amnesty International's report raised concerns on the 'massive destruction of civilian infrastructure in Lebanon' (Amnesty International 2006: 1). A Report by Human Rights Watch (2006) documents serious violations of international humanitarian law by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF). The cases documented reveal failures by the IDF to distinguish between combatants and civilians. It is true that al-Qaeda does not distinguish also. However, the IDF represent the military forces of the *nation* of Israel and this failure contravenes the fundamental tenets of the laws of war which is the imperative to carry out attacks on only military targets. Israel as a *nation* is bound by these laws of war. Fisk (2006a: 2) called the war 'the mass punishment of a whole people'.

Israel's actions in this war precipitated criticism from countries all around the world. The Bush Administration provided Israel with diplomatic protection by vetoing a UN Security Council resolution, Proposal SC/8775 of 13th July 2006 that criticised Israel. Mearsheimer and Walt (2000c: 16) contend that the US then worked for a month to prevent the UN from imposing a ceasefire so that Israel could dissipate the forces of Hezbollah. When it became apparent that the IDF was not going to secure a decisive victory, only then did the Bush Administration and Israel agree to a cease-fire. Finally, Resolution 1701 was granted where the US went to great lengths to protect Israel in negotiations. As for the US congress, the House of Representatives passed a resolution supporting Israeli policy in Lebanon with a vote of 410-8 (Mearsheimer and Walt (2006c: 16).

There is no compelling strategic or moral rationale to explain why the US supported Israel unconditionally during the war in Lebanon while almost every other nation in the world and the world body, the UN, criticised it. Mearsheimer and Walt (2000c: 8) explain US one-sided support of Israel in terms of the political influence of the Israel lobby. The lobby is a loose collection of individuals and groups who work to shape US policy in a pro-Israel direction. The Israel lobby is particularly well funded, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) working from an annual budget of \$50 million. The lobby has a powerful influence on public discourse in the US so that Israel is viewed favourably by most Americans. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said of AIPAC: 'Thank God we have AIPAC – the greatest supporter and friend that we have in the whole world' (AIPAC 2006: 1).

I believe Europe's crimes against the Jews justify Israel's moral right to exist. However, as Mearsheimer and Walt (2000a: 32) argue, a narrative exists which portrays Israel as a country that has sought peace without qualification in every instance and where the Arabs are said to have always acted with wickedness, whereas in terms of actual behaviour, Israel's conduct is not morally dissimilar from that of its opponents. Many authors refer to this narrative. For example, Mustafa Abu Sway (2009: 1) who teaches at Al-Quds University, contends that the imposition of a Zionist narrative prevents attempts at resolving Palestinian-Israeli conflict by aiming to insulate Israel against the implementation of international law and international agreements. Also, for example, Daniel Levy, journalist, writes that Netanyahu's narrative for Israel is 'a narrow, unreconstructed and self-righteous nationalist discourse', a discourse that precludes any true equality for the 20 percent of Israel's population that is Palestinian Arab (Levy 2009: 1).

This discourse has serious ramifications. If the US continues to unconditionally support Israel, then it can only expect its strategic concerns in the Middle East, of which terrorism is a part, to become increasingly problematic: The Bush Administration's support for Israel in the war with Lebanon only compounded US ability to deal with the terrorist problem. Most importantly for the Bush Administration, unconditional support of Israel only placed impediments in the attempt to realise the neoconservative vision.

The Neoconservative Vision

The ideological dimension of the neoconservative vision is to expand the boundaries of neo-liberal democracy around the world. The Bush years were a decisive moment in history to

assert *Pax Americana*, a decisive decade in human liberty. This exporting of American values included pluralist political systems and open markets. So bringing American-style democracy to the world was one pillar of neoconservative philosophy (Shawcross 2004:57). To the neoconservatives, the US had given Iraqis, in particular, a chance to lead the Arab and Muslim world to democracy and liberty. Iraq was a most pragmatic choice – it is to be noted that Syria or Lebanon, for example, did not qualify for the same beneficence.

Another pillar of the neoconservative vision was the maintenance of US military pre-eminence: The US should not be constrained from acting unilaterally whenever it sees that its core interests are compromised. This is outlined persuasively by Kristol and Kagan (1997) in one of the most important contemporary neoconservative documents, “A Report of The Project for the New American Century” (PNAC). The foundation of this document called for a policy of military strength to promote American global leadership, to promote democracy abroad and to challenge regimes hostile to American interests. These included such regimes as Iran, Syria, North Korea and Libya.

Kristol and Kagan (1997) contended that as the American peace reaches across the globe, the force that projects that peace is increasingly burdened by its tasks. The American peace has proven itself ‘peaceful, stable and durable’ (Kristol and Kagan 1997: 1). It has provided the geopolitical framework for widespread economic growth, its political and economic principles being ‘almost universally embraced’ (Kristol and Kagan 1997: iv) as well as the spread of American principles of liberty and democracy. However, a *Pax Americana* is not self sustaining. The current American peace will be short-lived if the US becomes vulnerable to rogue powers who might acquire arsenals of ballistic missiles or other weapons of mass destruction:

We cannot allow North Korea, Iran, Iraq or similar states to undermine American leadership, intimidate American allies or threaten the American homeland itself. The blessings of the American peace, purchased at fearful cost and a century of effort, should not be so trivially squandered.
(Kristol and Kagan 1997:75)

Shawcross (2004: 58) adds Syria and Libya to the rogue list. Thus we see, revealed, the political rationale for embarking on the war on terror.

There has, in effect, not really been a change in American policy. September 11 has only made America articulate its policy ever more clearly. America has, for the past 200 years, been expanding its power and influence base. It clearly intends to remain the dominant force

in East Asia and Europe. The end of the Cold War has seen the US expand its reach yet again. Expansion of territory and influence has been ‘the inescapable reality of American history and it has not been an unconscious expansion’ (Kagan 2003:86). Kagan (2003: 88) posits that it is reasonable to state that we have entered ‘a long era of American hegemony’ and suggests that the enduring vision of Americans, that their interests coincide with the world’s interests, may be disdained but may not be doubted. That the US is so powerful makes it not unreasonable to assume that mainstream Americans not only countenance but take pride in their nation’s military power and special role in the world, that of global policeman.

Some neoconservatives have shown a blatant disrespect of the United Nations. For example, neoconservative John Bolton, former United States Ambassador to the United Nations, once quipped ‘If the UN Secretariat building lost 10 stories, it wouldn’t make a bit of difference’ (Lierman 2005: 1). Neoconservative Richard Perle who was chairman of the defence policy board, an advisory panel to the pentagon, called ‘safety through international law administered by international institutions’ mere ‘liberal conceit’ (Perle 2003: 1). Frum and Perle (2003: 269) once unreservedly stated, ‘The UN is not an entirely useless organisation . . . It gives smaller countries a feeling that their views count’. Frum and Perle’s criticism was levelled at the fact that the UN Charter does not recognise such modern aggression as state-sponsored terrorism. Yet it could be said that this is what the US is guilty of – “state-sponsored terror” – in the name of democracy and liberty? Neoconservatives argue for a restoration of the UN’s relevance but conceive that a world at peace, if it ever happens will be brought into being by American armed might and defended by American might:

America’s vocation is not an imperial vocation. Our vocation is to support justice with power. It is a vocation that has earned us terrible enemies. It is a vocation that has made us, at our best moments, the hope of the world.

(Frum and Perle 2003: 279)

This vision accorded with a blueprint for US world domination and embraced the idea of pre-emptive wars waged to remake the geopolitical map. It was a road map for changing the world. It is of note that this is exactly what Bush was accusing Al-Qaeda of doing in their terror campaign against the “Free World”. Was Bush’s vision shared by his European counterparts? Broadly speaking, there was an observable divergence between American military attitudes and European military attitudes.

France, for instance, has been one of the main opponents of American policies in the Middle East and Iraq. In the lead up to the American-led war in Iraq, Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin called for a 'solution of the Iraq problem by discussion' and indicated he would use all diplomatic means to *prevent* a US war against Iraq (Rippert and Schwarz 2002: 4). German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer was explicit in his country's opposition to the war stating that Iraq contained 'a large, almost incalculable risk' (Rippert and Schwarz 2002:1). Rippert and Schwarz (2002: 2) also claim that despite the election campaign contestations, there was a large measure of agreement between government and opposition concerning German support of American actions in Iraq. This was a good indicator of unified German opinion on this volatile issue. The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press (2004: 1) reported on March 16, 2004 that a year after the war in Iraq, negative opinion of the United States and its policies had intensified in France and Germany while British views were decidedly more critical. Growing perceptions of American unilateralism among the nations of Europe could be seen to be leading to a question of international legitimacy for America.

A Question of International Legitimacy

War now between the major European powers is unlikely. Europe hence is more inclined to promote idealism without the use of raw power. European political elites are situated therefore more on the philosophical side of the divide. American political elites, on the contrary, retaining the ideal of defending and advancing a liberal international order, remain primarily realists for such an order requires a belief in the necessity of power. In short, it is a salient point as to how much America can rely on Europe for military support in any future conflict.

As touched on above, Americans and Europeans differed dramatically on what to do about the recent Iraq war. While a majority of Americans supported the war, majorities of Europeans did not. As Kagan (2003: 106) indicates, Americans and Europeans disagree about the role of international law and international institutions, and about 'the nebulous and abstract yet powerful question of international legitimacy'. While these different worldviews emerged prior to the Iraq war and the presidency of George W. Bush, both the war and the Bush administration's conduct of international affairs have deepened the rift between them.

Bush had indeed a Machiavellian streak running through his administrative methods. A prince, according to Machiavelli, should *appear* to be 'compassionate, faithful to his word,

kind, guileless, and devout' and indeed he should be so but if he *needs* to be the opposite, he should know how; he thus should have 'a flexible disposition, varying as fortune and circumstances dictate', i.e. 'he should not deviate from what is good, if that is possible, but he should know how to do evil, if that is necessary' (Machiavelli 2003 (1520) : 57). While Bush applauded his own virtuous efforts on the War on Terror, he played a Machiavellian role in entrenching the role of the US as the global hegemon, wielding so much power it may have little need for allies, clearly intent on maintaining its pre-eminence politically and militarily. As Machiavelli (2003 (1520): 58) states: 'Everyone sees what you appear to be, few experience what you really are'. Singer (2003: 3-4) invokes the use of Hobbes' creation, 'the great Leviathan'²⁷ to explain US intentions of assuming the role of global hegemon. After the end of the Cold War, Singer (2003) explains, there were two candidates for global peacekeeper: the UN and the US. In his West Point speech of 2002, Bush omitted all reference to the UN. He stated, as Singer notes: 'America has, and intends to keep, military strengths beyond challenge, thereby making the destabilizing arms races of other eras pointless, and limiting rivalries to trade and other pursuits of peace' (Bush 2002b: 3). As Singer (2003: 4) notes, Bush was, in effect, stating the claim that the US would, from then on, play the role of Hobbes' "great leviathan" in international affairs.

However, despite this state of affairs, the US was nevertheless still facing a crisis. For the first time since World War II, the US was seeking international legitimacy. The struggle to obtain this "qualification" was directly related to aims of shaping the international system and situating the United States place within it or to state it more succinctly, to place the rest of the world within a US sphere of control and influence.

American responses to the September 11 terrorist attacks have opened up what Kagan (2003:107) calls 'a great philosophical schism' within the West. After the Cold War, at "the end of history" so to speak, the world's liberal democracies were expected by many historians, notably Francis Fukuyama²⁸, to live in relative harmony. The emerging direction of American global leadership has cast this expectation, whether realistic or not, into doubt.

²⁷ Thomas Hobbes in his classic work, *The Leviathan*, lays out the problem of pre-emption. There is no solution to the problem of establishing when a nation may use pre-emption or not when there exist equally independent nations. The way out of this dilemma, according to Hobbes, is for everyone to hand over his power to a sovereign and thereby to establish "that great Leviathan" which has a monopoly on the use of force (Hobbes 1985 (1651)).

²⁸ Fukuyama (1992) argues that the coming of Western liberal democracy may signal the end point of humanity's sociocultural evolution and the final form of government globally.

Initial European support for American action in Afghanistan gave Europe some control over American response to the terrorist attacks. However, when the Bush Administration began looking past Afghanistan toward Iraq and the possibility of other “rogue states” it became clear that Europe had been left behind in the direction of world affairs and such a situation understandably brought with it a fear that the US could and maybe would, if it wanted, wield its immense power solely in its own interests.

Based on attitudes and actions regarding America’s first pre-emptive war, Europeans and Americans are not agreed on the threat posed by terrorism and WMD. There is thus no consensus of what is required to meet global threats today. Kagan (2003) contends that most Europeans are not in accord with American perceptions of global dangers. Europe then may fail to provide further support in the international terrorism issue. Of itself, this is of no consequence to the United States: It has the military might to wage wars in any rogue state it wants to. What is at stake, however, is legitimacy for legitimacy is not derived for the US from the Security Council of the United Nations – it has flouted the decisions of the World Body many times – but from the international legitimacy by associate democracies, particularly European democracies (Kagan 2003). This is seen historically as Americans have much investment in the idea that they have led the global liberal revolution: Democracy is an ideal cherished by the American people. In order to address what America considers to be today’s global threats it will require the legitimacy that Europe, in particular, can grant. However, Europe may refuse to do so because it does not perceive these threats in the same light. What may very well be the result is an ever widening gap between the US and Europe; a US unchecked and uninhibited by European constraint, a US that justifies its actions based completely on its own sense of values. Where once American participation was considered essential and welcomed in the world, American core values are now being questioned and are increasingly being perceived by many nations in terms of a support for world domination. Writing in October 2008, Tony Saunois, journalist for the socialist *World Relations* states that throughout much of the world including Europe, hostility towards the USA as a consequence of Bush’s policies has increased dramatically. Bush will leave the White House with ‘the international authority and credibility of the US at record low levels’ (Saunois 2008: 2). This statement has proved to be very prophetic and is reflected in the views of Ulrike Guerot, Berlin director of the European Council on Foreign Relations, when she says that the Bush administration ‘betrayed much of what the US stood for’ (Gifford 2008: 1). Guerot, in criticising US lack of compliance with international law, says her *primary* advice to the next

US president would be to respect international law (Gifford 2008: 1). Gifford (2008: 2) also quotes Denis MacShane, a British member of parliament and Tony Blair's minister for Europe, who stated that 'we've got to speak as one and show that this new America sees Europe as a partner, rather than just as a poodle to be called on from now and then and dismissed if it's not going to walk as the same direction as the White House wants to walk in'.

Pre-emption and the Fight against Terrorism

What does this mean for the fight against terrorism? Since 9/11 the US has developed specific doctrines to respond to terrorism. Shawcross (2004: 65) lists these as 'prevention, the expansion of military capacity, and preemption'. While prevention has a broad mandate, it possesses an historical base and has been used in the past to prevent aggression against the US. Hence it is a familiar concept to allies and antagonists alike. It has included the use of nuclear weapons as in the Cuban Missile Crisis. However, new generation nuclear attack options that vary in scale, scope and purpose are now on the scene and will complement other military capabilities. With this the nuclear option is being effectively integrated into the range of available military responses. That is why the expansion of US military capacity is concerning to many nations. During the Bush presidency, a new generation of nuclear weaponry was sought with a push for new nuclear design. The Bush Administration was set to spend over 50 percent more on nuclear weapons in 2004 and for the next five years than was the yearly average during the Cold War (Goldstein 2004a: 2). If expansion of military capacity unsettled America's allies then the concept of American pre-emptive action becoming an accepted military strategy is understandably alarming to them.

While pre-emption has been a strategy practised down the paths of history by various empires, present day usage has been limited by moral constraints in part perhaps due to the salutary presence of the United Nations and the sovereignty principle on which it has rested. While humanitarian interventions have muddied the waters somewhat and called the sanctity of sovereignty into question, the UN still exerts a principled and civilising influence on the military aspirations of nations in terms of pre-emption. Pre-emption consequently is still regarded as an avenue only to be contemplated with the greatest of restraint. What is therefore disturbing is that the Bush Administration promoted the idea liberally and stated it openly. Bush (2002b: 2) does so as early as June 2002 in delivering the graduation speech at West Point:

In defending the peace, we face a threat with no precedent. Enemies in the past needed great armies and great industrial capabilities to endanger the American people and our nation. The attacks of September the 11th required a few hundred thousand dollars in the hands of a few dozen evil and deluded men. . . . The gravest danger to freedom lies at the perilous crossroads of radicalism and technology. . . . New threats . . . require new thinking . . . Our security will require all Americans to be forward-looking and resolute, to be ready for pre-emptive action when necessary to defend our liberty and to defend our lives.

In this speech Bush refers to the threat posed by the merger of global terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. He emphasises that the US must not be constrained to act when it wants to in the interests of security. This includes the ability to launch pre-emptive attacks. In fact, on September 20, 2002, Bush released a new national security strategy which clearly abandons deterrence as a strategic concept and replaced it with a pre-emptive strategy directed against hostile states and terrorist groups.

In this document, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (2002), (hereafter *The National Security Strategy*) it is stated that traditional concepts of deterrence will be unsuccessful against a terrorist enemy and that it is necessary to act because there exists an overlap between states that sponsor terrorism and those that pursue WMD. What legitimises pre-emption is the existence of an imminent threat. In the past this has been a visible mobilisation of armies, navies and air forces in preparation for attack. *The National Security Strategy* (2002) makes clear that it is necessary to adapt the concept of imminent threat to the capabilities and aims of the adversaries of today. Terrorists and rogue states do not attack using conventional means: They rely on acts of terror and the use, potentially, of WMD as these weapons can be easily hidden and delivered stealthily. *The National Security Strategy* (2002: 15) is completely unambiguous on the doctrine of pre-emption: 'To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act pre-emptively.'

However, by the time of the State of the Union Address, 2004, Bush had jettisoned the term "pre-emption". Perhaps it had become too volatile to use it. Instead he talked about having 'no desire to dominate', 'no ambitions of empire' and this great republic leading 'the cause of freedom' (Bush 2004a: 4). With regard to the War on Terror, however, Bush emphasised that the US was insisting that both North Korea and Iran meet their commitments in not developing nuclear weapons: 'America is committed to keeping the world's most dangerous weapons out of the hands of the most dangerous regimes' (Bush 2004a: 3). This goes dangerously close to another way of defining "pre-emption".

