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The Terrorist Masquerade

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Introduction

Atrocious acts of terror have occurred during the last decades of the 20th Century, from hijackings of airplanes, boats and other means of ground transportation, kidnappings of civilians for ransom or political blackmail, blowing up of buildings, malls, restaurants, airports, airplanes in mid-air, trains and buses, to attacks by gun-fire on individuals and groups. Atrocities of this sort were practiced in, around and about the Middle East since the late 1960s, but they soon spread to other areas of the world, until no continent or country was immune. During those years, terrorist groups, which smacked of Marxist-prone “revolution” of some kind or other, mushroomed in all parts of the globe, from the Red Army in Japan, the Symbionese Liberation Army in the US, the Red Brigades, the Action Directe, the ETA, IRA, and the Bader-Meinhoff in Europe, to the Shining Path in Peru and the various Palestinian rival groups of the PLO, the PFLP, the DFLP, the Abu Nidal group and their clones and splinter sub-groups.

Notwithstanding their different motivations, goals, scope of action, diffusion, means and targets of action, all those groups sought to sow fear amidst their enemy and humiliate and intimidate him into surrendering to their demands. They took to long-haul military struggles in order to weaken the enemy by guerilla warfare and constant bleeding, attempts to capture the attention of the world media in order to air their grievances and attain their redress, or to obtain simply by terrorism what they could not achieve in the arena of the battlefield. But although all these groups and organizations often collaborated and aided each other (like the Bader-Meinhoff involvement in the hijacking of the Air France plane to Entebbe in 1976, or the Japanese part in the rampage at the Ben-Gurion Airport in 1972), they were never considered branches and arms of the same international networks. Moreover, while the acts of terrorism were often daring and required sophistication in planning and execution, they had always been the business of small groups, calculated to extract a demand or to inflict pain and damage on the enemy, while the perpetrators were planning and hoping to get away.

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In most of the cases cited above, it seems that their ideologies have either worn out along the years, or the members of the terrorist cells have mellowed with age and change of status, or have shifted tactics and adopted peaceful ways to achieve their goals, or have been driven into oblivion due to effective eradication campaigns launched by the states concerned. Notable exceptions are those cases, like in Kashmir, Xinjiang, the Philippines and the Middle East, where lagging unresolved ethno-national problems have complicated the issues at hand and contributed to their prolongation. At the same time, however, a new type of terrorism has emerged in the past two decades, triggered and nurtured by a certain interpretation of the creed of Islam, usually dubbed “fundamentalist”, which has lent new twists to the entire idea of terrorism. For now, it was no longer the followers of an ideological splinter group who purported to produce “revolution” by terrorist means, but the adepts of one of the largest and most successful universal religions, which is the established faith in some 56 Islamic countries across the world, namely about one third of the total, spanning mainly the continents of Asia and Africa, but also counting among its 1.2 billion membership, i.e. one fifth of the world population, large minorities in the rest of the globe.

The massive return to Islam during the past two or three decades, whose roots and modalities have been discussed elsewhere, has by necessity colored both the domestic struggle for legitimacy of governments within Muslim countries, and the lingering ethno-national strife between those countries and the rest of the world. Thus, on the one hand, one observes Muslim rule taking root in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, the Sudan and Afghanistan, or struggling for the upper hand, inter alia via terrorism, in other places such as Algeria, the Palestinian Authority, Lebanon or Egypt; and on the other hand, one cannot help notice that some of the international conflicts in which Muslim groups or countries are involved, such as the Middle East, Kashmir, the Philippines or Xinjiang, have also been tinged by Islamic ideology. The implications are vast: if thus far conflicts were settled by negotiation and compromise, namely by quantitative means, once they are pushed to the religious domain, i.e. as they become qualitative and not given to discussion and compromise, they grow also that much more difficult to resolve.