The big question was whether the world could trust the Bush Administration with the weapons it had under its control; to act in a responsible way rather than in its own selfish interests. When the Bush administration took office, it initiated a fundamental shift in US strategic policy, away from a deterrence posture to one of nuclear war fighting. This was first indicated by the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) released in 2002, which proposed to replace the Cold War era nuclear triad of bombers, land-based ICBMs and submarine-based nuclear missiles with a “new triad” of strategic nuclear and non-nuclear forces, active and passive defence systems and “responsive infrastructure”, i.e. ‘the capability to design, develop and produce new weapons, all to be tied together by an advanced command-and-control system’ (Osgood 2007: 2). So while former US President Bush Senior and former President Clinton made substantive moves away from nuclear deployments, President George W. Bush acted to endorse the neoconservative push towards a pre-emptive nuclear war capacity with spiralling developments of capabilities in nuclear design. Such an acquisition was made justifiable through the conduit of the War on Terror and as the possible means of restraining rogue states (Goldstein 2004c). Four factors immediately emerge to put this rationale into question.

Firstly, there is the moral dilemma of the US shoring up its own nuclear arsenal and demanding that other powers, including ‘rogue’ states, restrain from developing nuclear weapons at all. The US Strategic Command announced January 1 2006 that it had achieved an “operational” capability for rapidly striking targets around the globe using nuclear or conventional weapons after testing its capacity the previous month for nuclear war against a fictional country believed to represent North Korea (Ruppe 2006: 1). If the US was to involve itself in a vortex of nuclear development, surely this would give the message to ‘rogue’ states to acquire nuclear capacity as deterrence to possible US attack. It does not follow that the only reason ‘rogue’ states such as Iran and North Korea seek WMD is solely for aggression: To them there is the fear of the US pre-emptive attack. Looking at the situation from their perspective, it is logical that they would seek balance. The idea of nuclear pre-emption creates more and more instability in international relations. Is this not unlike localised Cold Wars, a response to what the US might do?

Secondly, while nuclear weapons might be “suitable” for targets like ‘rogue’ states, they certainly are not suitable for the presumably foremost and original enemy in this war: terrorists such as al-Qaeda and its network of allies because as discussed earlier they are not

confined to or associated with any particular nation-state. Dr Jeffrey Record, one of America's foremost military strategists, argues that given al-Qaeda's method of battle, i.e. dispersed and decentralised, they are not subject to conventional military destruction, intelligence and police-work being the best counter-terrorism approach. Of note is that Al-Qaeda does not present as a target suitable for nuclear weapons (Record 2003).

Thirdly, the US Defense Authorisation Bill of 2004 repealed a ban on research of low yield nuclear devices that was mandated by a law called "Spratt-Furse". The Spratt-Furse law stated that the US could not conduct research and development that could lead to the production of low yield (five kilotons or less) nuclear weapons. Spratt-Furse was repealed in the Defense Authorisation bill of 2004 (in November 2003) under the proviso that no more than limited research be done on any nuclear weapons without 'explicit Congressional approval' (Goldstein 2004b: 3). However, Goldstein (2004b: 3) states that the administration began work on a low-yield nuclear program in January 2002, almost two years prior to Spratt-Furse's repeal. It appears that the Bush Administration usurped Congressional authority. In other words the Bush Administration violated US law.

Finally, strong evidence suggests the evolution of the Bush Administration's nuclear posture preceded 9/11. Nuclear weapons and policy expert, Joseph Cirincione (2003:3), claims nuclear capability embraces a double standard, a strategy of 'good guys and bad guys': It's acceptable for Israel to have 100 nuclear weapons and India and the US to have them but it's not acceptable for Iraq, North Korea and Iran. Goldstein (2004a: 2) quotes Cirincione in claiming that America's enhanced nuclear posture was already formed prior to 9/11 by committed ideologues (neoconservatives) who worked it out beforehand. This contention is realistic in that such a posture was adopted so quickly. This goes hand in hand with the Iraq invasion. Numerous media reports regarding the invasion of Iraq have detailed allegations of a group of ideologues who had a pre-existing plan that they pushed. One of these reporters is Perry (2004) who argues that 9/11 only brought to the forefront a radical plan for US control of the post Cold-War world that had been taking shape since the closing days of the first Bush presidency. Cirincione (2003: 3) concurs with this postulation and states most emphatically that the war in Iraq was not about WMD or terrorism; it was about seeing that the US 'uses its power to transform the world' in the manner that it wanted. This plan included an enhanced nuclear posture.

Defining the Enemies and Scope of the Global War on Terror

What does the intersection of fighting global terrorism, American preparedness for pre-emptive wars, growing nuclear capabilities that have violated American law and consigning rogue states to the terrorist umbrella mean for The Global War on Terrorism? Who are its real enemies? Despite the fact that there can be a link between nation-states and non-state terrorist organisations seen when the Taliban government in Afghanistan allowed al-Qaeda to use its territory, it is nevertheless apparent that the Bush Administration treated al-Qaeda and its allies and ‘rogue’ states in a very indiscriminate manner, situating them both together under the rubric of terrorists in general notwithstanding the fact that Al-Qaeda is stateless while Iran and North Korea are sovereign states as Iraq once was. So called ‘rogue’ states and terrorist organisations have differing agendas and “threat” levels. The problems posed by them need to be treated separately. They are not the same enemy. One conclusion to be drawn therefore is that the Bush Administration projected the enemy of the GWOT as a monolithic entity when in fact it is not. This has serious consequences.

A notable example is the grouping together of Saddam Hussein’s Iraq and Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaeda. The Bush Administration needlessly and unreasonably (from the point of view of pure motives) expanded the GWOT by launching a pre-emptive war against a state not at war with the US. This state posed no *imminent* threat to the US. This took away valuable resources and effort from fighting a terrorist organisation with which the US was at war. The al-Qaeda threat was ‘much more immediately dangerous and difficult to defeat’: A US war with Iraq was, on the contrary, winnable, but internationally unpopular and likely to erode the willingness of key countries to share intelligence information necessary to win the war with al-Qaeda (Record 2003: 18). In addition, maybe other benefits, e.g. control over a large supply of oil were also more important than the aforementioned costs.

By conflating these threats and pre-emptively attacking Iraq, it is arguable that the US in the name of the GWOT created the very conditions that are a breeding ground for terrorists in Iraq: a state unable to control its borders and a growing resentment amongst militant Islam regarding the presence of Americans in a Muslim heartland. Record (2003: 19) quotes Former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) director of counterterrorism operations and analysis, Vincent Cannistraro: ‘There was no substantive intelligence information linking Saddam to international terrorism before the war. Now we’ve created the conditions that have made Iraq the place to come to attack Americans.’ The invasion of Iraq has, in fact,

brought Al-Qaeda into that country. Two years after the invasion of Iraq, Robert Hutchings, director of the National Intelligence Council (NIC) which is the official research arm of the entire US intelligence community, stated that post-Saddam Iraq has become 'a magnet for international terrorist activity' (Cornwell 2005: 1). Estimates in 2005 suggested that there were 40,000 or so hardcore fighters who have 200,000 or more sympathisers in the population (Cornwell 2005: 1). Within a decade, the NIC report predicts that al-Qaeda will have been superseded by other Islamic extremist groups who will merge with local separatist and resistance movements making the job of US counter-terrorism even more difficult (Cornwell 2005: 1). It appears that Iraq has therefore joined the list of conflicts beginning with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and including independence movements in Chechnya, Kashmir and Mindanao in the Philippines that have created solidarity among Muslims and helped spread the radical message.

Also, if rogue state acquisition of WMD is to be feared then the build-up of America's nuclear arsenal will only accentuate its provocative pre-emptive stance and alienate both former allies and enemies. The scope of the GWOT has thus become staggering. The *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (2003: 10) argues that the new global environment with its resultant 'terrorist interconnectivity' and WMD are changing the very nature of terrorism. It is therefore both terrorists and terrorism that the GWOT targets and it is the eradication of both these intractable problems that defines US priority:

We must use the full influence of the United States to delegitimise terrorism and make clear that all acts of terrorism will be viewed in the same light as slavery, piracy, or genocide . . . With our friends and allies we aim to establish a new international norm regarding terrorism requiring non-support, non-tolerance, and active opposition to terrorists.

National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (2003: 23-24)

The scope of the GWOT does not stop there either. I refer to an earlier reference made to *Pax Americana*: the exporting of American values around the world, in particular, the transformation of Iraq into a successful democracy as an antecedent to democratisation of the entire Middle East. What could prompt such a working philosophy? It is breathtaking in its vision. As Record (2003: 19) explains, the political status quo in the Middle East was no longer satisfactory to the Bush Administration: The politically repressive regimes of this region are the source of Islamist terrorism which produced the horrors of 9/11. These regimes must be replaced.

This evidence suggests that the Bush Administration at the apex of its power did hold ambition to remake the world. In fact, during his first 30 months in office, George W Bush started a foreign policy revolution discarding many of the constraints that had bound the United States to its allies and redefining key principles that had governed American conduct in the world for more than half a century (Daalder and Lindsay 2003: 1). The revolution in foreign policy rested on two beliefs: shedding the constraints imposed by international allies and institutions thereby maximising America's freedom to act in the world and using its strength to change the status quo where it thought necessary. This entailed the capacity to act pre-emptively against imminent threats but also preventively against potential threats (Daalder and Lindsay 2003: 2). As Daalder and Lindsay (2003: 4) contend, the fundamental premise of the Bush revolution was that America's security rested on an America unbound. However, did not an America unbound still need the active cooperation of others in the many challenges that America itself instigated, e.g. the war in Iraq. Although Britain provided most of the other forces, American troops constituted more than 90 percent of all forces supporting the Iraq operation at an annual cost of \$50 billion to the American taxpayer (Daalder and Lindsay 2003: 4). Playing unbound by any rules meant losing the support that was once customarily present to the US. Going it alone undermined the very support that was necessary in attempting to make the grand visions that the Bush administration entertained happen. Some of these visions appeared, in any case, wildly unrealisable.

For example, how was the democratisation of the entire Middle East to come about even if Iraq did successfully democratise? Record (2003: 27) saliently observes that the 'democratic domino theory' to support this conversion has never been explicated. Is it likely, in any case, that Iraq will produce a democracy that functions fairly given the nature of the insurgency problem there? In speaking to veterans at a national convention two years after the war in Iraq had begun, Bush (2005c: 3) unfolded yet another domino theory: Events in Iraq suggested that the terrorists' goal 'is to drive nations into retreat so they can topple governments across the Middle East, establish Taliban-like regimes, and turn that region into a launching pad for more attacks against our people'. Here Bush has reduced the complexity of the insurgency in Iraq to a very simple scenario. This reduction process is a characteristic feature of Bush's statements which will be investigated further throughout this thesis. Bush's singular focus on Al-Qaeda in Iraq belies the fact that the coalition and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) 'face a composite insurgency whose elements act out of diverse motives' (Eisenstadt and White 2005: 3). These motives may be driven by humiliation engendered by the

coalition military victory and occupation; feelings of entitlement owing to the Sunni Arabs' former, dominant role; fears over the growing power of Shiite and Kurdish parties and militias; fears that Sunni Arabs (20 percent of Iraq's population) will be marginalised in a democratic Iraq; Iraqi-Arab nationalism that is ingrained in many Sunni Arabs; and the growing popularity of political Islam (Eisenstadt and White 2005: 4). Briefly speaking, the insurgency is a nationalist Sunni Arab resistance to the US supported Shiite-Kurd coalition that the Bush Administration sought to impose on a population torn apart by an invasion.

It is not that Arabs are not capable of building a democracy in Iraq. This argument is conveniently thrown by American policy supporters in Iraq at those who protest American policies in Iraq and it misses the point. Rather, despite the fact that military rule *has* been the standard, it is more significantly the artificiality of the Iraqi state itself that poses a huge problem to democratisation. Patched together in colonial fashion by the British after World War I (Harris and Hacıogullari et al 2007: 1-4), it incorporates a hostile religious, ethnic and tribal distribution inimical to the unity and solidarity that the building of a democracy requires. In addition, the breakdown of public order and continuing violence contribute to divisive processes already in existence. The insurgency that exists there today reflects to a significant degree the patchwork that was engineered by the British after World War I. Although the insurgency is to some degree related to ethnic and religious divisions that predate the British colonial period, these divisions were exacerbated further during and following British colonial incursions in Iraq.

In addition, many who support conversion to democracy in Iraq have contrasted the situation in Iraq with that in Germany and Japan after World War II. This does not yield a valid comparison. Both Germany and Japan were defeated powers that had initiated a world war and were seen as such to the rest of the world. The victims of their aggression welcomed US occupation: The US presence was accepted as being unquestionably legitimate even by both Germany and Japan. The US-led war in Iraq, however, has been regarded as highly controversial even by US allies and there is not the equivalent of the Soviet Union to force the issue as was the case with Germany and Japan.

Given the problematic attempts at democracy building in Iraq, the democratisation of the Middle East appears to be an unrealistic ideal of nightmarish proportions. Yet, neoconservative ideologues referred to at the start of the chapter, David Frum and Richard

Perle²⁹, who argued passionately for the American invasion of Iraq, still push for more pre-emptive wars with other states even while the US can be seen to be mired in Iraq. For example, in speaking out against militant Islam, Frum and Perle (2003: 277) had this to say:

The United States has been reproached even by many who should know better for inserting itself into Iraq rather than letting the Iraqis rule themselves. But it is only because we did insert ourselves into Iraq that the Iraqis have any hope of ruling themselves – and the same will be true in Iran and everywhere else in the Islamic world where we must fight.

(Frum and Perle 2003: 277)

These words are indeed ominous and sobering, with implications of forever widening the scope of the GWOT.

To summarise then, the goals of the GWOT targeted:

- The destruction of Al-Qaeda, the alleged perpetrators of 9/11.
- The destruction of all other terrorists operating within a global reach.
- The obliteration of the phenomenon of terrorism.
- The transformation of Iraq into a democracy.
- Following on from Iraq's transformation into a democracy, the democratisation of the Middle East.
- The checking of the proliferation of WMD within hostile regimes.

This was an incredibly ambitious affair. It was arguably not within the limits of US capability. It was rather a search for ultimate security combined with the ideological aim of the US casting the neoliberal net as far as it could reach. Indisputably confrontational, the GWOT was a platform from which to legitimise the projection of US values and force around the world or to put it more provocatively, to effect US control of the post Cold War world.

This was in accord with the neoconservative vision – the GWOT was a suitable base from which to launch the PNAC plan. The neoconservatives take the position that America, in fighting militant Islam on behalf of the civilised world and installing democracy in the Middle East, beginning with Iraq, is the solution to global terrorism (Frum and Perle 2003). Yet as has been discussed, this is only part of the roadmap: It is also a design to makeover the world in an attempt to secure an enduring US hegemony. With regard to global terrorism alone, however, the view outlined via the projected neoconservative rationale for the

²⁹David Frum is a former speechwriter for President George W. Bush and a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute (Right Web 2008: 1). Richard Perle was the former assistant secretary of defense in the Reagan Administration. He worked on the Defense Policy Board Advisory Committee from 1987 to 2004 and was Chairman of the Board from 2001 to 2003 under the Bush Administration. He was a behind-the-scenes architect of the Bush Administration's foreign policy (SourceWatch 2008: 1).

American presence in Iraq, is only one way of looking at the terrorism problem. It is viewing the world in straightforward terms, an extension of Manichean absolutes, good and evil. That view is that terrorists are human monsters; they deserve no understanding; it would be of no value to attempt an understanding. This view is encapsulated by Alan Dershowitz, renowned US criminal defence and civil liberties' attorney (*italics by Dershowitz*):

We must commit ourselves *never to try to understand or eliminate [the] alleged root causes [of terrorism]*, but rather to place it beyond the pale of dialogue and negotiation. Our message must be this: even if you have legitimate grievances, if you resort to terrorism as a means toward eliminating them we will simply not listen to you, we will not try to understand you, and we will certainly never change any of our policies toward you. Instead we will hunt you down and destroy your capacity to engage in terror.

Dershowitz (2003: 24-25)

This worldview is certainly commensurate with that of Former Vice President Dick Cheney who has become a vocal public defender of the Bush Administration's controversial interrogation policies. It appears that 'we will hunt you down and destroy your capacity to engage in terror' (Dershowitz 2003: 24-25) has meant subjecting detainees to 'enhanced interrogation techniques' which form the basis of an ongoing debate involving past (Bush) and present (Obama) Administrations on the use of torture (Hornick 2009: 2). Justice Department documents released in April showed that Bush Administration lawyers authorised the use of techniques such as sleep deprivation, slapping, stress positions and waterboarding, which produces the sensation of drowning. Cheney argued that those techniques saved American lives but critics say they amounted to the illegal torture of prisoners in US custody (Hornick 2009: 1).

This briefly sums up the War on Terror. It also indicates that the Al-Qaeda approach is a real threat or fear for the US and the Bush Administration cannot find any other way to eliminate this threat other than to try to stamp it out of existence. This is problematic because US expertise rests in continental warfare and Al-Qaeda conceals itself in the nebulousness of a network. Bush Administration philosophy is based on the belief that any other approach will encourage the use of terrorism as a means toward achieving ends to goals, whatever those goals may be.

I, however, do not share this view in this thesis. In trying to understand a phenomenon like global terrorism, the positives far outweigh the negatives. Granted, it is difficult to envision a context that makes the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, and the further bombings attributed to Al-Qaeda in Bali, the Philippines, Riyadh, Cassablanca, Jakarta, Bagdad, Nasiriya and Istanbul, understandable political acts. They are

wholly different to national liberationist movements where a political transition carries with it a certain sense of political legitimacy. A new government is formed, for example, and the former “terrorists” become the new leaders. The global terrorist act is moreover a symbolic act for it lacks a realistic goal. Is it a strike against the US, the West in general or modernity itself with its iniquitous consumerist culture? The material interests of the West and the consequent stratification of world societies that an unchecked capitalism has caused, sorely reveals a dangerous power differential that may have helped ignite the fuse leading to the Twin Towers. I believe this is worth trying to understand at a deeper level to find means of defusing the violence and finding ways to transform it into peace.

Consequently, in contrast to viewing global terrorists as initiators, purveyors, of the evil scourge of terrorism in their fight to take over the world, I present another hypothesis:

Global terrorism is a response (reaction) by a group of oppressed people (or people who perceive themselves as being oppressed) who perceive they have no other means of protecting their value system in a world dominated by the neo-liberal agenda and supported by a militaristic neo-conservatism led by the USA. This group of oppressed people is Islamic fundamentalist.

Invoking this hypothesis renders international terrorism a resistance, a response or an extreme reaction by certain Islamic fundamentalist groups to improve their position of power in the globalised political economy, an economy which has greatly contributed to the marginalisation of the peoples of Islam.

A Ray of Hope

As a startling contrast to the Bush Administration’s orientation, Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama opened up new possibilities in the US Presidential Election of 2008. Change was the central theme of Obama’s successful campaign. In January of 2008 he told a French magazine in an interview that if he were to win office he would hold a summit with Muslim countries to better the United State’s image in the world: ‘Once I’m elected, I want to organize a summit in the Muslim world, with all the heads of state, to have an honest discussion about ways to bridge the gap that grows every day between Muslims and the West’ (Rohan citing Obama 2008: 1). Obama continued, ‘I want to ask them to join our fight against terrorism. We must also listen to their concerns’ (Rohan citing Obama 2008: 1). Obama’s language contrasted strongly with the previous speeches made by George W Bush

who in his presidency had been bound by conceptions of “a clash of civilisation” and the innocence of the West³⁰.

Although this thesis is not intended to cover events after 2008, it is necessary to make the observation that Obama, as President, has already reached out to the Muslim world in his speech at Cairo on June 4 2009 where he firmly rejected the idea of a clash of cultures. From the start, Obama’s speech was steeped in respectful gestures to Muslims. He said it was part of his responsibilities as president ‘to fight against negative stereotypes of Islam wherever they appear’ (Obama 2009: 2) He quoted the Quran: ‘be conscious of God and always speak the truth’ to accentuate his call for a new relationship based on mutual interest and respect (Obama 2009: 1-2). Obama’s gesture can be seen as an initial step for dissolving misconceptions between Islam and the West and paves the way for a new era of dialogue and understanding. This is a contradistinction to the worldview of George W Bush.

Conclusion

Unlike the foreign policy directions of the Obama Administration which appears to be embracing a move to facilitate a deeper understanding in the relationship between Islam and the West, George W Bush’s Global War on Terrorism was projected as the fight against evil Islamic fundamentalist leaders and their followers who want to take over the free world. The good and the just are in a struggle with the criminal and the evil who will eventually be defeated. Basic to the GWOT philosophy is that global terrorists want to remake the world according to their own belief system. However, this goal bears similarities to the administration of George W Bush and its neoconservative support which has aimed to promote American global leadership in securing an enduring period of American hegemony. Such a direction is in accord with perhaps the most controversial, contemporary neoconservative document, “A Report of the Project for the New American Century”. Despite a growing loss of international legitimacy, the US headed by President Bush, has acted to shore up its nuclear arsenal and articulated a strategy of pre-emptive action which it used in the invasion of Iraq. In effect, Iraq itself was arguably less about WMD and terrorism than being part of the US plan for transformation of the world in the manner that it wanted. The GWOT can, therefore, logically be conceived as a convenient platform from which to

³⁰ These claims are covered in Chapter Eight, Critical Discourse Analysis of Excerpts from Selected Texts of President George W Bush

launch the PNAC directives. 9/11, grievously a great tragedy, nevertheless opportunely brought to the forefront the militant US plan to take control of the post Cold War world.

In light of this perspective and in face of the reality of US physical presence in the heartland of Islam such as that of Saudi Arabia, where the US-Saudi relationship has been one of America's most important and enduring connections in the Middle East, I therefore present another hypothesis for Islamic Fundamentalist people who resort to global terrorism: Conceivably they feel oppressed and perceive they have no other means of protecting their value system in this world dominated by a political and economic system determined by the West and dominated by the US, a system which globally marginalises not only their existence but wider Islamic groups which they represent. To this end, it will be necessary to establish whether or not the Islamic/Arab world has indeed been socially or culturally and economically marginalised as a result of the past 500 years of European and Anglo/American imperialism and colonial domination. This topic will be addressed in the following chapter.

Chapter Six

The Marginalisation of the Peoples of Islam

Chapter Aim: This chapter aims to answer the question, “Has the Islamic world been marginalised, politically and economically, because of historical factors, over the past 500 years by European and later Anglo/American imperialism and its colonial domination?”

Introduction

This question will be addressed in several steps. An overview will be given of the ascendancy of the Islamic Civilisation in order to establish that this civilisation was, for centuries, the foremost economic and military power in the world. Some interpretations for its decline will be discussed and the notion that colonial domination was one of the major reasons for decline will be posited. Facts will be stated in order to substantiate that imperialism, both European and American, has allowed colonialism and neo-colonialism to spread their influence and networks across the Islamic domain severely impacting on the very fabric of this civilisation geopolitically and economically. Finally, and most importantly, an investigation will be made on how postmodernist and postcolonial theory can contribute to the understanding of terrorism as a reaction or response by certain Islamic Fundamentalist groups/organisations to improve their position of power in a political economy that has become globalised.

Islamic Civilisation at its Zenith

Islam, having emerged in the seventh century in Arabia, grew rapidly and in less than a hundred years established the early Islamic state. It consisted of an empire stretching from Spain across North Africa, and from the Middle East to the borders of China. It was greater in size than the Roman Empire at its zenith³¹ (Noor Mohammed 1985: 381). The civilisation that grew up with this Islamic state was indicative of its military and economic prowess. For centuries, the achievements of Islamic Civilisation contrasted greatly with Western civilisation when it was experiencing the darkness of its medieval period, roughly from 800 to 1600AD (Lewis 2002: 3). During this time Islam became a great military power as well as flowering in arts, sciences and economics. Of course this meant the invasion of foreign territories. Within a short time of consolidation, the Muslim armies

³¹ Please see Appendix One for maps of the Islamic world for different time frames.

overthrew the ancient empire of Persia and assimilated all its territories in the domains of the Caliphate. This paved the way to the invasion of Central Asia and of India. The Christian provinces of Syria, Palestine, Egypt and North Africa were 'absorbed' and in due course 'Islamized' and 'Arabized' serving as bases for the continuing invasion of Europe and the conquest of Spain and Portugal (Lewis 2004: 29). This was a great burden for the conquered who had to accommodate for their losses and their new lifestyle. However, Lapidus (2002: 99) contends that in the new era of the Arab-Islamic Caliphate, 'the past was a living presence'. Apart from Muslims, the majority of Middle Eastern peoples remained Jews, Christians, or Zoroastrians. Family and village, neighbourhood and tribe, and other forms of small-scale community organisation were generally not affected by the Arab conquests and the Muslim empires. Despite the changes that were due to new geographical boundaries in the distribution of economic activity, the basic institutions of agricultural production and urban commerce remained unchanged (Lapidus 2002: 99).

A major reason that harmony persisted was the toleration given to those who did not wish to adopt the Muslim religion. As Lewis (1995: 2) points out, the Quran (ii, 256) states explicitly, 'There is no compulsion in religion'. This article of scripture was taken very seriously by Muslim rulers and meant that those who followed a religion other than Islam, provided it met certain criteria, were allowed to practice that religion, subject to certain political, social and fiscal constraints. The agreement between the Muslim state and the non-Muslim community that qualifies for this status and agrees to accept and live by it is in Arabic called the *dhimma*. A member of such a community is called *dhimmi* (Lewis 1995: 2).

These constraints were intended to exclude non-Muslims from political and military power, but in some civilisations such as the medieval caliphate, they did not prevent non-Muslims from contributing significantly to the social and economic as well as the cultural and intellectual life of society. Islamic civilisation has not been exempt from imposing discrimination. There have been times in Islamic history when the non-Muslim minorities were subject to serious discrimination and repression, but genuine persecution in the form of forced conversion or expulsion, though not unknown, was rare (Lewis 1995: 2). In general, the non-Muslim subjects of the Muslim state which usually meant Jews and Christians were reasonably safe as long as they were seen to respect the terms of the *dhimma* and did not attempt to exceed the status that it assigned to them. This kind of tolerance – endorsed by

religion, law, and public opinion – worked well for centuries and ensured for non-Muslims and deviant Muslims in most Muslim lands ‘a better life than was for long possible for outsiders and deviants in much of Christian Europe’ (Lewis 1995: 2).

The Pax Islamica, resulting from the Islamic empire could be likened to the Pax Romana, resulting from the Roman Empire although the early Muslim conquests were even on a larger scale than the Roman conquests (Bernstein 2008: 75). For the purposes of this thesis, it is necessary to compare the Pax Islamica to the Pax Americana³². In order to make this comparison I am going to firstly briefly discuss the Pax Romana. Bello (2003: 2) relates that nearly three millennia ago, the Roman Empire suffered the problem of overextension. The Roman solution was not military in nature. The Romans realised something very basic – that an important part of successful imperial domination was consensus among the dominated of the “rightness” of the Roman order. Thus the idea of Roman citizenship was created. The extension of Roman citizenship to ruling groups and non-slave peoples throughout the empire was a political breakthrough, a breakthrough that won mass allegiance among the territories dominated by the Romans. Political citizenship combined with the vision of peace created ‘that intangible but essential moral element called legitimacy’ (Bello 2003: 2).

The Pax Islamica had also created legitimacy in the way it granted safety to non-Islamic peoples living within the Islamic Empire. The Caliphate was a unique political system that built creatively upon a concept of citizenship inclusive of ethnicity and creed. It provided considerable stability and security to non-Muslims. The earliest usage of the term dhimma is in the Constitution of Medina. Dating from around 622 CE, it regulates the status of the Jewish clans of Medina after its conquest by the Prophet Muhammad and states that: “The dhimma of God is one”. The implication here is that all people of Medina, whether Jew or Muslim, were protected by the new Muslim rulers of the city (Nushin Arbabzadah 2004: 2). Thus the heterogeneity of the Medina population was clearly marked both ethnically and religiously. On the whole the Medina Constitution regulated the status of non-Muslims ‘quite vaguely but in a spirit of equality’ (Nushin Arbabzadah 2004: 2). Akbar S. Ahmed (1999a: 63) states that there was ‘a great deal of give and take on all levels’. However, some inequalities did persist. These inequalities were not harsh enough to be called persecution. Muslim tolerance was not perfect but in comparison to other civilisations at the time, it was

³² See Chapter Five, the Neoconservative Vision for a discussion on Pax Americana.

uncommon. For instance, the only law that had a functional impact on the *dhimmi* was a tax called the *jizya* which was paid if the option to convert to Islam was not taken. In addition to the *jizya*, *dhimmi* had to obey a number of other rules which related to their public conduct but these rules were often suspended in practice (Nushin Arbabzadah 2004:2).

Although these restrictions imposed on the *dhimmi* were unpleasant, Christians and Jews lived peacefully with Muslims throughout the centuries in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world. They were free to practice their religion and manage issues such as property, marriage, death and inheritance. This relative acceptance and open-mindedness towards religious minorities in medieval Islam contrasted greatly with what the Jews suffered in Christendom. In fact, Jews fled from Spain during the Inquisition and were quite readily received by the Muslims (Ahmad H Sakr 2005: 5). They settled in the heart of the Islamic Caliphate where many took up positions of power and authority (Ahmad H Sakr 2005: 5). While, at first, protection was confined to Jews and Christians, when Muslims came into contact with populations of Zoroastrians, Buddhists, Hindus and others who would have resisted conversion, these were also given the status of “protected groups”(Watt 1961: 149-150). Thus, generally speaking, this has meant Islam has had a sound record for its behaviour toward minorities whether they have been religious or ethnic minorities. It was not the best deal in the world but it was far from the worst. This record is based on an extension of a concept of citizenship. Thus while Pax Romana offered citizenship, Pax Islamica offered a form of citizenship.

With regard to the Bush Administration, extension of citizenship did not play any role in the US imperial order. As Bello (2003: 2) states, US citizenship ‘is jealously reserved for a very tiny minority of the world’s population, entry into whose territory is tightly controlled’. Subordinate populations are kept in check. This is done through force or threat of the use of force or by a system of rules and institutions – the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the Bretton Woods system, NATO – that are used to serve the interests of the imperial centre (Bello 2003: 2). At the end of the Cold War there were expectations that the US would use its role as sole superpower to institute an Augustan peace globally. George W. Bush’s unilateralism destroyed those hopes. Bello (2003: 3) suggests that Pax Americana (as managed by the Bush Administration) had no moral vision to bind the global majority to the imperial centre. Instead, subordinate populations were kept in check through the respect of lethal US power or purchased (Bello 2003: 3). By comparison, and it is difficult to compare

as there are two time periods involved, Pax Islamica had the moral vision of fostering a degree of peace and stability throughout its territory where none had existed before (Lewis 2002: 6-7) and extended to all people a form of citizenship so that people of differing creeds and ethnic origins flourished.

Wars did break out from time to time in the Islamic World but in the long period of prosperity that prevailed, the people became increasingly peace-loving. Such a culture fostered discovery, invention and reflection. Mathematicians from this civilisation devised algebra and algorithms that eventually facilitated the coming of the computer age. Its doctors pioneered practices of diagnosis, cure and prevention. Its astronomers developed the astrolabe, an instrument used to determine latitude by looking at the position of the stars and sun paving the way for space travel in a later century (Mann 2005: 1-4). Its visionary poets and philosophers have today become renowned for challenging the knowledge of the ideas of truth and self³³.

In order for these developments to have taken place there must have dwelt a passion for the seeking of knowledge within Muslim Civilisation itself. This must have been facilitated by a freedom to enquire. Indeed, the quest for knowledge was encouraged throughout Muslim society not only so that one could read and understand the Quran but also for the exploration of new ideas and the insights that this could bring. The development of Arabic into the language of international scholarship provided a medium for translations from Greek, Latin, ancient Egyptian, Chinese and languages from other parts of the world (Mann 2005: 3). What this meant was that knowledge could be freely given and freely received by scholars from all over the Islamic world. In most of the arts and sciences, medieval Europe was only a pupil in this respect and thereby dependent on Islamic Civilization.

Of course the Islamic Empire had its practical concerns. This resulted in the Empire resorting to a solution in the trading of slaves from Africa and Europe (Lewis 2002: 6). In the

³³ Accomplished scientists were also philosophers and poets. For example, Ibn Rushd (d 1198) or Avveroes was not only a physician, scientist, and linguist; he was a great Muslim philosopher. Ibn Rushd tried to reconcile Aristotle's system of thought with the religion of Islam. He argued that there is no conflict between religion and philosophy. He believed in the eternity of the universe and the existence of pre-existent forms (NationMaster Encyclopedia> Ibn Rushd). Ibn Sina (d 1037) or Avicenna was also a physician, scientist and great philosopher. Ibn Sina was an acknowledged master on Aristotle who argued the validity of reason alone. Unlike Aquinas who sanctified Aristotle as church dogma, Ibn Sina corrected him often, encouraging a lively debate. He is thus one of the earliest pioneers of the scientific process as we know it today. Ibn Sina was interested in the effect of the mind on the body and wrote on psychology (NationMaster Encyclopedia>Ibn Sina).

Middle ages, slave raiders and slave traders brought black slaves into the Muslim lands of North Africa and the Middle East. However, in addition in the Islamic world, the slave population was recruited from all the different races and peoples whom the Muslims encountered on the frontiers of Islam. Consequently, slaves were both black and white as opposed to European slaves who, taken from Africa, were black (Lewis 1995: 4). As Lewis (1995: 5) observes, there was a prevailing view that some races were suited to civilization, others only for servitude. This perspective was reflected by Muslim writers who ‘noted the racial inferiority and unteachability of the very white peoples of the north and the very black peoples of the south, both deviating, in opposite directions from the light tan that was the civilized norm’ (Lewis 1995: 5). The surrounding nations, the Egyptians, the Syrians, the Mesopotamians and the Persians also had a slave population. Salah Zaimeche (2003: 9) attests however, that the slaves in Islamic Civilisation were treated well in comparison and often given their emancipation. Former slaves were even allowed to aspire to rank in society. This is exemplified in the government of Egypt by Kafur, a ‘Negro’ born in slavery (Salah Zaimeche 2003: 9). However, slavery continued in Islamic Civilization, the abolition of which was left to West Europeans and later Americans.

Gender relations were also a problematic issue in medieval Islam when contrasted with Western norms. Divorce, for example was inscribed in Islamic Law as a patriarchal privilege; the family was the central building block of pre-modern Muslim society and an institution that was to be protected (Rappoport 2005: 3). However, Medieval Islamic Law rendered the female position very difficult which has ramifications even today. Stowasser (1998: 31-33) claims that to appreciate medieval authorities on gender issues, it is useful to examine Tabari’s (d923) and Baydawi’s (d1286) interpretations of the ‘pivotal’ Quranic verse on gender relations, Sura 4:34. The verse says:

Men are in charge of women because God has endowed one with more (because God has preferred some of them over others) and because they spend of their means. Therefore the righteous women are obedient, guarding in secret that which God has guarded. As to those from whom you fear rebellion, admonish them and banish them to separate beds, and beat them. Then if they obey you, seek not a way against them. For God is Exalted, Great.

Stowasser (1998: 31) quoting Tabari

Stowasser explains that to Tabari, this verse is primarily concerned with the domestic relations between husband and wife. It ‘legislates’ men’s authority over their women in order to ensure female obedience both toward God and also himself (Stowasser 1998:32). This is deemed equitable in that it sets out men’s obligation to provide for them. Tabari also

indicates that men in general have ‘precedence’ or ‘excellence’ over women (Stowasser 1998: 32).

The point is made more clearly by Baydawi; men’s ‘guardianship of’ or ‘superiority over’ women as revealed in Sura 4:34 is likened to that of ‘rulers over their subjects’ (Stowasser 1998: 33).

God has favoured men over women by endowing them with a perfect mind, good management skills, and superb strength with which to perform practical work and pious deeds. Hence, to men (alone) were allotted the prophethood, the imamate, government, performance of the religious ceremonies, witnessing in all (legal) matters, the duty to fight for the sake of God (jihad), attend Friday prayers, to wear the turban, receive the greater inheritance share, and the monopoly in the decision of divorce.

Stowasser (1998: 33) quoting Baydawi

Unfortunately, this classical tradition has been enshrined in Sharia Law. However, Stowasser (1998: 34) explains that the prominent trait of the modernist school is a spirit of reformism that seeks to grasp the value system of the Quran as a whole in order to gain new guidance in a new world. The propagation of legal reform is a result.