The Muslim groups and countries that have embraced this way, those we customarily call “fundamentalists”, prefer the language of “victory” over “compromise”, “Holy War” (*Jihad*) over negotiation, rejection over acceptance, exclusion over tolerance, the absolute Truth of Allah over human reasoning, and zeal over accommodation. In this state of affairs, terrorism, in the name of Allah, in His Path and for His sake, becomes not only permissible due to the unmatched forces of the Western Satan and his underlings, but indeed inevitable. Only the vocabulary changes in this setting: *Jihad* is never terrorism, but lawful battle, and the enemy’s counter-attack is never legitimate self-defense or counter-measure, but always “aggression”, “state terrorism”, violation of the Divine Will, rebellion against the Divine Order. In this setting, when conventional terrorism is no longer efficient enough to deal the enemy painful blows, and necessity arises to afford unhindered access to the terrorist to strike his lethal blow at the enemy, then “suicide bombers” move into the picture, not to commit suicide, but to annihilate the enemy in earnest.

The misnomer of “suicide bombers” was discussed elsewhere¹ and it is pertinent to our analysis of Islamic terrorism. Here suffice it to mention that this mode of terrorism is not unique to Islam, the Japanese Kamikaze at the end of the Pacific War (1944-5) had acted likewise. We have also seen Indira Gandhi and then her son Rajiv die at the hands of such terrorists, as were a number of other isolated cases where the perpetrator was courageous/desperate/motivated enough to lose his life in the process of eliminating his valuable target. But it is in Shi’ite Islam since the precedent of the “Assassins” in the Middle Ages, that this

form of self-sacrifice has taken root. It is no coincidence that it was among the Shi'ites of Lebanon that this lethal tradition surfaced once again in the 1980s, in the context of the Lebanese War, first against the American marines who landed in that quagmire to guard the peace, and then against the Israelis. Few in the West suspected that a generalization of this method would soon drag into the fray the Sunnite Hamas and Islamic Jihad who have also embarked on this avenue, and Western civilization in general as its prime target.

This is what dramatically changed the world scene on September 11, 2001, when it suddenly dawned on people that this ill-understood "treatment" by "suicide bombing" was not reserved for the Jews and Israelis only, nor limited to the Middle East and the Arab-Israeli dispute, but a well-thought, patiently contrived and cunningly devised all-out war against the West, the Great Satan, for its "corrupting" effect on the youth of the world, notably the Muslims who are led astray by the glamour of the American material culture, and tend to drift into the western orbit of misdeed and mischief. Furthermore, the tragedy of the World Trade Center attested to the undreamt-of new reality where the "suicide bombers" are not individuals who act foolishly on the spur of the moment, but a coterie of several determined individuals who acted in unison to carry out a simultaneous series of hijackings for which they had been groomed for years, and even had closely, precisely and cautiously programmed their harrowingly cold-blooded act of terror to coincide, in time, scope, space and horror, with the simultaneous and equally horrendous acts perpetrated by their like-minded fellow "suicide-bombers".

This drama has shown that not only the perpetrators of these murderous acts did not need the pretext of the *intifada* (which began to unfold much after the preparations for the Twin Towers were under way) and the Palestinians (who currently plan and carry out their own "suicide bombings", without waiting for Osama Bin-Laden), but that the myth that used to link "suicide bombings" with economic under-development was found to have no leg to stand on. Neither Bin-Laden nor his operatives, who could afford to study engineering and piloting in Europe and the US, were exactly the impoverished types who, out of despair, depression or personal accounts to settle, would embark on this most horrible (and complicated) of atrocities. Explanations have to be sought, therefore, elsewhere, for example in the powerful grip of Islamic ideology in general and its fundamentalist teachings in particular.