Slave trading and gender problems notwithstanding, medieval Islamic civilisation possessed many positive attributes. A gift that Islamic civilisation has given to Western civilisation, for example, has been to serve as a bridge to the European Renaissance. Muslim scholars brought back from Europe handwritten manuscripts, predominantly of Greek origin but also encompassing other cultures as well, for translation into Arabic. Without these translations and corresponding research that they instigated, it is possible much of the Greek, Latin and Egyptian knowledge would have been lost to the world (Majid Tehranian 1997: 2-3; Mann 2005: 1). In cultural exchange terms then, the Renaissance of Europe may not have taken place without these cultural borrowings. The long-term salvation of the knowledge of the Ancient Greeks, knowledge which was lost in the West throughout the long European Dark Ages was reverently restored and preserved in Islamic hands and respectfully given back to Europe to form the foundation of the Renaissance.

Like the Roman Empire, the Islamic Empire gave to the secular world the multicultural paradigm. Hand in hand with this flowering of knowledge, inquiry and learning was born an accommodation of many different creeds and ethnic origins in a super state that consisted of hundreds of millions of people. This super state was termed a “Caliphate” (Robinson 2005: 77-78). Francis Robinson, historian of Asia and Islam, claims that for much of the period

from the eighth to the 18th century, Islam was ‘the leading civilisation on the planet in terms of spread and creativity’ (Robinson 2005: 77).

An example from al-Andalus, the Arabic name given to the Iberian Peninsula, proves an interesting point. From 711 to 1492AD al-Andalus was one of the great Muslim civilizations. The Cordoba Caliphate in the 10th century had great libraries where art, poetry and debate flourished. In contrast with Europe at the time, London and Paris were only small towns while Cordoba was a very sophisticated city where to a great extent race and religion co-existed harmoniously (Ahmed 1999a: 63). Indeed, in terms of ethnic diversity, the Muslims of al-Andalus were especially outstanding. The leadership and ancestry were Syrian, the soldiers were immigrant Berbers and the other inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula included Celto-Iberians, Romans and Visigoths (Menocal 2002:174). This intermingling of race and religion enhanced the rich and dynamic culture that was Muslim Spain. Inter-marriage between Jews, Muslims and Christians even resulted in many Muslim rulers who were fair in complexion with blue eyes (Ahmed 1999a: 63), a *visible* symbol of inter-racial and inter-religious harmony.

Menocal (2002: 174) contends that al-Andalus had three principle features which are significant for us today and which were in its own time at the core of that culture’s security and well-being: ethnic pluralism, religious tolerance and a variety of forms of cultural secularism, i.e. secular poetry and philosophy that were not considered un-Islamic. This was a Golden Age of learning where the richness of civilization - religious and ethnic tolerance, harmony between faiths, discovery and free debate - were the rule. However, what is especially interesting is that the numbers of Muslims in Iberia grew exponentially until the disintegration of the Caliphate in 1492 not because more “Arabs” came to live there, but because the original populace of the peninsula converted to the leading faith in vast numbers (Menocal 2002: 174). The implication here is that the original inhabitants converted to Islam without being coerced. This is a great testament to the vision, the vibrancy and the integrity of the Islamic Faith.

What can be said about Islam at the peak of its civilisation, then, was that it epitomised a multicultural global culture. While it traded in slaves and gender relations were problematic,

it nevertheless offered an enlightened globalizing movement³⁴ that brought together people of heterogeneous races, religions and ethnic origins where diversity among peoples flourished in stable political and social environments. This movement produced many centres throughout the Muslim world where libraries provided access to research and knowledge as well as a link to peoples of other societies, and other cultures of the world outside. As discussed previously, one centre that embodied the richness and the vitality of such a multicultural globalizing movement was Cordoba in the 10th century, a witness to the truth that our humanity does indeed flourish in the differences between us, and not the similarities.

These assertions do not easily lend themselves to dispute. The sole civilisation comparable to Islam at its peak was China. Chinese civilisation, however, was restricted to one region and to one racial group. Islam, on the contrary, conceived what Lewis (2002: 6) terms, ‘a world civilisation, polyethnic, multiracial, international, one might even say intercontinental’. Moreover, peoples of different colour intermingled freely in the daily intercourse of life. While there were differences of rank and wealth, these did not become the class distinctions that characterised Western Civilisation at the time.

Saikal (2003: 31) describes the Arab Islamic empire as a ‘very vibrant, dynamic civilisation’, a civilisation which was based not only on what it absorbed from Arabs and Islam but also in a give and take manner from what it secured from other religions and cultures. The rejection of difference based on race, ethnicity and colour and the tolerance afforded to Christians and Jews allowed for participation and contribution by a great variety of people including those who did not embrace Islam. Saikal (2003) is not claiming that all co-religionists lived in complete harmony but that an extraordinary degree of peaceful coexistence and mutual respect bound the Islamic civilisation together.

Interpretations of Islamic Decline

Islam’s ascendancy over the West in the medieval era was however subject to a long but sustained decline. Today Muslim countries lag behind the West with respect to science, commerce, the arts and culture, even acceptance of ethnic and sexual differences. Can the actual causes for this decline not only of power but also of influence and productive output be identified? It is curious to note that many scholars, both Western and Islamic, focus on the

³⁴ This globalizing movement is not to be confused with globalisation of today which depends upon the ethic that what ultimately matters is “The Market” meaning unrestrained economic growth at any cost.

internal factors rather than the external ones. In the following discussion, I list suggestions from various theorists as to why Islam declined. I then revisit these suggestions and critically examine them. I am seeking to especially investigate the role of colonial domination in Islamic decline being mindful of other factors that may have contributed.

Marmaduke Pickthall, a contemporary of Winston Churchill at Harrow, on converting to Islam was the first to translate the Quran into English. A devoted Muslim, Pickthall (1927) saw the origin of Islamic decline in a philosophical narrowing of the religion itself: The Ulama, the body of enlightened thinkers who express the true content of Islam towards its people and leaders had become parochial and close-minded depriving the religion of its liberating, expansive and light-giving nature. Whereas the practice of the early Muslims was to seek knowledge even if it was from a heathen race such as the Chinese, all knowledge coming from without in the later period was considered impious.

For Hamid Aziz (2000: 2), the main cause of the decline is the failure to understand and practice Islam correctly. The central themes of Islam, unity, truth, human development and the search for knowledge had been understood and practiced in the early phase leading to social and cultural changes. However, later Muslims failed to understand this message leading to stagnation of the Islamic way of life. Hamid Aziz (2000: 2-6) lists 24 reasons in all for the decline of Islamic civilisation. It is not until reason number 17, however, that an external factor is mentioned: It is suggested that Western countries dominated and exploited Muslim communities taking their wealth away from them³⁵. Reason number 21, the final reason, is the boldest assertion that there has been deceit practised by Western powers which has disrupted their economies and destabilised governments causing impoverishment to many communities. Even bolder, Aziz (2000: 6) states that the establishment of a Muslim Reformation has become difficult because, in his words, it would certainly go against 'the interest of those who hold the wealth and power in the USA'. Thus this contention appears to be revealed only grudgingly as if Aziz holds some fear of offending Western powers.

Esteemed Western modern historian, Bernard Lewis, suggests the internal factor of Muslim arrogance towards other cultures and civilisations, particularly Christian cultures, as

³⁵ This imperialism began to impact heavily after the end of World War One when Western European powers promoted the emergence of young nation states in place of a centuries-old established order. These powers supported the newly formed states based on their own political, military and economic interests. State boundaries divided tribes, clans and families in a negligent, arbitrary manner (Yevgeny Bendersky 2005: 1).

hastening Muslim decline. According to Lewis (2002), Muslims have adopted aspects of other cultures only where such aspects have been regarded as useful, e.g. architecture, coins, postage stamps, medicine, astronomy, chemistry, physics and mathematics. They did not translate literature of any kind, for example. In the translations from Greek into Arabic in the Middle Ages³⁶ there were no poets, no dramatists or even historians. They were not useful and hence were of no interest. Lewis (2002: 155) contends that this was clearly a cultural rejection: “you take what is useful from the infidel; but you don’t need to look at his absurd ideas or to try and understand his inferior literature, or his meaningless history.” Therefore according to Lewis, whereas Western scholars, merchants and diplomats were eager to travel in Muslim lands and absorb its languages and culture, this was not met with reciprocal interest and was an important factor in Islamic decline.

The internal factor that Lewis (2002) strongly suggests as being a primary cause of decline is that, unlike Christianity, church and state have never separated in Islam. Christian secular culture has been generally independent of Church domination and has allowed for greater diversity, culturally and politically. Silverberg (2008: 1) comments that it has taken the West four centuries to reconcile freedom with religion. In England the democratic tradition constituted a journey towards parliamentary government that began with the Magna Carta in the 13th century and involved four centuries of persecutions and religious wars that finally resulted in the separation of church and state and the creation of a secular middle class, a middle class capable of thinking independently of religious tradition. According to Silverberg (2008: 1), the fact that Islam never separated religion from state and prevented the development of such a secular, educated and freethinking middle class is the reason for the decline and stagnation in the Arab world today (Silverberg 2008: 1). Lewis would concur with Silverberg’s argument. Lewis (2002: 111) claims that the idea that any part of human life lies in any sense outside the scope of religious law is ‘alien to Muslim thought’. Thus there is no distinction between canon law and civil law. There is only a single law, the *Sharia*, accepted by Muslims as of divine origin and regulating every aspect of human life. Lewis (2002) appears to be suggesting that it is not coincidental that the West began to overtake Islam around the time that politics became increasingly more independent of religion in the Western world. Lewis (2002: 107) claims that the idea that church and state

³⁶ As has already been previously discussed, Muslim scholars translated Greek documents into Arabic, preserving them and saving them from being lost to subsequent civilizations. This was a contribution that the Muslim world gave to the Western world for such documents served as a bridge to the European Renaissance.

can or should be separated is 'in a profound sense, Christian'. Its origins may be traced in the teachings of Christ. The authoritative Christian text is the passage in Matthew 22:21, in which Christ is quoted as saying, 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's'. Lewis (2002: 108) states that these words underwrote the separate coexistence of two authorities, the church and what has become now known as 'politics'. As the term 'secularism' appears to have found its way into the English language toward the middle of the 19th century (Lewis 2002:107), it can be concluded that the separation of church and state was well under way at this time as was the supremacy of the West over Islam.

Irshad Manji, a Muslim outspokenly critical of her religion articulates a powerful perception which provides another possible reason for Islamic decline. She states in interview with Deborah Caldwell that in the mainstream there is a lack of critical thinking within Islam (Manji-Caldwell Interview 2004: 1). Manji explains that critical thinking existed between the 9th and 11th centuries but most Muslims today are not conversant with it. The term for "critical thinking" is "Ijtehad"³⁷. Manji asks "What happened to the spirit of ijtehad?" Manji continues, "Toward the end of the 11th century, something catastrophic happened in the world of Islam and it is this: gates of ijtehad closed in an effort to protect the fragile Islamic empire, from Iraq to Spain, from further division" (Manji-Caldwell Interview 2004: 1). There was a series of internal convulsions which led to intellectual enterprises being closed down and scholars could no longer question but only imitate. According to Manji, this has had impact today where Islamic scholars do not show much self-reflection or self-criticism (Manji-Caldwell Interview 2004: 1). Over the centuries this lack of critical thinking may have contributed to Islamic decline. This view is reflected in the findings of the UNDP (2002: 3) document³⁸ – the *Arab Human Development Report* under the heading of "Bridled Minds, Shackled Potential". The authors report that about 65 million adult Arabs are illiterate, two thirds of them women (UNDP 2002: 3). Illiteracy rates are much higher than in poorer countries. The challenge is far more than overcoming the under-supply of knowledge to people. Important also is overcoming the under-supply of knowledgeable people, a problem exacerbated by the low quality of education together with the lack of 'mechanisms for intellectual capital development and use' (UNDP 2002: 3).

³⁷ Ijtehad or Ijtihad will be discussed in the following chapter, "Islam: a Multi-dimensional religion".

Progressive ijtehad is innovative, independent thinking that endeavours to apply Islam to the present time.

³⁸ The authors of this document comprise a panel of London-based leading Arab political and economic scholars.

So it cannot be denied that Islam suffered a decline. Various reasons have been given for the causes, both internal and external, of this decline: a philosophical narrowing of the religion itself; the domination and exploitation of Muslim lands by the West; hesitation to appreciate foreign literature and customs; a failure to separate religion from state and a closing of the gates of *ijtehad*. Lewis (2002) has an illuminating insight on the nature of the Muslims' own perception of their civilisation which he seems to imply is a factor in the decline also: Islam was to Muslims, Lewis claims, synonymous with the concept of civilisation itself. This meant that anything beyond its religious boundary fell into the category of the Islamic equivalent of barbarians and infidels despite the accommodating nature of the Islamic religion itself. This is the perception of "self" and "other", "us" and "them". However, is this not a perception that could be very well applied to all civilisations, i.e. that in all civilisations there is a tendency to identify those outside this social/cultural/political system as 'other'? It is important to consider how a society views "self" and "other" because how the "other" is treated arguably reflects the moral credentials of that society. It is therefore useful to look briefly at how the West has perceived itself in terms of "self" and "other" in order to contrast this with Islamic society.

It was from the Middle Ages onward that Europe began actively creating 'self' and defining 'other' through tough legal machinery. Eminent medieval historian, R. I. Moore, has termed Europe at this time 'the persecuting society'. Moore (1991: 7) explains that the Lateran decrees provided a program whose initially slow, piecemeal and haphazard influence gradually reshaped 'the institutional and spiritual framework of European society'. From 1492, heretics, that is to say anyone who did not profess to belonging to a specific brand of Christianity, were subject to the cruel processes of the Spanish Inquisition. So differing religious groups and, in addition, marginal groups such as lepers, homosexuals and prostitutes were persecuted. However, Moore (1991) holds that such persecution did not necessarily reflect popular feeling but was related to the decision of princes and prelates for their own political reasons. This claim was not pursued in depth by Moore. However, a hundred years before the Enlightenment one can see how society organised itself and regulated people's thoughts and behaviour. That is, the discouragement, even punishment of non-conformity: the application of norm enforcement in the disciplining of society. This highlights Western differentiation between "self" and "other". Surely, it can be said that Islam has not by any means fared worse than Western society in regard to treatment of the

“other”. Lewis’ claim, discussed above, that Islamic civilisation relegated the “other” into the equivalent of barbarians and infidels does not appear to be a factor in the decline.

Furthermore, Lewis’s and Silverberg’s contention that church and state have never separated in Islam has not remained unchallenged. Talal Asad (1996) and Lapidus (1996) strongly contest the notions of separation of religion and state in the West and their unification in Islam³⁹. Each of these scholars maintains that there is no single Islamic model for states and religious institutions, but rather several competing ones⁴⁰. Moreover ambiguities exist in the distribution of authority and functions across diverse models⁴¹. It is intended that consideration of such a challenge might give pause to full acceptance of Lewis’s and Silverberg’s external reason, the failure of religion and state to separate, for the decline of Islamic civilisation.

As for Lewis’s internal reason for decline, Muslim arrogance toward other civilisations, Western involvement must be acknowledged here. The formal and legal ‘legislation’ in the form of the Inquisition forcibly converted hundreds of thousands of Muslims in Andalusia and executed the disobedient ones who refused to change (Cole 2003: 3). What is significant about this statistic is that the Andalusians had been key transmitters of knowledge between Muslim and Christian civilisations – they had acted in the role of knowledge go-betweens (Cole 2003: 3). Their demise created difficulties for the Muslim world to access Western knowledge. This is one possibly important reason why Muslims failed to acquaint themselves with the Western world from this crucial time onward.

Cole (2003: 3) suggests that rather than blaming Muslims for knowing so little of Europe in the age of the Inquisitions and the wars of religion, including the Crusades, some might perceive Europe as being isolated from the rest of the world in that period by ‘its own paroxysms of religious intolerance’. In contrast, Christian Europeans lived freely in Muslim lands (Cole 2003: 3). Certainly, the spread of Islam through jihads resulted in territorial

³⁹ Turkey, Syria and Iraq have emerged from the Western Encounter as *secular* Muslim nations, for example.

⁴⁰ The Muslim world extends from North Africa to Southeast Asia. In addition to 43 Muslim majority countries, Muslims constitute a significant minority in another twenty countries. It is understandable that this geographic expanse lends itself to differing expressions of Islam. To speak of Islam as if it were unified is surely misleading.

⁴¹ For a comprehensive discussion of this issue refer also to Hurd, E. (2001) ‘*Toward a Postsecular Alternative: Secularism and Political Islam in Historical and Relational Context*’, <http://cas.uchicago.edu/workshop/meht/ElizabethHurd.pdf>.

expansion but the non-Islamic faiths were still not subject to any noticeable degree of persecution or forceful methods of conversion (Saikal 2003: 29-33; Steele 2008: 1-2). From its beginnings Islam accepted the existence of other monotheistic religions that had arisen from the same roots. Although many forms of Christianity flourished, to the Muslims all the sects were simply Christian and so were treated equally. For the Ottomans particularly, religious tolerance became a sound, practical basis for government. Although Muslims were given preference in many parts of government and hence Muslim tolerance was not perfect, their toleration was notable because it was much better than what existed elsewhere, particularly Europe where only one religion was tolerated and those dissenting faced conversion, exile or death (American Forum for Global Education 2003).

In any case, while there may have been some influences from both internal and external factors that contributed to Islamic decline as has been discussed above, the most striking factor that is being overlooked or underplayed by the writers mentioned so far is with respect to one of the reasons given for the decline of Islamic Civilisation, which is European colonisation. Lewis (2002: 170), for example, devotes one paragraph to colonisation of the modern Middle East and then claims it was 'comparatively brief and ended half a century ago' thus completely dismissing the impact that such a vast marginalising force had on the Islamic world. Lewis (2002: 170) goes out of his way to reduce the consequences of colonial domination by failing to address the issue meaningfully, stating that the period of French and British 'paramountcy' in much of the Arab world produced a new and a 'more plausible scapegoat' for the cause of Arab troubles – Western imperialism. The truth of the matter is that the Western world had, in fact, for centuries, gradually been penetrating most of the areas that had once been part of the Muslim empire with devastating effects. Eventually, European powers came to dominate the Middle East. This process started around 1500 was completed by the end of World War I. The degree of Westernisation was seen most visibly when in 1924, Kemal Ataturk abolished both the sultanate and caliphate following the establishment of the Turkish Republic (Furnish 2002: 1-2). Ataturk's orientation was Western based secularism. As a means of breaking with the Islamic past, not only did Ataturk abolish the Caliphate but he also purged the Turkish language of Arabic and Persian elements, and replaced its Arabic script with a Latin one. By design, this policy was intended to reduce the strength of Islam, by making the great body of existing religious literature inaccessible, to even learned Turks (J. E. Lewis 2004:5).