It is true that it is not Islam as such that has declared war on the US and the West. For one thing, there is no single papal-like authority that can make such a declaration in the name of all Muslims. It is also true that one can cite verses of peace or war from any holy book, and manipulate Holy Scriptures, religious tenets, vocabulary and symbols to fill in tailor-made arguments. But one must also face several puzzling quandaries and attempt to resolve them:

1. Is it pure coincidence that all the hijackers and perpetrators of these horrors are Arabs/Muslims? And are the papers found on some of them, pointing to Muslim fundamentalist training and attachment, relevant?
2. If this horror has nothing to do with normative Islam, as we often hear it said, do we find in any other contemporary faith or system of belief any individuals or organizations who have launched or made common cause with a scheme of this scope and of this horrendous cruelty and inhumanity?
3. Why is it that Islam has given rise to so many groups of "suicide bombers", and to so many "spiritual" leaders who openly condone this practice and lend legitimacy to it: Bin Laden in Afghanistan, Sheikh Yassin in Gaza, Sheikhs Fadlallah and Nasrallah in Lebanon, etc? Why is it that those adulated personalities condemn acts of terror in general, but not those of their own doing or inspiration?

4. Why is it that most armed conflicts in the world today, and most acts of terrorism throughout the globe are caused by or connected to Islam of one brand or another: from the Abu Sayyaf group in the Philippines, which kidnaps foreigners to collect ransom; recurring arsons of churches in Indonesia, Nigeria, the Sudan and Egypt; the ongoing genocide against the Blacks in southern Sudan; the war in Kashmir; the Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hizbullah connection of the Arab-Israeli dispute; the civil war in Afghanistan and Central Asia; the heinous slaughters of civilians in Algeria and Egypt; the new wave of terrorism in America and Western Europe etc.? What is in fundamentalist Islam that is so bellicose and uncompromising as to sanction conflict, terrorism and “suicide bombing”?

These are some of the questions we will be tackling in the following pages, not only through examining their historical sources and their modern manifestations, but also by referring to some of the texts that have become hallowed in the modern Islamic world and are being consulted and cited as “justifications” for these horrors. We have repeatedly heard the argument that those are “un-Islamic” deeds performed by “un-Islamic” zealots, and yet they all say and write, and are indoctrinated to believe, that they act in the name of Islam, for the sake of Allah. Are we then talking about a different Islam? If so, then how do we explain the vast popularity of the deeds and their perpetrators among the Muslim populace, after due lip service is paid, of course, to the “deep trauma” that many Muslims say they feel in the aftermath of the Twin Tower slaughter? If the trauma were genuine, why is it that in previous smaller-scale murders of this sort, no outright condemnation was forthcoming from Muslim leaders?

In the wake of the Twin Tower horror, an almost universal cry of condemnation of this horrendous act was heard across the globe. One would have noticed, however, that except for the US and certain of its closest allies, almost no one dared to condemn the perpetrators, under the pretext that “clear evidence” is needed before one hurries to indict. When this argument is advanced by law-abiding regimes, one could still perhaps understand; but when it is particularly emphasized by the world of Islam, which does not count among its 55-nation membership even one regime ruled by law, this sounds as a rather flimsy pretext to avoid the need to act against the culprits. This is the reason that while almost all Muslim countries rushed to take cover by swearing allegiance to America, for fear of its wrath, none of them has been accommodating in terms of joining the battle itself, or at least making its facilities available to the US fighting units, without restriction.

A paradox has been in the works: had the Muslim countries been so certain, as they claim, that no Muslim element was involved in the anti-American onslaught, then why are they reluctant to join the battle against the perpetrators? In fact, they know exactly where the terrorists had come from, that all those involved were Muslims, their doctrine Muslim, their financing from Muslim sources, their constituencies Muslim and their goal Muslim. It is the same Muslim governments who have fought the terrorism that threatened them (Mubarak against the Gama`at, Assad against the Muslim Brothers, Arafat against the Hamas), but when the same terrorism was directed against Israel, the US or the West, they did not act against it, and often even harbored it (Egypt – the hijackers of the Achille Lauro, Syria – the Islamic Jihad and the Hizbullah, Iran – all the Islamic terrorist organizations, and the Palestinian Authority – the Hamas and Islamic Jihad, who day in, day out terrorize Israeli cities). Saudi Arabia and Libya subsidize the Hamas and other terrorist groups, and the Yemen refused to turn in the saboteurs of the American Navy ship, the “Cole”, in Aden.