I give here, therefore, an indication of those Western forces that have marginalised the Islamic world. It is not intended that a history of European intervention be given. This would be an enormous task. Rather, some key facts are provided in order to substantiate the colonialist nature and extent of the penetration of a Christian Europe into the Muslim domain⁴². Although the process was gradual, complex and intricate, a few turning points can be identified.

Some Facts concerning European Colonialist Intervention in the Middle East

The first turning point arguably came in the 16th century when the Ottoman Empire voluntarily granted a series of concessions called the “Capitulations” to European powers. These concessions gave the Europeans great advantages in foreign trade in the Empire and allowed European influence to percolate through the fabric of society (Islam and Islamic History in Arabia and the Middle East 2004: 1).

The invasion of Egypt in 1798 by Napoleon Bonaparte was another turning point. Napoleon was hoping to cut Britain’s lines to India and briefly occupied the country. By defeating Egypt, still part of the Ottoman Empire at the time, Napoleon exposed the weaknesses of the Sultans and inaugurated more than 150 years of direct political intervention by the West which culminated in France occupying Tunisia in 1881, Britain taking control of Egypt in 1882 and Italy seizing Libya in 1911 (Islam and Islamic History in Arabia and The Middle East 2004:1).

Western penetration also caused the Middle East to be drawn into the First World War with the Ottoman Empire siding with Germany. Great Britain encouraged an Arab Revolt against Turkish forces by promising aid and ultimate independence (Islam and Islamic History in Arabia and The Middle East 2004: 2). This became “Lawrence of Arabia” fame. While the Arab Revolt contributed substantially to the Allied victory, it did not result in full independence for Arab lands. Instead, France agreed with Great Britain to partition most of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire between them, another turning point (Islam and Islamic History in Arabia and The Middle East 2004: 2). These countries eventually obtained mandates from the League of Nations: Britain over Iraq, Palestine and Transjordan; France over Syria and Lebanon. These mandates extended Western control of the Middle

⁴² Appendix 2 shows a chronology of key events on how European powers carved up this once thriving civilisation and later how Anglo-American and American power set up hegemony over the region.

East and set the stage for one of the most catastrophic conflicts of modern times: the partitioning of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states (Islam and Islamic History in Arabia and The Middle East 2004: 3).

Since the creation of Israel through a mandate of the United Nations in 1947, there have been three major wars (1956, 1967, and 1973) and endemic fighting between Arabs and Israelis. Samuel Lewis, who served as US Ambassador to Israel in 1977-85 states that there have been many negotiations attempted and peace treaties formed (Lewis 2004: 2). Unfortunately few have endured. In 1949 an armistice was hammered out between Arab and Israeli diplomats. The armistice agreements were meant to serve as preludes to formal peace treaties. A formal peace, however, proved elusive. It would take all of 30 years before Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin would sign the first Arab-Israeli peace treaty, and 15 more years before King Hussein of Jordan and Israel's Yitzhak Rabin followed suit. These treaties were made with US mediation (S. W. Lewis 2004: 1-2). Contemporary peacemaking efforts date from the wake of the 1967 Middle East war which left Israeli forces occupying the West Bank and all of Jerusalem, the Golan Heights (plus some Syrian territory beyond them), Gaza and all of the Sinai Peninsula up to the Suez Canal. US mediation yielded partial withdrawal agreements with Egypt and Syria in 1974-75 and the Egypt-Israel peace treaty in 1978-79 (S. W. Lewis 2004: 2). The Madrid Peace Conference - 1991, led to the first official face-to-face peace negotiations among Israel, Jordan, Syria, and the Palestinians. The Oslo accords in 1993 achieved formal recognition between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) (S. W. Lewis 2004: 2). Prior to the accords, the PLO and Hamas had been both dismissed as terrorist organisations. Oslo legitimised Yasser Arafat and the PLO in the eyes of the international community. In contrast, Hamas refused to accept the legitimacy of the state of Israel. Consequently, Hamas has become the common enemy of Israel and the PLO and has been denounced as terrorist (Esposito 2002: 101). The fragile trust built up during the Oslo process has thus been compromised leaving the prospect for future negotiation remote. The Middle East is probably the most volatile place in the world; volatile because, although European imperialism has died, out of its ashes has been born American imperialism. American support of Israel and its continually growing influence and intervention in the Middle Eastern

region itself has led some theorists⁴³ to use the term “hyper-imperialism”. A brief examination of American and Anglo-American imperialism in the Middle East will therefore be made, not to encompass every event that occurred but to gain an insight as to the vigour of its nature. This will be useful in gaining awareness as to the cause for the rise in militant Islam, or, stating it more directly, an understanding of why certain Islamic Fundamentalists ultimately resort to terrorism. Following this examination will be an analysis on how postmodern and postcolonial theory can contribute to a deeper understanding of this kind of terrorism.

Some Facts concerning American and Anglo-American⁴⁴ Intervention in the Middle East

I again stress that it is indeed very difficult to present a coherent picture of American intervention in the Middle East given the limited space available and the magnitude of American activity in this region. What is presented is only a bare outline of events to establish the extensive imperialistic nature of the American presence and influence. It also must be stressed that there have been *some* constructive engagement in the region by the US. For example, the US under President Wilson opposed the plans by the British and French to carve up the Middle East after World War I. President Wilson, in his 14 points, argued for *autonomous development* for the people of the Middle East who lived in areas formerly the Ottoman Empire (Streich 2008: 1-2). Henry Kissinger contributed to the negotiations that ended the Yom Kippur war in 1973 (Inglis 2008: 3). The US negotiated the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in 1979 (BBC 2005: 1-2). However, there has been a great deal of negative engagement in the region which is listed below.

The US, using its Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and British operatives, organised a military coup in Iran in 1953, ousted the elected Prime Minister and returned the exiled Shah who ruled in a very dictatorial yet pro Western manner serving Western interests where dissidents were persecuted (Chomsky 2003: 128). Chomsky (2003: 128) maintains that the Shah ‘compiled one of the worst human rights records in the world’. However, while the repression was largely successful in wiping out democratic opposition, it did nothing to suppress religious institutions with the result that in 1979 the Shah was toppled by

⁴³ See, for example, Ziauddin Sardar and Merryl Wyn Davies (2002) *Why Do People Hate America?* Cambridge: Icon Books

⁴⁴ Anglo-American indicates a US-British alliance as in the War on Terror

reactionary, anti-American Islamists who set up an Islamic state. Iran had pulled out of the imperial system.

In Lebanon, the US provided military, financial and diplomatic support for Israel's June 1982 invasion of this country which was targeted at the Palestinians and their leftist Lebanese allies. Despite heavy civilian casualties from the Israeli attack, the US blocked efforts by the UN to force an Israeli withdrawal or even a cease fire. During this conflict, periodic attacks by US-armed Israeli forces against Lebanese civilian population centres resulted in large numbers of refugees, some of whom subsequently joined radical Islamic groups like Hizbollah (Zunes 2003: 1). Many pro-Western Lebanese people, predominantly Christians, fled to the West. Lebanon turned from a staunchly pro-Western country to a centre of anti-American sentiments (Zunes 2003: 2).

In part to challenge Libyan claims for expanded territorial waters, the US, beginning in 1981, launched a series of air strikes along the Libyan coast. Libyan military aircraft were consequently shot down. This conflict escalated into a series of minor naval battles with Libyan forces in the Gulf of Sidra. It culminated in April 1986 into an operation, codenamed "El Dorado Canyon", which involved more aircraft and combat ships than Britain employed during its entire campaign in the Falklands (Schafer 2001)⁴⁵. For the US, the mission was highly successful from a military perspective. For the Libyans the air strikes were a shocking humiliation. Libyan support of terrorism may have been seen to have provided justification to the international community for American actions. There was little proof, however, to support such a justification and this was reflected in the aftermath of the April 1986 US raid which provoked an outburst of anti-American sentiment throughout the Western world and beyond. As Schafer (2001) comments, there was no room for an international coalition against terror in the polarised world of that time.

In the Iran-Iraq war, 1980-1990, the US actively supported Iraq's invasion of Iran in two ways: It blocked efforts by the UN to place sanctions upon Saddam Hussein's regime for its aggression and it provided the Iraqis with economic and military assistance (Zunes 2003: 2). The US also sent banned material to Iraq even though Iraq was actively supporting well

⁴⁵ Schafer draws his information from Colonel Stephen E. Anno and Lieutenant Colonel William E. Einspahr, Command Control and Communications Lessons Learned: Iranian Rescue, Falklands Conflict, Grenada Invasion, Libya Raid, Air War College Research Report, No. AU-AWC-88-043, Air University, United States Air Force, Maxwell Air Force Base, AL, pp. 36-63.

known terrorist groups such as Abu Nidal (Zunes 2003: 2). The means for doing this was by dropping Iraq from its list of countries sponsoring terrorism. The material included seed stock for Iraq's anthrax supply (which were subsequently used to make biological weapons) and toxic chemicals (which were used to make chemical weapons) (Zunes 2003: 2). These materials formed the bedrock of the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) that became the rationale for the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.

In the Sudan, the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant was destroyed by US bombs in August 1998. President Clinton maintained that the plant produced nerve gas and was controlled by Osama bin Laden (Zunes 2003: 2). Though the US blocked the UN from investigating this further, independent reports indicate that it was solely used for the production of civilian medical items and had no connection with bin Laden at all. Thousands of Sudanese, particularly children, died as a result of the shortages of antibiotics and vaccines following the destruction of the plant (Zunes 2003: 2).

Finally, two countries that are influential players in Middle Eastern affairs and that are the recipients of US military and economic aid should be mentioned. They are Turkey and Israel. Turkey is strategically located close to the former Soviet Union and the Middle East. It received a high level of aid during the Cold War period and a great deal more from 1997 onwards. Chomsky (2003: 62) suggests that the reason for this increase was that the Turkish government was carrying out state terror, principally against the Kurds, a quarter of the population, i.e. US aid made the repression of Kurds more efficient. Little needs to be mentioned about Israel for the alliance between the US and Israel is widely known. Chomsky (2003:116) goes so far as to say that when people talk about Israeli or Turkish atrocities, they should be saying US atrocities because, according to Chomsky (2003), the US is indirectly responsible for the violence.

Passing on to contemporary events, the UN led a demoralising war against Iraq in 1991 in response to Saddam Hussein's occupation and annexation of Kuwait. Although the US had the sanction of the UN, arguably it went well beyond what was necessary to liberate Kuwait. Damage to Iraq's civilian infrastructure was extensive (Zunes 2003: 2). The resulting sanctions crippled the Iraqi civilian population and the stationing of US forces in Saudi Arabia which contained the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina incensed many Arabs including Osama bin Laden, the exiled Saudi businessman cum terrorist leader. Most

importantly, there was increased strategic cooperation between the US and repressive family dictatorships of the Gulf region, particularly Saudi Arabia, at the long-term expense of common citizens (Zunes 2003:2). Howard Zinn, notable contemporary historian, claims the US used the invasion of Kuwait as 'an excuse to intensify [US] military presence in that area' (Zinn 2002: 52).

Chomsky (2003: 118) very emphatically accuses both Russia and the US for having 'destroyed' Afghanistan in the last 20 years. The US secretly began arming Islamist rebels, the mujahedeen, who were fighting the leftist government in Afghanistan, in July 1979. Zinn (2002: 51) reveals that the national security adviser to President Carter, Zbigniew Brzezinski, boasted that he knew that such a move would provoke the Soviets to invade. It is understandable that the US would want this to occur for it would mire the Soviet Union in a counter-insurgency war. This agenda could be seen as part of Cold War power rivalry. The Soviets invaded, in fact, in 1979 and the war lasted ten years. In 1989, Soviet troops pulled out of Afghanistan, defeated. The US presence which was limited to funding and special services was subsequently withdrawn. Out of the chaos rose the Taliban which seized power in 1996 imposing a theocratic rule upon the country; they embraced a biased, militant worldview in which Islam was used to legitimate their preferred manner of ruling which was based largely upon their tribal customs (Esposito 2002: 16). The Taliban granted access to its territory to the Al-Qaeda network which used this territory to base terrorist operations against Americans in Africa, the Middle East and eventually the US itself. In October 2001, following the 9/11 terrorist attacks against the US, the Bush Administration launched a major sustained bombing campaign against Al-Qaeda and Taliban positions in Afghanistan. The stated purpose of the invasion was to capture Osama bin Laden, destroy Al-Qaeda and remove the Taliban which had provided safe harbour to Al-Qaeda (Source Watch 2008: 1-2). The initial attack removed the Taliban from power but Taliban forces have since regained strength and now threaten Afghanistan's fragile government (National Security Network 2008: 1). The attacks on Afghanistan have devastated the country. Retired Gen. Barry McCaffrey said that Afghanistan 'is in misery', a result of poor co-ordination and management, and a lack of resources and troops (National Security Network 2008: 1). As of 11 September 2008, the war has been unsuccessful in its primary purpose of capturing Osama bin Laden. However, violence is up by 40 per cent along the volatile Afghanistan-Pakistan border (National Security Network 2008: 1). The impact on Afghanistan's inhabitants has been enormous.

A United Nations report on social conditions in Afghanistan shows the reality behind the supposedly benevolent role of the US government in that country. Life expectancy in 2005 was 44.5 years while one out of five children died before the age of five (Laurier 2005: 1). One woman died approximately every 30 minutes from pregnancy-related causes (Laurier 2005: 1). The infant and maternal mortality rates are thus among the highest in the world. Only 25 percent of the population has access to clean drinking water (Laurier 2005: 1). Mental disorders have been largely ignored. WHO (World Health Organisation) estimates indicate that 95 percent of the population in Afghanistan has been affected psychologically and one in five suffers from mental health problems (Laurier 2005: 1). Malalai Joya, Afghan politician and social activist, states that Afghanistan is now in turmoil, politically, socially, economically with warlords still controlling most of the country (Joya 2008: 2). Joya claims her people have been betrayed over the past seven years by the US and allies; they were invaded and bombed 'in the name of democracy, human rights and women's rights' but the enemies of these values were supported and installed into power (Joya 2008: 3). Joya states that justice does not exist, with every sector of life in Afghanistan today a tragedy (Joya 2008: 2).

The most recent country to succumb to Anglo-American neo-colonialism is again Iraq. Based on the rationale that Iraq had begun again to stockpile WMD and had links with the Al-Qaeda network, US president, George W. Bush, gained British and Australian support in invading this country for the threat it reputedly posed to world peace in relation to this nightmarish combination of "facts". Today, no hard evidence has been found for either the stockpiling of WMD or links with Al-Qaeda. David Corn, long-time editor of *The Nation*, observes that the Hussein-bin Laden link grows ever more weaker: According to a document found with Hussein when he was captured, the former dictator had warned his Iraqi followers to be wary of forging an alliance with foreign Arab fighters coming to Iraq to fight the American troops (Corn 2003). Hussein apparently believed that while jihadists and his own Ba'athist supporters shared a common foe, they did not share a common agenda. Hussein was in fact a secular leader of a secular state not a fundamentalist Islamist.

According to Dean (2004), CNN columnist, on February 6, 2004 Bush announced an independent commission to look at American intelligence capabilities, especially those relating to WMD. In doing so, Dean believes, Bush sought to head off what potentially could

be an aggressive Congressional Inquiry, or a congressionally created independent commission, on the WMD justification for the Iraq war.

Zinn (2002) takes a tough and prophetic stand against American hyper-imperialism under the guise of winning the “war on terrorism”. Writing in 2002, he warns that running out of targets in Afghanistan may set the stage for US military action in other places. Iraq, Somalia and Syria are mentioned. Iraq has already fallen. There is a precise division, Zinn notes, between who is bombed and who is not bombed:

The division has nothing to do with which countries may be harbouring terrorists. The division has only to do with which countries we don't control yet. The countries that we control, like Turkey and Saudi Arabia, can harbour as many terrorists as they want. We will look elsewhere.

Zinn (2002:28)

Zinn's sentiments find resonance with the hard core evidence produced in the content of a document called *Rebuilding America's Defences (RAD)* (Project for the New American Century (PNAC): 2000). The PNAC includes Vice-President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary of Defence Paul Wolfowitz. The PNAC philosophy was formed in response to the emergence of America as the world's only superpower and in the belief that America should use its position to advance its power and interests into all areas of the globe. RAD goes so far as to assume control of space in its global hegemonic aspirations and advises instituting a new “Space Service” to escalate US military preparedness from the theatre level to the global level in order to achieve worldwide dominance, both militarily and commercially (Stockbauer 2003). Meacher (2003: 3) suggests that the 9/11 attacks offered a convenient pretext, a catalyst, to put the PNAC plan into action. Not only did the US ignore warnings from 11 countries about a very significant forthcoming terrorist attack, the resultant War on Terrorism has been and is being used largely as bogus cover for achieving wider US strategic geopolitical objectives. This can be seen, Meacher (2003: 3) contends, in the evidence that plans for military action against Afghanistan and Iraq had been well in hand before 9/11.

Although of course all factors have not been discussed, this rough sketch of European imperialism and American hyper-imperialism is meant to substantiate the colonial domination to which the Arab world has been subject. In the last 600 years, Arabs have been treated as pawns in a global game of geopolitical control by Western powers. In more recent times, the need for the West to secure oil from the Arab world has led the West, particularly the US, to wield economic power and political control over the Arab World which has

ultimately resulted in US domination of the global economy. Perhaps the most salient question to ask is, 'How deeply did and how deeply does this colonialism affect local economies and societies?' Has the Arab world been marginalised, economically and politically, by the historical undermining of their civilisation? The evidence from this section suggests that the undermining and subsequent historical intrusion was a product of designed intervention and manipulation. This leaves another crucial question to consider – Is terrorism a response to this historical intrusion and subsequent decline? For the remainder of this chapter I will discuss how postmodernism and postcolonialism can contribute to the understanding of terrorism as a response by certain Islamic Fundamentalist groups who may resort to using this form of violence to improve their position of power in the global political economy.