One needs then to call a spade a spade, to identify terrorism not according to its victim but according to its perpetrator and mode of action. Whenever an organization trains,

indoctrinates and dispatches groups or individuals to engage in wanton killing of civilians, for any purpose, it is a terrorist organization pure and simple, that has to be pursued and eliminated. No national or religious grievance, justified as it may be, can explain away or provide “understanding” to acts of terror, and those who tolerate any kind of terrorism are bound to see it turned against themselves. There are civilized ways to struggle against “injustice”, “oppression”, “occupation” and “exploitation”, which involve armed struggle against the armed forces of the enemy, if negotiations should fail; similarly, it is the duty of any country witnessing terrorism in the making, to take all necessary measures to avert it, through legal means if possible, but also through elimination of the culprits if necessary, after all precautions have been taken to minimize collateral damage to innocent civilians.

It will be the contention of the present work that while acts of violence that clearly take on the characteristics of terrorism, have to be identified and eradicated, one also ought to detect and recognize the ideological infrastructure which permits them to take hold in certain societies more than in others. While there are widespread acts of injustice, domination and inequality of opportunity around the globe, which generate terrorist movements (ETA, IRA and the like), they are bound to recede when these grievances are laid to rest. What characterizes the latest wave of Islamic terrorism in America is that no specific demands were attached to it, like the payment of ransom, adoption of a certain policy, relinquishing a certain territory, or releasing hostages. It was not unleashed as a warning or a bargaining position, or as a list of demands, the fulfillment of which would resolve the crisis and avert the horror, but as an irreversible punishment to be meted out, an expression of anger to be vented. This calls for investigation and unraveling, and this is what we shall attempt in the following pages.

Sampling Muslim Reactions to the New York and Washington Horror

Unlike their governments which lack legitimacy for the most part and do not reflect their public opinion, much of the populace in most Muslim countries reacted with jubilation to the disaster that befell the West following the attack against the Twin Towers and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. This is, of course, not necessarily indicative of the Islamic doctrine as such, or of the interpretation the Muslim masses lend to it in the world today, but it is certainly reflective of the depth of hostility towards the West, its wealth and values. Much of this hostility can be imputed to the fashion the policies, way of life and economic prosperity of the West are perceived by the unfortunate multitudes who live under oppression, misery, disease and illiteracy in those lands; but there is no doubt that a crude popular perception of Islamic doctrine has also played a significant role in this view of the world.

There is no way, of course, to gauge the predominant sentiment among the masses throughout the length and width of the entire Islamic world, but judging from press write-ups, public demonstrations where pictures of Bin Laden were displayed, slogans were brandished or shouted, and American (and Israeli) flags and effigies were trampled and then burned by crowds in delirium, and the attacks against American institutions or businesses, one could make no mistake about the intensity of the feelings. Sometimes it is evident from the manifested support for the Taliban or for Bin Laden, or from the waving of Islamic slogans, that the angry populace was transmitting a Muslim message of vindication, but at other times the virulent grievances sounded generally anti-Western and anti-American. In either case, it is certain that since Islam has remained the main focus of identity among Muslim societies, the anti-Western vitriol voiced among the masses, will almost always retain Islamic under- or overtones. There is also little doubt, that educated, Westernized and less-bigoted Muslims would feel and express sadness and horror at the sight of the tragedy, but still the seemingly

prevailing mood among those societies was not one of mourning or identification with the victims and their families.

This should come as no surprise when one bears in mind, on the one hand, the harsh, even fanatic, reaction of Muslims worldwide to what they perceive as the profanation of their holy sites or any slur to their culture, or the enthusiastic and self-assured way they go about spreading their faith and imposing it on others; but on the other hand, the unbearable ease with which they deny others' religious rights, and even step in to obliterate the religious heritage of other faiths. Similarly, it escapes no one's scrutiny that their dead in their clashes with non-Muslims, are immediately dubbed *shahid* (martyr), their funerals are tumultuous, emotional, vindictive and replete with shouts of revenge, even when the deceased had engaged in a visibly aggressive and unprovoked act of terrorism; while the death and destruction of others is jubilantly celebrated by dance, distribution of sweets and outright delight in the misery and havoc they had wrought on others. It is as if human happiness were a zero-sum game, where someone's glory must come at the expense of others' misfortune, and where any success of the West is regarded as a Muslim failure, and vice-versa.

Mosques can be and are erected throughout the Christian and Jewish worlds, Muslim clerics are invited to officiate in national ceremonies of Western countries, as a matter of course, but no church can be built anywhere in Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan, Buddhist symbols are torn down by the Kabul government, and existing churches are torched or blown up in Indonesia, Egypt, the Sudan, Kosovo and elsewhere in the Islamic world, where the state religion is invariably Islam and therefore no provision is allowed or possible for other faiths. Moreover, Muslims around the world have grown accustomed that their rampages against other faiths go unpunished, and this encourages their belief that persecuting others is the natural state of affairs. For example, during the first year of the *Al-Aqsa Intifada* (2000-1) Muslim immigrants in Western democracies were involved in hundreds of cases of vandalism, desecration and assaults against Jewish sites and Jewish individuals and worshippers, the scope of which has been unprecedented in Europe since *Kristallnacht*. Since not much was done to deter the vandals, it took a full year to calm tempers there, although in the Middle East itself, Jewish sites continued to be desecrated.

In short, there is a world of difference between Western values and the Muslim ones, at least those articulated by the fundamentalists among them. While for the West terrorism is terrorism, and under no circumstances can there be any justification for loss of life of innocent civilians, Muslim fundamentalists, and one suspects also other Muslims around them, have found ample ideological rationalization for wanton killing of civilians. Among the Palestinians, for example, although the Hamas supporters count no more than one third of the Palestinian constituency, polls among the populace show some 80% support for acts of terror against Israeli civilians. These are precisely the numbers of the people who celebrated the New York and Washington horror in the streets of the West Bank and Gaza, and for that matter in the other Muslim cities and towns across the world. Years prior to this horrendous act of terror, Abdallah Shami, the Head of the Islamic Jihad group in Gaza, when questioned by an Israeli journalist about indiscriminate "suicide bombing" of civilians, answered thus:

We do not possess the military hardware our enemy possesses. We do not have planes, missiles, or even a cannon with which we can fight injustice. The most effective tool to inflict damage and harm with the least possible losses is operations of this nature. This is a legitimate method based on martyrdom. The martyr gets the privilege of entering Paradise and frees himself from pain and misery.²

In these terms, not only does the killer have no qualms to kill anyone, by any method, due to his lack in arms, but he also delights in taking the shortcut to Paradise by doing so. And since the wanton murderer is “privileged” to be dubbed a “martyr”, killing becomes “legitimate”. This is the world of values of these terrorists, and this is the Islamic rationalization of these values. These notions, which are cultivated by entire networks of ruthless and heartless terrorists, as we have seen and heard in the Twin Towers tragedy, are also backed by the crowds who cannot resist the temptation to exhibit their jubilation in public. Worse, they are incited by politicians, journalists, clerics and intellectuals, who have no compunction to voice their distorted and inhuman worldview in public, both in writing and orally. The following selection will exemplify this horrific state of mind, which allows this type of assassin to flourish and operate among a sympathetic population.