The Contribution of Postmodernism and Postcolonialism in Understanding Terrorism Related to Islamic Fundamentalism

As has been discussed earlier, the Enlightenment gave birth to modernity and modernity identified Western civilisation as an archetypal model for all cultures. This model defined a truth which was regarded as absolute – cultures which chose not to emulate this model were therefore seen to be inferior. Postmodernism, on the contrary, regards truth as relativistic and is accepting of diversity across cultures.

It is not surprising then that a progeny of modernity has been the idyllic *Civilising Mission* – the spreading of *European* civilisation across the globe. The modernist would see this mission in a highly idealised fashion: It was bringing civilisation to the barbarian, enlightenment to the heathen and law and order to the primitive. This was often represented to the colonisers as a duty to the rest of humankind by virtue of their national, racial, and cultural superiority. Kipling's poem, *The White Man's Burden*, identifies the civilising mission as one to be assumed by every right thinking European (Esposito 1992: 47-48; Leela Gandhi 1998: 32-33). The *Civilising Mission* is therefore anathema to the postmodernist for s/he would immediately question the authority implicit in the "truth" of the superiority of Western culture.

While European imperialism to which the *Civilising Mission* belongs brought improved standards of administration and health care to colonial countries, it also brought a dehumanising breach of conduct on the part of the colonizers. However, that is only a small

part of the real issue of imperialism: The alien culture with its own value system would intrude upon the political, economic and social fabric of the subject civilisation and rip it apart, breaking down and rupturing traditional forms of life and living. It was a subjugation, which allowed no respect for the sanctity of the dominated culture and letting that society exist for its own sake in its own way. At the heart of the *Civilising Mission* was arrogance; there was no humility (Danaher, Schirato and Webb 2000: 103; Leela Gandhi 1998: 144; Said 1994: 130; Sardar 2003: 265). The perception of the colonised culture was fundamentally childlike. This is consistent with the logic of the colonial *Civilising Mission* which was fashioned as a form of tutelage concerned with 'bringing the colonised to maturity' (Leela Gandhi 1998: 32-33). The political ramification of European colonialism was that it reversed the tide of Muslim rule and expansion that had existed from the time of the Prophet. As the balance of power shifted to Europe, the formerly dominant Islamic civilization was now dominated by the Christian West. A principal belief held by most Europeans at that time was that modernity attested to the innate superiority of Christianity both culturally and religiously (Esposito 2002: 76). Britain used the *White Man's Burden* and France the *Civilizing Mission* to authenticate European imperialism as they colonized much of Africa, the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia. Europe's threat to Muslim identity and self-determination raised profound questions, religious and political, for the Muslim world (Esposito 2002: 76).

As has been highlighted in Chapter Four, for postmodernism, the true and the powerful are related. Although there existed a pan-Arabic Islamic identity underneath the borders drawn arbitrarily by the European powers, the colonial subjugation of the Arab domain effaced this identity politically and religiously. The *powerful* European colonialists rearranged the Arab world to how they thought it ought to exist, i.e. the *true* way. For example, in the Western world, the basic unit of overall human organisation was the nation which was subdivided in various ways, one of which was by religion⁴⁶. To the Westerner this was how things should be. Muslims, however, tend not to place the emphasis on the nation or nation state. Instead they tend to see a religion subdivided into nations, notwithstanding the fact that there exists division within Islam such as that between Sunni and Shia.

⁴⁶ I am using the past tense in this context because globalisation is now affecting how we perceive the world and the nation.

How is this related to terrorism at all? Postmodernism can contribute to understanding Islamic Fundamentalist terrorism⁴⁷ in various ways. One of the very first ways is to take a postmodern look, to try and gain an understanding from a Muslim perspective, at the imposition of nation states, their frontier demarcations and their names. By exposing the artificiality of both boundary and name, it will become evident how difficult it must be for a Muslim to think in terms of territorial identity when s/he is used to thinking in terms of ethnic and religious identity. This will take us one step closer to understanding the humiliation a Muslim man or woman feels when the whole weight of the colonialist exercise bears down upon her/him.

Another way that postmodernism can contribute in understanding a terrorism response is to investigate, from a Muslim viewpoint, the Muslim reaction to the imposition of the colonialist regime, politically, socially, and economically. For example, Saikal (2003: 34) makes the point that colonialism contributed in a major way to bifurcation of the subjected Muslim societies into secularist elites and Islamic clusters. It would appear then that although there was some embracing of the nation state ideology, there was also a rejection and resistance to it. It is important to understand to what extent and intensity that resistance surfaced, the way it was expressed and how successful that resistance was in countering colonial influence. It is vital also to appreciate the disruption to Muslim society in all three spheres – political, social and economic – that colonialism imposed.

Concomitant with these dimensions is the psychological factor related to the political and cultural offensive of the colonial *Civilising Mission* and the related economic marginalisation imposed by the whole movement of colonialism itself. From a Muslim viewpoint, the Muslim is enslaved. The master is not going to go away. How does the enslaved Muslim feel? What does s/he do? Burning with anger and humiliation, does s/he submit or rebel? It is a dilemma for the slave because the master offers the vision of Western knowledge for the hegemony of colonialism. There is revulsion for the master but ambivalence for the knowledge. Can the slave have one but not the other? It is a complex state of affairs. Can terrorism be a logical outcome of this conflict? Or stating it more concretely, can terrorism be a comprehensible response to colonialist hegemony and economic marginalisation? In order to bring understanding to this situation I will invoke Postcolonial theory. Postcolonial

⁴⁷ I have used Islamic Fundamentalist terrorism for shorthand purposes. It is, more correctly, terrorism that is a reaction or response by certain Islamic Fundamentalist groups or organizations.

theory will join postmodernism in seeking to explain that terrorism can be a response by certain Islamic Fundamentalist groups and organisations which may use this form of violence to improve their position of power in the global political economy. Up to now I have been speaking in terms of the possibility of European colonialism generating the necessary conditions for the emergence of extreme Islamism. It is time to consider the other great colonialist force that has taken over the domination of the domain of Islam: the rise of the USA to global superpower.

The USA was not a participant in European colonialism and has therefore not generally been perceived as a colonial power. In fact its rise helped free Islamic states of European power. However, American hegemony placed another type of colonial yoke upon Muslims. This oppression can be understood in terms of postcolonial theory. By way of historical explanation, US interests in the Middle East came after World War I. At that time the value of oil as a long-term source of energy was beginning to become apparent. The US found its foothold in Saudi Arabia under King Abdul Aziz and a relationship of mutual convenience developed: The King's need for security was matched by US interest in oil and strategic gains. February 14, 2005, marks the 60th anniversary of the historic meeting (1945) between Saudi Arabia's King Abdul Aziz and the then US President Franklin D. Roosevelt aboard the cruiser USS Quincy at Great Bitter Lake in Egypt. These two leaders have been hailed as forging 'an enduring relationship' that has weathered many challenges (Saudi-US Relations Information Service 2005: 1). However, Chomsky (2008: 1) exposes an uncomfortable truth when he says that US-Saudi relations date to the recognition of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1933 'not coincidentally, the year when Standard of California obtained a petroleum concession and American geologists began to explore what turned out to be the world's largest reserves of oil'. This important association sets the beginnings of US imperialism in the Middle East. The control of Saudi oil paved the way for the US to pursue wider economic and strategic involvement in the region. The US consolidated its imperial mission. Strong US penetration of key parts of the Middle East further came in the context of America's campaign to contain Soviet communism through the Cold War: The US embarked on interventionism, overt and covert, across the Middle East (Zinn 2002: 14-15; Chomsky 2003: 83-87). Spreading its tentacles into Iran, Pakistan and Turkey and later into Jordan and Morocco, the US courted receptive ruling elites by supplying economic and military aid and bilateral and multilateral pacts. Israel eventually gave the US another significant strategic foothold in the Middle East.

During the period up to the 1950s there was no convincing Islamic challenge to US power consolidation. Islamic forces appeared allied to secular authorities. However, penetration and cooption blinded the US to the eventual fallout from such a policy. As Saikal (2003: 66-67) points out, the US relentlessly backed, promoted and even imposed regimes in the domain of Islam which were corrupt and contrary to the democratic and liberal values in which the US claimed to act. Chomsky (2003: 85-86) reports that there was a perception in the region that the US had historically been supporting harsh, brutal, and corrupt regimes which had been blocking democratisation and development. Chomsky claims that this perception was considered accurate by the National Security Council itself, the highest planning body in the country (Chomsky 2003: 86). The US was indifferent to the pain and aspirations of peoples living under such regimes. It appeared blind as to the suffering of Islamic peoples under European colonialism and drew no lessons from this part of Middle Eastern history. It was too preoccupied with defeating Soviet communism, controlling oil and protecting Israel. Consequently, US administrations failed to see how their policy actions could eventually ignite the fuse between traditionalism and modernism and 'open the necessary space' for many Muslims to turn to their religion, a religion which had sustained them for 14 centuries, as an ideology of salvation and resistance (Saikal 2003: 67). They confused America's power over *ruling elites* with control over the *people* themselves. This was to prove a big mistake.

Many authors see the Palestine-Israel conflict as the primary bitter outcome of colonialism and imperialism in the Middle East. Esposito (2002: 94-98) sees, for example, the rise of Hamas as the continuation of the holy war between Muslims and Jews based on conflicting religious and territorial claims. Saikal (2003) suggests, however, three major issues that have reinforced the effects of European colonialism and US global penetration of the Muslim realm. They have acted to continue the marginalisation of the world of Islam both politically and economically that began 600 years ago when Europeans first began to take advantage of the Capitulations granted to them by the rulers of the Ottoman Empire. One of these issues is the Palestinian problem. The other two are the Iranian Revolution and the US counter-intervention strategy in addressing the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. To these I would add the US retaliation on Al-Qaida bases in Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks and the invasion of Iraq, both in the context of the global war against terrorism. It is around the latter two issues, 9/11 and the War on Terror and the invasion of Iraq that the postmodern and

postcolonial analysis of this study will focus for it is these issues that have generated, toward US hyper-imperialism, the antagonism of not only Islamists but moderate Muslims⁴⁸ as well.

Hand in hand with this hyper-imperialism, a process that is exerting pressure to transform the world into a single culture and civilisation is what has earlier been referred to as globalisation⁴⁹. This is not only a cultural phenomenon but one that has political and economic dimensions. Markets are becoming free from all constraints of the state and capital moves across borders with ease but the people or workforce are confined within their own borders. Global capital seeks absolute maximisation of profit opportunities to the detriment of labour. The economy is becoming dominated by consumerism while liberal democracy imposes the neoliberal ethic upon nations across the globe in a total embrace of Western culture.

Thus, globalisation is the nutrient matrix for Western imperialism and as Sardar (2003: 251) describes, it promotes a dominant set of cultural practices and values, 'one vision of how life is to be lived, at the expense of all others'. It has serious practical consequences. From a postmodern and postcolonial perspective, not only does it erode non-Western, including Islamic, traditions and cultural practices but it prevents the flourishing of non-Western future options: The future becomes locked into a single, linear projection. The aim, Sardar (2003: 252) claims, is to preserve a future landscape where 'technological advances can be employed to maintain the hegemony of the west'. It will therefore be against the backdrop of the 'globalised' world that the central analysis will be done.

Conclusion

This chapter sought primarily to establish that postmodernism and postcolonialism can contribute to the understanding of terrorism as a reaction or response by certain Islamic Fundamentalist groups/organisations which may resort to using this form of violence to improve their situation globally. It has been shown that the Islamic Empire was once a foremost economic and military power among all the civilisations in the world and that a

⁴⁸ For example, Indonesia's top environmental watchdog, the Indonesian Forum for the Environment (Wahli), a broad Muslim network with over 300 member NGOs, has severed ties with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in protest against the US-led war on Iraq. (The National Executive of Wahli 2003: 1-3)

⁴⁹ See Chapter Three, "Power Imbalance, Globalisation and the Terrorism Response"

primary reason for its decline has been due to European and later Anglo/American and American colonialist intervention which have marginalised the Islamic domain both politically and economically. Recent American military initiatives in the Middle East have stimulated feelings of animosity amongst Muslim people not only in the Middle East but in many other parts of the world also. It is therefore necessary, before attempting the main analysis, to differentiate between the militant Islamic response and the moderate Islamic response. The next chapter therefore explores the different dimensions of Islam in preparation for the analysis proper.

Chapter Seven

Islam: A Multi-dimensional Religion

Chapter Aim: As global terrorism and the War on Terror have produced a distorted image of Islam which is becoming increasingly defined in terms of the fundamentalist aspect of its religious profile, this chapter aims to demonstrate that Islam comprises a diversity of religious expression, that it is a world religion with many different faces, and that Islam is therefore not a monolithic religion.

Introduction

It is obvious that there is much ignorance in the world today about Islam. It is necessary to present an honest critique of this religion. While it is true that fundamentalism is one face of Islam there are other faces which affirm that Islam is a multi-dimensional world religion. This chapter explores the different dimensions of Islam in seeking to establish that it is in no way monolithic. Islam is undergoing a transformation, however, where progressive forces are competing with long held traditions in order to attune Islam to the challenges and demands of contemporary society. Thus voices for reform are being heard. The context of the call for reform is examined in this chapter in the writings and interviews of several prominent Islamic thinkers. A central concern that emerges is laying down the terms for an intercivilisational dialogue where peaceful coexistence among cultures and religions is seen to be a basic prerequisite for peace in general.

Islamic Fundamentalism

As Esposito (1983: 3-4) explains, for Muslims Allah (God) is the foundational fact of reality. Allah has many names to describe His personality: the Creator, the Sustainer, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Judge, the Eternal. Allah is the same God who revealed himself to all the prophets in the monotheistic tradition (Adam, Moses, Abraham, Jesus) and finally and most wholly to the Prophet Muhammad. A person who believes in and consciously follows the teachings of Allah as declared by Muhammad is called a *Muslim* and the religion is called *Islam*. Islam teaches that one can find peace in one's life by submitting to Allah in heart, soul and deed. Thus a Muslim's duty is obedience and submission to the will of God (Esposito 1983: 4).

Submitting to the will of Allah, however, means different things for different Muslims resulting in differing forms of expression. One of the divisions that is important in this study on global terrorism is the grouping of Muslims as nonfundamentalist/fundamentalist. Monroe and Kreidie (1997: 28) made some insightful findings in this area. In an attempt to understand a fundamentalist perspective they made the following distinctions in order to describe a Muslim's religiosity: secular, good and orthodox⁵⁰. Subjects that were classed as nonfundamentalists located themselves between secular and orthodox on the continuum and fundamentalists located themselves to the right of this divide. Muslims were found to be sensitive to the word 'fundamentalism' viewing it as both a European phenomenon and as a political catchphrase to denote extremism. In order to circumvent the problems associated with these connotations, the authors explained to each interviewee that what they meant by fundamentalism was the literal acceptance of the Quran and a returning to the basics of the Quran and the *Sharia* (Monroe and Kreidie (1997: 28-29). Through narrative and survey interview technique, the worldviews of fundamentalists were contrasted with those of comparable Muslims.

The analysis performed by Monroe and Kreidie suggested that Islamic fundamentalism attracts because it furnishes a basic identity, an identity which provides a foundation for daily living. Its corresponding worldview makes no distinction between public and private. It is a perspective where truth is revealed by revelation and reason is subservient to religious doctrine (Monroe and Kreidie 1997).

Before progressing too far with an enquiry into fundamentalism, however, one must be aware that the deployment of the word "fundamentalism" is a cross-cultural one. Indeed there is no word for fundamentalism in Arabic. According to Euben (1997: 431), the term arose in connection with the early 20th century Protestant movement that called for religion based on a literal interpretation of the Bible. Euben, in exploring the relationship of Islamist political thought to modernity, rightly points out that in the context of a history of Western colonialism, the application of a specifically Western and Christian term to the Islamic world is duly suspect. However, Euben deems the word "fundamentalism" useful across cultures in so far as it evokes a connection with fundamentals, origins, foundations. Her usage of the

⁵⁰ "Secular" Muslims are defined as those who inherit the religion from their parents. They might follow some Islamic traditions but are not true believers. "Good" Muslims believe Islam is a good religion and accept most of its doctrines but only follow a few of its rituals such as celebrating the feasts. "Orthodox" Muslims follow the five pillars of Islam, live by the laws and try to apply it in all aspects.

term, ‘to refer to contemporary religio-political movements that attempt to return to the scriptural foundations of the community, excavating and reinterpreting these foundations for application to the contemporary social and political world’ (Euben 1997: 431), resonates with that of Monroe and Kreidie’s and will be employed in the present context.

Wahhabism

A representative form of fundamentalist Islam is Wahhabism which is the official form of Islam in Saudi Arabia. Wahhabi theology advocates a puritanical and legalistic stance in matters of religious practice. Mohammed ibn Abd al-Wahab (1703-87) was the founder of the Wahhabi movement, which through alliance with the ruling Ibn Saud dynasty continues to be a principal player in the politics and society of the contemporary Saudi state (Saikal 2003). Wahhabi is presented by its followers as the pristine and unadulterated message from the Prophet Mohammed. It is literalist and exclusivist and the Wahhabi followers seek to enforce their strict beliefs onto the Muslim world (Esposito 2002: 106).

Esposito (2002: 105-106) explains that Wahhabi Islam has come to be used popularly, however, as a blanket term for religious extremism and radicalism. Wahhabi Islam has been identified with Islamic opposition movements in Russia, Chechnya and other parts of Asia. It is also commonly thought that Osama bin Laden is a follower of Wahhabism. However, there is controversy around this widespread belief. Oliver (2005) addresses this issue in depth and compellingly dispels the myth that Bin Laden is a Wahhabi. While bin Laden’s Saudi Arabian roots may have been Wahhabi, Bin Laden appears to have adopted the philosophy of the Egyptian writer and activist Sayyid Qutb. There is evidence to support this claim⁵¹.