Maybe the most telling broadside against America, while it was still under the shock of that horror, merely one day after its unfolding, came from the Hamas movement in the Palestinian territories, those same people who murder civilians in restaurants, blow up school buses, re-enact in public those atrocities and brag about them. Typically for this brand of terrorists, the accusation is directed at the victim itself, which means not only that the act of terror and the mass-murder are justified in their eyes, but that they expected more to follow and that they might participate themselves in future butcheries of this sort. What is particularly sad and hallucinating about this is that one author, Atallah abu-al-Sabah, boasts the title of PhD, namely that he is a well educated man, supposedly versed in humanities and perhaps trained to honor human life and human values as they are cultivated in the West. Here are some excerpts from his “Letter to America” that he published in the organ of the Hamas in Gaza, *Al-Risala* (The Message, the Mission):

I am confident that you will be facing for a long time to come the mirror of your history. Thus, you will be able to realize how oppressive, corrupt and sinful you have been, how many entities you have wiped out and how many states you have destroyed. Do you remember what you did in Korea and Vietnam? Do you recall how you turned Hiroshima and Nagasaki to piles of radioactive rubble, which contains death for the two destroyed cities, now and in the future? Not one single human being was left in those two cities that the fire has not deformed, nor a baby who was not torn to pieces, nor a bird that was not drowned in a sea of flames!!!

Oh America, the sword of oppression, arrogance and crime!! Do you remember how you smashed man’s humanity? Do you remember how you mistreated the blacks under your aegis? Can you describe for us the humiliation, disgust and contempt you meted out to those unfortunate people, whose only sin was that they were born to black parents? It was your white son who chained their necks in slavery, after he had hunted them down in Africa’s forests and along its coasts. They were born free, but were enslaved in your virgin land....

Did you ever ask yourself about what you did to the original inhabitants of your land, the Apache Indians? You trampled them under your white feet, and then used their name, the Apache, for the helicopter that carries death, destruction and annihilation to owners of rights, who dared to clamor for their right. This is a heinous and destructive conduct, which made us hate the Apache, before we could realize that they were themselves victims, just like us...

Did you ever ask yourself what was the sin of the children of al-Amariyya³ or Kana,⁴ or the reason for the continuous injustice you have been bringing down on Baghdad,⁵ Jerusalem and Jenin⁶ and on all those who do not see eye to eye with you, or refuse to walk the road of those sycophant and emasculated [Arab] rulers that you treat as “excellencies” and “majesties”? America, did you ever ask yourself why do you produce cluster bombs, nuclear and hydrogen bombs, biological weapons for mass killings, and F- 16 planes? Even should we accept the

contention that you do it for your own war preparedness, why do you put these weapons in the hands of every murderer, war criminal, and enemy of humanity, such as [Serbian war commander] Karadzic, [Prime Minister] Shamir and [Prime Minister] Sharon?

America, have you ever tasted horror, pain and affliction? These have been our lot for a long time, and they have filled our hearts, torn our guts and burned our skin. This has become daily routine for us, and carried out by your favorites with high proficiency. They indeed destroy our shacks in Jenin, and what has happened to us tonight there, is no different from what has happened to you...

Every so often Dick Cheney and his girlfriend, Condolezza Rice, set out to calumniate us, to castigate us, to incite against us. And we lined up and asked Allah to let you sip from the cup of humiliation, until Heaven responded. Now, America, consider whether you are able to forgo your fanaticism, your arrogance and your vanity... While we have accepted your mediation for the sake of peace... you have opened the gates of the Pentagon for every Jew to acquire a knife in order to slaughter us... You have planted yourself the seed of hatred for you... You did not think that the roots of those plants would grow to poke your eyes, even as they were placed on top of the World Trade Center... Those plants have also grown to hit at the heart of the Pentagon, the most heavily guarded facility on earth... Can't you see that the outgrown roots have reached the very eyes of your strong Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, who thought he was immune to revenge for what he did?

America, why did you evacuate the Sears Building, the way we do every night in order to flee your laser-eyed missiles? Are you scared, just like us? Do the giants also experience fear and run for their lives just as the oppressed do?... It turns out that you are weaker than the weak, and miserable like all the refugees whom you forced out of their villages on the Palestine seashore, together with their wives, children and torn clothes... America, where is your famous CIA which can detect even ants on a rock? You did not see the grievances of those who have struck you... for your blindness could only see through the eyes of traitors and spies... America, where is your second eye, the Mossad, which you always made us believe could detect anything?...