Sayyid Qutb: Influential Fundamentalist Thinker

According to Dinesh D’Souza, renowned political analyst, Sayyid Qutb is ‘the most influential thinker of fundamentalist Islam’ (D’Souza 2002: 1). Indeed, David Pryce-Jones (2001: 2), controversial Western author, claims that no other Muslim intellectual has been so influential in the 20th century. The leaders of terrorist groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad cite Qutb’s works on a regular basis while his influence has become so apparent in bin Laden’s clique that he has been called “the brains behind Osama” (D’Souza 2002:1). Qutb (1990) claimed that all Muslim societies of his time had abandoned Islam and were living a

⁵¹ As will be seen, Al-Qaeda’s stated aims are in accord with Qutb’s philosophy.

life of *Jahiliyyah* (barbaric ignorance). Submission to secular authorities went against the Quran's plan: 'The earth belongs to Allah and should be purified for Allah, and it cannot be purified for Him unless the banner, "No God except Allah" is unfurled across the Earth. Man is a slave to Allah alone, and he can remain so only if he is ready to declare, "No God except Allah"' (Qutb 1990: 22). In addition, Qutb desired to purge Muslims of the effects of Western cultural influence, which he saw as one of the primary causes of their *Jahiliyyah* condition. As part of his rejection of Western influence, he rejected the Western 'myth' of progress (Shepard 1997: 255). Qutb, in fact, throughout his writing advocates a replacement of the Western, secularised world with an Islamic world order. Of note is the fact that Qutb directs the fight equally as much against the 'Westernisation' of Muslim civilisation. Bassam Tibi, a Muslim born and raised in Syria and reputedly a leading authority on Islamic fundamentalism, interprets the goal of the Islamic fundamentalists of whom Qutb is recognised to be the intellectual father, to be the creation of a new absolutist Islamic world power (Tibi 2002). Thus Qutb is argued to be a theoretical foundation of Islamic extremism. While Qutb stops short of advocating violence, his writing has been interpreted as a call for an anti-Western jihad or holy war.

The last statement requires further elucidation. In 1951 Qutb joined Hassan al-Banna's revolutionary Muslim Brotherhood⁵², a grassroots movement with a bottom-up approach on Muslim empowerment. On al-Banna's death, Qutb, elaborating on ideas from Abul A'la Mawdudi⁵³, filled a vacuum that was to push the limits of Muslim Brotherhood thought⁵⁴. Qutb's writings suggestively argued for a gradual preparation for violent revolution in order to overthrow a state that was anti-Muslim (Calvert 2005: 1). John Calvert (2005: 3), American history professor, is convinced Qutb's message is that the whole world must inevitably submit to Islam – Islam is a religion about justice and humanity so it is only right that it be the dominant ideology in the world. The way to begin is to liberate the Muslim

⁵² Hassan al-Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928 after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. It quickly became a large organization and political opposition group in response to colonialism and its aftermath (Denoelcx 2000: 1).

⁵³ Abul A'la Mawdudi, another founding figure of contemporary Islamic fundamentalism, pictured true Islam and its past and present leaders as 'a modern-style revolutionary party engaged in a revolutionary struggle' to reshape the world (Zeidan 2001: 29). Mawdudi appears to have borrowed from Marxist ideology.

⁵⁴ The capitalist West might misinterpret the Muslim Brotherhood as being another Marxist Liberation movement. They could then legitimately assume that this particular Muslim movement can be treated as being a threat similar to communism, the familiar enemy.

world from secular rulers then to retake former Muslim land and then to establish the universal Caliphate⁵⁵. The following statements from Qutb's *Milestones* support this view:

The era of the Western System has come to an end primarily because it has lost those life-giving values that enabled it to be the leader of mankind. . . Islam is the only system that possesses these values and this way of life. . . Islam cannot fulfill its role except by providing the leadership for all of mankind, for which the Muslim community must be restored to its original form . . . The growing bankruptcy of Western civilization makes it necessary to revive Islam.

Qutb (1990: 6-7)

The Muslim Brotherhood has been implicated in attempted assassinations of former President Nasser whose government was secularly based and in the assassination of the secular, political figure, President Anwar-as-Sadat, in September 1981. These acts are in accordance with Qutb's notion that Muslim rulers who do not rule by Islamic law must be removed ('the Muslim community must be restored to its original form' (Qutb 1990:7)) and affirm Qutb's influence on some of the members of the Islamic population. The Muslim Brotherhood has spread widely. Since the 1960's its members and sympathizers have moved to Europe and steadily established a well-organised network. Today, a complex network connects the operations of more than 70 branches across the world (Vidino 2005: 1). Indeed, it is possible to say that the Muslim Brotherhood has been one of the most important movements in the history of political Islam. It is not to be seen as a single uniform group, however. There has been growth and division into factions including groups such as al-Jihad and al-Gama'at al-Islamiyya in Egypt, HAMAS in Palestine and *mujahideen* groups in Afghanistan (FAS 2002: 2). These groups could be termed violent *jihad* organisations. Thus stems the connection from Qutb to an anti-Western *Jihad* or holy war. *Jihad* is a key concept in Islamic thought that does not necessarily invoke violence, however.

Jihad

Jihad is an Arabic term from the root *jhd*, which has the root meaning of using or exerting one's utmost power or ability in struggling for the sake of God (Saeed 2002: 73). Firestone (1999:19) explains that there are many different types of *jihad*. For example, '*jihad* of the heart', denotes struggle against one's own sinful inclinations while '*jihad* of the tongue' requires speaking of the good and forbidding evil. *Jihad* of the sword is to defend Islam and to propagate the faith. Noor Mohammad (1985: 389) similarly claims that Muslim jurists have spelled out four ways to perform the *Jihad* obligation. These are: (1) by heart, (2) by tongue, (3) by the mind, and (4) by the sword. Muslim thinkers often differentiate between the 'greater *Jihad*' and the 'lesser *Jihad*' with the former meaning the struggle against the self

⁵⁵ Qutb appears to be implying that a re-establishment of the old Caliphate would precede the setting up of a global Caliphate.

and the latter referring to warring in the path of God. Thus *jihad* can range from totally non-violent actions which could encompass political, economic or intellectual struggles, for instance, to violent actions which could mean taking up arms against an enemy.

However, the classical Islamic conception of jihad in the sense of warfare does not come from the Quran directly, where the term “jihad” is used more frequently to refer to the believer’s inner struggle for virtue. It comes from the jurists of the early Abbasid period (the late eighth and early ninth centuries AD) who developed it in the context of an effort to shed light on the nature of the Islamic community. This encompassed the leadership of the Islamic community and its relations with the non-Islamic world (Johnson 2002: 12). Central to this conception was a legal division of the world into two realms: the dar al-Islam or abode of Islam and the remainder of the world, defined as the dar al-harb or abode of war. Warfare could take two forms: (1) that of the dar al-Islam as a body under the authority of its legitimate ruler, the caliph for the Sunni tradition, the imam for the Shiite and (2) an emergency form of defensive jihad against a direct attack on the dar al-Islam by a force from some part of the dar al-harb. The first form of warfare encompassed offensive war against the general threat of the dar al-Islam where an organised collective defence against attack was made. Here the duty to take part in the jihad was a collective one, with some Muslims fighting while others played other roles. In the second case, however, in an emergency form of defensive jihad, to fight was an individual duty, incumbent on all Muslims. So not only healthy men of fighting age but also women, children, the aged, and the infirm were obliged to fight to the limit of their ability to do so (Johnson 2002: 13).

Johnson’s concepts discussed above can be summarised as follows. Two forms of warfare existed significantly different to each other. The collective jihad required the caliph/imam’s authority and drew upon the religious unity of the Islamic community. While it could be thought of as being offensive in scope, its aim was to preserve and extend the dar al-Islam. The jihad that sought to respond to emergency cases such as a direct attack across the border of the dar al-Islam was a defensive form of warfare. In this case, the individual duty to take up arms crossed the usual divisions and all Muslims were required to fight in whatever capacity they could in the immediate area of the aggression.

Saeed (2002: 74), whilst acknowledging the existence of different understandings of jihad, also focuses on the importance of the classical Islamic legal texts in narrowing down the

meaning of the contentious doctrine, jihad, to “war” but sees the concept from a slightly different perspective than Johnson. According to Saeed (2002: 74), the *classical jurists*⁵⁶ understood two different types of jihad: offensive jihad and defensive jihad. Defensive jihad is used to protect the Muslim community with each individual under obligation to defend the land or community when attacked. Offensive jihad can only be waged by the caliph or imam of the unitary Muslim state against the territory of belligerent non-Muslims to extend the borders of the state (Saeed 2002:77). Thus imams could preach a moderate line or extreme line of reasoning. As Saeed (2002:78) points out, however, the conditions for offensive jihad no longer exist as the unitary Muslim state has been broken down into many smaller units. This classical doctrine has been reviewed by influential modern groups today, however, and there now exists a diversity of opinion among Muslims about jihad in terms of it being for purposes of offence or defence. Some Muslims interpret it as a doctrine of self-defence (Saeed 2002: 81; Clinton Bennett 2004: 219). This may mean confronting threatening situations for the welfare of the Islamic community at large. In the colonial period, for example, many Muslims under colonial rule felt that jihad was justified against colonial powers, such as the French in Algeria and the British in Sudan. Muslim leaders believed they had a duty to challenge this domination, by force if necessary. In more recent years the liberation struggle in Afghanistan following the Soviet occupation can be seen as a jihad, justified by the duty to challenge the Soviet domination of Islamic land and peoples. These are examples of defensive jihads. Some Muslims, however, still hold a significantly militant and offensive understanding of the concept.

For instance, Qutb’s belief was that jihad was ‘a powerful revolutionary instrument’ (Saeed 2002:83). Nation states were for Qutb only artificial creations of the West for, as indicated earlier in this chapter, Qutb believed in an Islamic socio-political order which would establish god’s sovereignty on earth. This understanding cuts across nation states and is an undertaking of all Muslims across the globe – a global religious movement. Bin Laden has taken up an interpretation of Qutb for at the heart of his strategy sit two declarations of holy war – jihad – against America. The first, issued in 1996, was directed *specifically* at Americans occupying the land of the two holy places, the two holy places being Mecca and Medina. US troops had been stationed in this land, Saudi Arabia, since the 1991 Persian Gulf

⁵⁶ The classical doctrine of jihad developed in the first two centuries of Islam, between the seventh and eighth centuries CE. When Muslim jurists developed the doctrine, they did so in an environment in which Islam was politically, militarily and economically powerful (Saeed 2002:77).

War. This fatwa⁵⁷ was actually entitled “Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places” (Bin Laden 1996). According to Esposito, its goals were to drive US forces out of the Arabian peninsula; bring down the Saudi government; liberate Islam’s holy sites of Mecca and Medina; and support Islamic revolutionary groups world-wide (Esposito 2002: 20-21)⁵⁸.

In 1998, bin Laden extended his edict in another fatwa:

The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies - civilians and military - is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa mosque and the holy mosque [Mecca] from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim. This is in accordance with the words of Almighty Allah, “and fight the pagans all together as they fight you all together,” and “fight them until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah.”

(Bin Laden 1998: 2)

Thus the target of military civilians was broadened to include America’s allies including civilians as well. Bin Laden talks of ‘an individual duty’ which classifies the jihad as a defensive one. However, Bin Laden’s fatwa takes the radical element to new extremes when it calls for any and all Muslims to kill any and all Americans – ‘civilian and military’ alike ‘in any country in which it is possible to do it’. This is no longer a defensive war. As Johnson (2002: 15) contends, this is a jihad on the offensive. The justification given in the fatwa is a fundamentalist interpretation of a Quranic passage. The injunction regarding civilians was reiterated in an interview with John Miller in May 1998:

We do not have to differentiate between military or civilian. As far as we are concerned, they are all targets, and this is what the fatwa says . . . The fatwa is general (comprehensive) and it includes all those who participate in, or help the Jewish occupiers in killing Muslims.

(John Miller – Bin Laden Interview May 1998)

Bin Laden is not an imam, caliph or mufti nor recognised as a learned scholar so the authority to issue an offensive fatwa would be questioned by the majority of Muslims. Categorising this jihad therefore remains problematic. It must be emphasized, however, that these fatawa and bin Laden’s urging to build a pan-Islamic coalition of states cannot be viewed as isolated from the grievances he holds against the West, grievances that many Muslims might hold valid. Throughout his writings, he passionately expresses his anger at the injustices which he

⁵⁷ A fatwa is a legal opinion in Islam, issued by a recognized religious authority. Because Islam has no centralized priestly hierarchy, there is no consistent method to decide who can issue a legitimate fatwa and who cannot. The opinion, the reputation of the person giving it, the evidence given to support it, are all taken into account by Muslims as to whether to follow it or not (about.com 2008: Fatwa). One scholar capable of issuing fatawa is a Mufti who is known as a legal expert (Esposito 2002: 34).

⁵⁸ In contrast to Bin Laden’s fatwa, the Fiqh Council of North America issued a fatwa in the wake of the bombings in London. This American fatwa followed a fatwa issued in March 2005, by the Spanish Muslim Council on the first anniversary of the Madrid train bombings. This fatwa declared Osama Bin Laden an apostate and urged other Muslims to denounce the Al Qaeda leader. Muslim clerics had essentially denounced terrorist acts in religious vocabulary, using Islamic instruments, such as fatwa and apostasy (Pearl 2005: 1).

considers the Islamic world suffers at Western hands. In the interview with John Miller he is articulate about such perceived Western injustice exhorting the West to “listen”:

They rip us of our wealth and of our resources and of our oil. Our religion is under attack. They kill and murder our brothers. They compromise our honour and our dignity and dare we utter a single word of protest against the injustice, we are called terrorists.

John Miller – Bin Laden Interview May 1998)

Despite the militant interpretation of “jihad”, the more usual interpretation is to strive for an understanding of the self, to struggle against sinful inclinations within oneself and ultimately to struggle to improve the quality of life in society. It is this interpretation that the majority of Muslims adopt. This is the province of traditional (mainstream) Islam.

Traditional Islam

A leading interpreter of Islam is Dr Seyyed Hossein Nasr who speaks from a traditional point of view, a view that is rooted in the Quran, the Muslim holy book, and the prophetic Sunnah, the second source of Islamic jurisprudence which denotes the way Prophet Muhammad lived his life. The creed of Islam “there is no divinity other than God and Muhammad is his prophet” summarises in its simplicity the basic attitude and spirit of Islam. This affirms both God’s oneness and the central role of the Prophet. Islamic civilisation as a whole is based upon a point of view: the revelation brought by the Prophet Muhammad is the “pure” and simple religion of Adam and Abraham, ‘the restoration of a primordial and fundamental unity’ (Nasr 1968: 1). Nasr (1968: 1) stresses that to grasp the essence of Islam, it is enough to recognise that God is one, and that the Prophet, who is the vehicle of revelation and the symbol of all creation, was sent by him to do His work in the world.

Such simplicity as embodied in the Islamic revelation implies a structure different in many ways from that of Christianity. The work of the Catholic Priest, for example, can be seen as continuing the functions of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ, the Intermediary between divinity and humanity (Graham 1980: 1). By contrast, there is no priesthood or clergy as such in Islam. When a Muslim prays s/he prays directly to God not through any intermediary. While the life of an imam is rooted in a community, his principal task is to literally lead the prayers and also to deliver the Friday sermon, the Islamic equivalent of the Sunday service in a Christian church (Casciani 2005: 1). Thus the imam has a more ritualistic function than his Christian counterpart. In Christian churches, the hierarchy is dominated by clerics who determine not only theological issues but also manage church affairs. Imams, on the other hand, are more akin to legal counsel who can be consulted on matters of religious law (Irfan

Yusuf 2005: 1) as throughout Islamic history, imams and mullahs have issued fatawa which have the force of law among Muslims, similar to a ruling by a Western court⁵⁹. Each Muslim is thus a “priest” in him/herself and capable of fulfilling all the religious functions concerning family life and by extension community life. The orthodoxy based on the Islamic creed appears to be theoretically more open to the individual believer and therefore not as binding as that of Christianity.

There are, however, obligations and specific ways of carrying out those obligations. In addition to the declaration of faith, *shahada*, “there is no divinity other than God and Muhammad is his prophet”, four other obligations comprise the “Five Pillars” of Islam which constitutes a framework for Muslims to follow. The Five Pillars form the edifice of Islamic religious belief. They are, as well as belief (*shahada*), worship (*salat*), almsgiving (*zakat*), fasting (*sawm*) and pilgrimage (*hajj*). *Salat* is to worship God five times a day – at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and nightfall. To do so, Muslims may wash according to a particular ritual and prostrate themselves on the ground in the direction of Mecca, the holiest place on Earth to them, while reciting prayers. Facing Mecca provides a spiritual focus thereby creating a sense of unity among all Muslims. By bowing their heads to the ground, Muslims are humbled in the acceptance of the omnipotence of God. Thus the prayer also helps them transcend the mundane realities of the everyday. The third pillar of Islam is *zakat*, to give alms to the poor. It is a commitment for Muslims to donate a fixed amount of their property to charity every year. Thus *zakat* reflects the compassion of Islam. At the end of each year Muslims must give some of their wealth away for good causes or to help the poor. The amount of *zakat* depends upon an individual’s wealth. It can be given directly but Muslims are encouraged to give secretly. This is to preserve the dignity of the poorer person receiving the alms. The fourth pillar of Islam is *sawm*, fasting, to abstain from food and drink, as well as smoking and sex between sunrise and sunset during the month of Ramadan, the ninth month in the Muslim calendar. There are various aspects to fasting. As well as remembering God through self-discipline, fasting assists a Muslim to appreciate how the poor suffer. In addition, one of the great advantages of fasting is that it brings Muslims together during the month when differing social barriers can be transcended thus fostering camaraderie. The fifth pillar of Islam is to undertake the pilgrimage to Mecca, *hajj*, at least once in one’s lifetime, if one is able, during the first days of *Dhu’l-Hijja*, the twelfth month of

⁵⁹ Fatawa become a part of the Shari’ah which is analogous to codified law in Western society.

the Muslim calendar. People who have performed this pilgrimage earn the epithet '*hajji*' which is a title of great respect (Ahmed 1999a: 32-38; Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia 2008).

Prayer is very important to the traditional Muslim way of life. The Muslim performs prayer out of the desire to submit to and please Allah and there are, within Islam, prescribed ways of performing prayer. However, prayer's importance can move beyond the concept of obligation. While prayer helps the practitioner to purify him/herself, many Muslims have developed private prayer practices out of a desire to develop more individual relationships with Allah. However, in the orthodox understanding of Islam, no human truly develops a personal relationship with Allah. God exists far above his creations, leading humankind; humans are Allah's servants and this relationship is understood quite literally (Ciaravino 2005). The reaching out to establish a personal relationship with Allah touches on another aspect of Islam: *Sufism*, Islam's mystical dimension.