Can we expect that this time you will reconsider and avoid attacking a drug factory in Khartoum, or in Libya? Or will the appetite for revenge again blind your sight and lead you to discharge your wrath again on Al-Amariya or Bet Hanun [In the Gaza Strip]? What good did your Navy or ballistic missiles and nuclear reactors do to you? How have your satellites and AWACS, NATO and world leadership, come to your help? All those were paralyzed when the sword of vengeance got to your neck, in this unprecedented feat in world annals... You surely understand, that unless you repent from your corruption, you are bound to be hit once and again by the same perpetrators...

America, re-examine your decisions to cast hundreds of veto votes [at the Security Council of the UN], with a view of denying humanity its rights. Look at your humiliated face, and check whether it is not due to those votes. This will teach you to stand by justice and the righteous, even if they are weak, and then perhaps the dust of humiliation will be removed from your sad face...⁷

Much along the same lines the editorial of the same journal, also written by an educated and enlightened Dr Ghazi Hamad, calls America to task, stressing the rule that "punishment matches the crime", and wondering why the US had not learned any lesson from the killing of her Marines in Lebanon, the destruction of her HQ in the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, the explosion of her two Embassies in Africa, the incapacitation of the Cole in the Yemen and the attacks against her forces in Japan and the Gulf. Thus, says the editorial, America was bitterly "reaping today what she had sown in the hearts of millions".⁸ These first projections of the

blame on the victim, which showed no signs of sympathy for the families of the dead, and were probably boosted by the atmosphere of jubilation in the Palestinian street, soon gave way to denials that Arabs or Muslims could have had anything to do with the horrendous destruction. So, on the one hand, the Arabs were not displeased by the disaster that befell America, but on the other hand, when they began to grasp the gravity of the horror and to fear the wrath of America's response, they ran for cover: they had neither seen nor heard, it was all the fault of others: America itself, Israel and all sorts of evil powers-that-be.

A columnist in the London-based Arabic *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* put the blame squarely on President Bush and Secretary Powell. Bush, because he was "hardly elected" to his post, and he needed the drama to draw behind himself the bi-partisan support of America, and Powell due to his military background which conditions him to conduct war, not diplomacy.⁹ The next hypothesis was of course Israel/ Zionism/ the Jews, they being the "most likely to benefit" from the slaughter. The Jews/Zionists, who "control the world media, economy and politics", wished to press NATO and the Americans to "surrender even more thoroughly to Zionist ideology", and to promote further the "Zionist slogan of Islamic terrorism".¹⁰ World Zionism was accused by other Arab and Muslim journalists, who could see the imprint of the American-Zionist-Israeli "holy alliance" on this affair, although they implied that the "perpetrators" rushed to accuse "international terrorism", by which they meant an Arab and Islamic. One columnist advocated a firm stand of the Arabs to wash their hands clean from any accusation, and to transcend their defensive stand and pass to the offensive.¹¹

Now that Israel was found to be the culprit, the act of terrorism becomes horrible, inhuman and unthinkable, epithets that fit in with "legendary Zionist cruelty". Another Arab writer claimed, that only the Jews themselves would not be afraid to be caught, because no one "would dare accuse them and incur the danger of being blamed for bringing upon them a new Holocaust." Therefore, they are the only people who "hide their crimes and are sure that no one would ask them to account for their deeds".¹² The author did not explain, however, why the Jews needed to hide their deeds if they were not held accountable in any case. Another Jordanian columnist was "personally certain that no Arabs or Muslims stood behind this act", because it was the Zionists organizations who were interested to perpetrate the crime in order to preoccupy the world while they destroyed the Aqsa Mosque,¹³ while his compatriot imputed the deed to either Christian fundamentalist groups who support Israel or the Israeli Mossad, which reputedly pursues "evil and dangerous avenues".¹⁴ The organ of the Muslim Brothers, *Afaq `Arabiyya*, after exclaiming that "no one in the East has shed tears for the Americans", castigated America for "wishing to teach the world who is Allah", and for

preferring the monkeys [the Jews] over other humans whom they mistreated , for supporting homosexuals and interest [in banking, which is prohibited by Islam], and forgetting that no one can escape Allah's punishment, and He indeed came from an unexpected direction and struck their hearts with fear.¹⁵