Sufism

According to Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1968), at the heart of the Muslim revelation is the idea of unity and it is this idea that extends into the concepts of Sufism. Humankind can be led to the unity of the Divine Principle in contemplation of the unity of the cosmos which exemplifies the unity and interrelatedness of all that exists. It is at this level that a Muslim's whole being can be surrendered to God; he has no separate individual existence of his own:

He is like the birds and the flowers in his yielding to the Creator; like them, like all the other elements of the cosmos, he reflects the Divine Intellect to his own degree . . . he [becomes] in fact the channel of grace for the universe.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1968: 2)

Although philosophies vary between different Sufi sects, Sufism as a whole is primarily concerned with direct personal experience. The central concept in Sufism is love. Love is seen as a projection of the essence of God to the universe and since it is believed that everything is a reflection of God, the school of Sufism practices to see the beauty inside the apparently ugly and to embrace to what they believe as even the most evil one (Grohol 2005a: 3).

A teaching of Sufism is that the absorption in the material world makes people alienated from their essence. In order to gain one's real self is to be in constant remembrance of God and to disconnect oneself from the ephemeral material world. God manifests Himself both as

Transcendent and Immanent when one submits with one's heart not just the head. Realising such presence of God requires one to experience the absolute love of God, by dying in Him and living in Him (Ghulam Haider Aasi 1993).

While the first requirement for a Muslim is to obey the rules and regulation of Islamic law, such an observance does not provide a spiritual experience of God which Sufism seeks to do. It is of the 'transience of life on earth', the 'mysteries of existence' and the 'complexity of being' that Sufism embraces (Ahmed 1999a: 51). Sufism is therefore one of the most enduring contributions to Islam in terms of human spirituality in its mystical tradition and dimension.

As Ghulam Haider Aasi (1993) explains, the Quran prohibits coercion in religion whether it is by force or deception. Muslims are obliged to call humankind toward submission to God through wisdom and sincerity. Perhaps this tenet has contributed to the growth in modern times of a number of liberal movements within Islam. These represent religious outlooks which may depend on a re-interpretation of scriptures.

Liberal Islam

Liberal Muslims interpret the Quran and Hadith⁶⁰ from their personal perspective rather than the traditional point of view. While liberals may claim that they are returning to the principles of the early Muslim community arguing that traditionalists have diverged from true Islam through their focus on the literal word rather than the original ethical intention of the scriptural passage, the principal difference with conservative Islamic opinion for liberals is in a difference of interpretation - how core Islamic values are to be applied to life today (Grohol 2005b).

Doogue and Kirkwood (2005) in discussing the various voices of what they call "progressive" Islam, cite, amongst others, three leading Muslims who in different ways are questioning how such core values can be applied to meet the demands of contemporary society. Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf has experienced a very pluralistic understanding of Islam throughout his life and he emphasises its spiritual dimension, drawing his inspiration from the

⁶⁰ The Sunnah includes everything the Prophet Muhammad said, did and approved of. The Sunnah is known from the statements called hadiths that have been handed down from the Companions of the Prophet (Reading Islam 2009).

Sufi tradition. Concomitant with this spiritual direction, Imam Feisal makes a clear distinction between culture which is expressed locally and the principles of Islam which have a universal nature. The blurring of culture and principles give legitimacy to cultural mores in Sharia⁶¹ which they should not have, claims Imam Feisal. This has profound effects in the promulgation of Islam. Imam Feisal therefore seeks to educate concerning the cultural aspects of Islam. In doing this, he wants to establish a discourse and dialogue not only at the inter-faith level but also at the intra-faith level, i.e. between those who have different interpretations within the same religious tradition.

Dr Faiz Khan, assistant imam at several mosques in New York City aims to foster a distinctly American Islamic identity and in so doing seeks to encourage connections between Muslims and the broader American society. Faiz Khan comes from the Sufi tradition which characterises an open and tolerant attitude in an attempt to find an internal mystical experience. Such a mindset is consistent with the innovating ideals of building bridges to other cultures and faiths which Faiz Khan holds important in his quest to renew his religion (Doogue and Kirkwood 2005).

Muqtedar Khan is a lecturer in Political Science at Adrian College in Michigan. He shares with readers the fact that he went through a rebirth where he reinvented himself and became a “thinking” Muslim (Doogue and Kirkwood 2005: 70). Muqtedar Khan believes that the Muslim world cannot continue to exist in its present condition. For him, change is necessary and the question he asks is can American Muslims become an agent for change. Muqtedar Khan seems to believe that revival (Tajdid) and reform (Islah) are possible in that they are Islam’s internal mechanisms for self-purification and ‘for the periodic transcendence of its corporate self’ (Muqtedar Khan 2002b: 4). Thus to Muqtedar Khan, these traditions are endowed with the responsibility of ensuring the Muslim community continues to embrace the principles and practices of the Islamic faith.

It is interesting to note that the title of Muqtedar Khan’s book is *American Muslims: Bridging Faith and Freedom*. In fact, the three Muslims discussed, have talked about building bridges in some sort of way: Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf at the inter and intra faith level, Dr Faiz Khan to other cultures and faiths and Muqtedar Khan between the more abstract terms of faith and

⁶¹ Shariah is Islamic Law – under Islam there is no separation of church and state.

freedom. Building these sorts of bridges is one way of looking at the types of programs with which liberal Muslims concern themselves for there is no clearly defined agenda amongst liberal Muslims on their views and beliefs. In fact there is a diversity of issues which claim attention from human rights to feminism, for instance. However, one issue, interfaith dialogue, is a concern most liberal Muslims seem to share. Another broader issue which interfaith dialogue leads into is reform. However, before pursuing this controversial issue, I want to review what implications the features already discussed mean for Islam as a world religion.

Islam: A World Religion

There is no doubt that Islam is a world religion⁶². It possesses a diversity of religious outlooks which are expressed in a multitude of ways. The basic divisions can be seen in terms of fundamentalism, traditionalism and liberalism which represent a range from a conservative, doctrinal approach to an oftentimes abstract interpretation of scripture. Sufism is Islam's mystical dimension which explores spirituality as opposed to a formal juridical approach to following the faith. It is apparent therefore, that Islam is not a monolithic religion. It is meaningless to talk of Islamic fundamentalism as if it represents the whole faith. It is only part of the picture. Islam is a living, breathing religion which is sometimes characterised by elements of orthodoxy, sometimes by those of radicalism and yes, at times by the voices of violent extremism. To fail to acknowledge this spectrum of religiosity with its nuances and complexities is to impede any progress that is to be made towards a possible solution to the global terrorist problem that is associated with fundamentalism in Islam.

Yet it is puzzling that references are consistently made to the Judeo-Christian tradition when Islam shares much of Judeo-Christian heritage? Doogue and Kirkwood (2005: 238) posit that perhaps 'Abrahamic tradition' is a more appropriate appellation that links the world's leading monotheistic religions together and offers a measure of bridge building, salutary for inter-faith dialogue.

A world religion is not a static system, however. It needs to be responsive to the challenges posed by daily living as society changes over time. It has been suggested by various theorists, such as Doogue and Kirkwood (2005: 241), that among the world religions, Islam

⁶² Morphologically, Islam has a conceptual aspect, a behavioural aspect, a social aspect and a subjective aspect, all four aspects representing the main aspects of religions, comparatively speaking (Pye 2005: 3).

has been slow in adapting to the trials of modernity with the result that it is now too inflexible to address the problems posed by contemporary Islamic society. A consequence of this is that the possibility of reform has become a hotly debated issue among adherents and believers (Wahid (2002); Khatami and Amanpour Interview (1998); Ibrahim (1996); Ibrahim and Phan interview (2004)).

The Question of Reform

There are two main reasons why reform is an important issue. One, of course, is internal to Islam and is to do with how believers can better negotiate the world and the times they live in. The other is tied up with other belief systems and the hopeful possibilities of creating a peaceful coexistence among them. The reality of terrorism poses a dilemma for all human beings: How do we learn to co-exist so that we can have peace in the future? This idea of co-existence is so basic to our lives.

Conflict is fundamental to any social order. Each of us experiences the world uniquely and each of us must bridge the differences between our perceptions and the needs that they generate and the perceptions of others. Why then do we not spend all our time in conflict with each other? Boulding (1998: 1) explains that human beings have two opposing needs – bonding and autonomy – and calls the culture that can accommodate these needs a “Peace Culture”:

A peace culture maintains creative balance among bonding, community closeness, and the need for separate spaces. It can be defined as a mosaic of identities, attitudes, values, beliefs, and patterns that leads people to live nurturally with one another and the earth itself without the aid of structured power differentials, to deal creatively with their differences, and to share their resources.

Boulding (1998: 1-2)

Peace Cultures rarely exist as separate societies, however. More commonly peaceableness and aggression coexist. While this balance is subject to change, human beings can positively influence the state of this balance through a willingness to keep taking steps toward peaceful coexistence with their enemies. The goal of peaceful coexistence is compromised, however, when building peace is focused on techniques driven by a need to find ‘quick fixes’ to complex long term problems rather than on a systemic understanding of peacebuilding as a process structure (Lederach 1999: 28). Reconciliation forms a very important part of this process structure as it is only through healing relationships and re-humanising antagonists that conflict cycles can end (Lerche 2000: 63-64). Relationships – between people, nations, cultures – require our nurturing and respect. Vaclav Havel (2000: 260) introduces a spiritual

dimension into this matrix by suggesting that respect of the “Other” can only grow from a humble respect for the cosmic order and from awareness that we are part of it and that we share in it: “We must discover a new respect for what transcends us: for the universe, for the earth, for nature, for life and for reality.” These words have been fashioned by a religious mind and while this mind may or may not have found belonging with any particular faith, these words resonate with the possibilities of the role that formal religions can play in the creation of Peace Cultures. Realising a peaceful coexistence among the major religions is a sound base from which to build more sophisticated and ambitious programs.

However, in order to create a peaceful coexistence across religions, it is necessary for involved people to come to terms with the fact that all organised religions today, in facing contemporary challenges and threats have become to differing degrees polarised between, what could be described as progressive and fundamentalist believers. This polarisation is not just pertinent to Islam but certainly it is also a characteristic of Islam. As has been expressed before, every religion holds within it diverse religious attitudes and positions. This is a healthy manifestation. However, when a polarisation exists to the point of approaching a potential schism, such a bitter struggle undermines the unity of the faith and compromises its ability to act cohesively for the benefit of its devotees. I am not suggesting that Islam is approaching a schism. However, opposing forces within this religion are causing major conflict for its adherents and these issues need to be identified.

“Progressive” forces within Islam are connected with the term *Ijtihad*⁶³ which was originally a technical term of Islamic law that describes the process of making a legal decision through an independent interpretation of the sources of the law, the Quran and the Sunna. The opposite of *ijtihad* is *taqleed* which means imitation. It is interesting to note that *jihad* and *ijtihad* share a common etymology: the verbal root *jahada* “struggle”. Both words thus touch on concepts of effort and meditation (Grohol 2005c:1).

Doogue and Kirkwood (2005: 241) claim that within Islam there is an ongoing conflict between the forces of progressive *ijtihad* and the conservative forces of both *taqleed* and conservative *ijtihad*. These concepts are philosophical in nature and not legal. Progressive *ijtihad* is innovative, future-oriented thinking. It is independent thinking that endeavours to

⁶³ This is also spelt ‘Ijtehad’. Please see Chapter Six “Interpretations of Islamic Decline”.

apply Islam to the present time, the present situation with all its concomitant problems and challenges and ultimately seeks to accommodate the evolution of Islam. *Taqleed* is conformity to past Islamic tradition and teachings. Conservative *ijtihad* comprises activists who want to return to a sense of pure Islam that existed at the time of the Prophet. Thus Muslims are witnessing a war waged with ideas as Islam undergoes a transformation. Whether progressive *ijtihad* can prevail is a vital issue that will determine the ultimate profile of Islam.

Today Islamic reform is being addressed by Muslims of various callings, by religious leaders as well as activists, intellectuals and most importantly, officials in government where they can canvass their ideas through their positions. Such spokespeople include former deputy prime minister of Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim who served six years of a prison sentence for what is believed were his dissenting political activities⁶⁴. Others include former president Mohammad Khatami of Iran and former Indonesian president Abdurrahman Wahid. Esposito (2002: 134) contends that Ibrahim, Khatami and Wahid have played important roles in laying down the terms for an inter-civilisational dialogue, each taking a position that is reflective of his own culture and political setting. A feature of such an active dialogue has centred on that between Islam and the West.

In response to Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilisations* Anwar Ibrahim called for a *Global Convivencia*, a pluralist vision based on dialogue among cultures. This term has roots in the peaceful and productive co-existence of Jews, Christians and Muslims in medieval Spain. Ibrahim particularly cited the civilisational relationship between the Judeo-Christian world and the Muslim world and the urgent need for dialogue in this context (Ibrahim 2004: 2). Ibrahim believed that *convivencia* must truly be encounters among equals, however (Ibrahim 1996: 45). Displaying support of this conviction he speaks passionately of the need to forge a better understanding between Muslims and the West in the Global War on Terror:

So there is I think need to pursue it in the United States, to understand Muslim sensitivity. I agree again without the need to be apologetic that Muslims themselves must not be in a state of denial, they must be in the forefront in the war against terrorism, but we do not and we cannot assume that the position taken by the United States in articulating these issues something that is conducive or even acceptable to the Muslims.

⁶⁴ Anwar Ibrahim was initially convicted on charges of abuse of power and sodomy. The trial was widely condemned by the international community because it failed to meet international fair trial standards and violated Ibrahim's right to due process. On September 2, 2004 Ibrahim was released from prison following a decision by Malaysia's highest court to uphold his appeal (Committee on Human Rights 2005: 1).

So I think we need to forge a better understanding. We are prepared to listen to the West and particularly the United States, but the United States also must be prepared to listen and adjust accordingly. The alternate interests for the sake of humanity is (*sic*) to combat terrorism, not to boost one's ego and to impose one's will or to act unilaterally. . .

(Ibrahim – Phan Interview 2004:4)

In attempting to bridge the gulf between the Islamic world and the West means that Ibrahim has had to pose deep and disturbing questions to Islamic followers, questions relating to how the notion of choice embedded in Islamic theology can materialise in responsible government, how, in fact, the Muslim World can navigate through political systems that are oftentimes inconsistent with justice, toward freedom and democracy.

Mohammad Khatami also nurtured a vision for a dialogue of civilisations between Islam and the West. Khatami, who has been regarded as Iran's first reformist president, completed two terms on August 2, 2005. Khatami's call for a dialogue of civilisations reflects a very different approach from that of Western political analysts but also from that of Islamic ideologues such as Sayyid Qutb. In an historic message to the American people in January 1998 (Khatami – Amanpour Interview 1998), Khatami outlined what form this dialogue might take while affirming his respect for American civilisation. Khatami believes that religious spirituality imbued with the values of liberty is a prerequisite for human happiness. The image of Islam, he maintained, has been often presented erroneously throughout the West. The collapse of communism has seen an attempt to portray Islam as the new enemy and it has been progressive Islam which has been targeted rather than 'certain regressive interpretations of Islam' (Khatami – Amanpour Interview 1998: 5). Khatami stressed that Islam is a religion which calls all humanity, irrespective of whatever creed, to unite around the worship of God. Islam seeks democracy and development and calls for the utilisation of the achievements of all civilisations including that of the West. Such Islam is enemy to no nation or religion but 'seeks dialogue, understanding and peace with all nations' (Khatami – Amanpour Interview 1998: 5). Thus, as Esposito (2002:137) says, Khatami's vision defends Islamic identity through a nonmilitant jihadist approach and calls for civilisational dialogue where all societies can not only contribute but also benefit through the exchange of ideas. Such a dialogue is a pre-condition for peaceful coexistence.

Abdurrahman Wahid advocates a cosmopolitan Islam, one that is responsive to the realities of modern life, one that is pluralistic and global and which affirms the existence of the diversity of civilisations (Esposito 2002: 139-141). In referring specifically to terrorism, Wahid

speaks of a great challenge that besets the Islamic world. It is to use a different method of educating young people. According to Wahid, the present methods of education use simple modelling and formulistic thinking resulting in a literalistic approach to the textual sources of Islam: the Quran and the Hadith. The result is that they use these texts in a reductionist fashion without appreciating “the subtly nuanced task of interpretation required of them if they are to understand how documents from the 7th and 8th centuries, from the alien world of tribal Arab society among the desert sands, are to be correctly applied to the very different world that we live in today” (Wahid 2002: 1). Wahid sees a more sophisticated form of education is required in order to deal with the forces of violent radicalism that is plaguing Islam. He very eloquently states the fundamentals of the problem: “Analysing problems in a reductionistic fashion and rigorously applying a simple formula may be an appropriate approach to building a bridge, or even erecting a skyscraper, but it is grossly inappropriate and inadequate to the task of building modern Muslim society” (Wahid 2002: 1).

Reform in Islam has been articulated in many ways through many voices. Those of Anwar Ibrahim, Mohammad Khatami and Abdurrahman Wahid surely represent the forces of *ijtihad* in all its progressiveness and future-oriented thinking. These forces again demonstrate that there is no monolithic Islam. The Islamic worldview is shaped by numerous visions, by varying politico-cultural contexts and by diverse spiritual and intellectual interpretation. It is a worldview that represents a religion subject to change as it meets the challenges of the 21st century and is forced to constructively deal with the limitations of old paradigms. In this respect it is similar to other world religions although the degree to which Islam is affected may be comparatively more pronounced as witnessed by the emerging forces of violent extremism.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to demonstrate that Islam comprises a diversity of religious expression, that it is a world religion with different faces, that it can in no way be labelled monolithic. It is true that Islam has a fundamentalist face from which violent extremism has found a voice. However, it is also true that the majority of Muslims follow a traditional path to worship with Sufism providing a way to seek a more personal experience of God. Liberal Muslims are especially interested in exploring how core Islamic values can be applied to life in contemporary society. This religion therefore must be seen as truly multi-dimensional.

Islam, however, is undergoing a transformation propelled by the forces of progressive *ijtihad* which seeks to accommodate change in society, in response to conservative forces which seek conformity with past Islamic tradition. While such a dynamic is present in all world religions today, it is especially the case in Islam. Reform has been articulated in various ways by many voices within Islam, some prominent voices calling for a dialogue of civilisations between Islam and the West. The basis of such dialogue is peaceful coexistence among all cultures – recognition of the differences among cultures and a realisation that with effort and understanding there can be movement towards peace in spite of them.

This chapter has provided some background into the Islamic religion. It completes Part I of this thesis. The following chapter will begin the formal analysis which comprises Part II of this thesis.