A Syrian columnist advanced the theory that this was a belated vengeance by the Japanese for Hiroshima and Nagasaki.¹⁶ A Palestinian author, who admitted that there were many potential candidates for this act of terror, who suffered, like the Palestinians, from American and Western policy, nevertheless counseled the Americans to look for the perpetrators far afield from the Middle East, because "not all those interested to counter American policy have also the means to perpetrate an act of this sort".¹⁷ Not a word of sympathy or compassion for the victims, just an expression of Arab helplessness in carrying out such a feat due to the scarcity of wherewithal at their disposal. A Lebanese reporter raised the idea that young computer hackers may have taken over the computerized air-control system and "directed the airplanes to painful targets".¹⁸ Another reached the conclusion that since the Arabs did not stand to gain

anything from the horror, they were not the likely perpetrators, but that others, like the Israelis, the Mafiosi, the Russians or the Chinese who oppose the American anti-missile defense program, or perhaps a fundamentalist group in the US, must have concocted it.¹⁹

A pro-Arab British journalist, Patrick Seale, who was considered the court biographer of Hafez al-Assad, also joined the choir of denials in the Arab media. As against his doubt that Arabs or Muslims could have perpetrated this act, he posited the many “massacres” committed in the past by the US and Israel. He also embraced the theory that “ecological terrorists” might have mounted the plot to deter the process of globalization. He elected to put aside the question of the immorality of “suicide terrorists”, and confine himself to inquiring about their efficacy, and evinces some understanding of acts of terrorism which impel desperate and oppressed people to seek vengeance, and to establish a “balance of terror”, which means that, for example, Palestinians threaten to kill Israelis, if the latter kill Palestinians, and that is an act of deterrence. Therefore, says he, there is no doubt that the perpetrators of the Twin Tower atrocity meant to establish a balance of terror with the Americans. He did not elaborate, however upon whether Bin Laden was appointed by the Vietnamese or the Japanese dead, or the Palestinians for that matter, to revenge them.²⁰

The state-controlled Egyptian press, with some exceptions, condemned the attacks against the US and also the Arabs and Muslims who had evinced joy at the misfortune that had befallen America, but it also used the occasion to call upon the US to alter its policy in the Middle East. At the same time, many Egyptian media, including those toeing the government line, spoke about “American and Israeli terrorism” and predicted the “fall” of the US from her superpower position. A columnist from mainstream *Al-Akhbar*, who had in the past manifested support for Hitler, Ahmed Ragab, could not contain his joy over the disaster. He wrote: “I know a person, extremely wealthy, scarily influential, who rules like a tyrant, imposes his will but loses everybody’s love. Suddenly, out of the dark, he was painfully struck on his behind. He turned around but only saw ghosts.”²¹

The opposition press, which does not toe the line, but would not dare publish, for example, a personal critique of Mubarak, took the liberty to explode overtly in delight, as if human compassion had anything to do with political opposition to any rule:

Let me state things directly and honestly: I am happy about what has happened to America, and I am elated about this high rate of casualties there. They can accuse me however they wish, but this will neither change nor diminish one iota from the happiness and delight that have taken me over, and no one can cause me to take back my words under any circumstances and for whatever reasons. All those innocent dead are the victims of the 50-year long American barbarism and terrorism... Just count the numbers of the victims of American weapons around the world and compare them to the figure of the killed in the US now, and you will discover that the latter is hardly 1% of the former. Therefore, I have the right to be happy; I have the right to be joyful, for the Americans have finally tasted the bitter flavor of death...²²

The editor of that harrowing “columnist” also insisted on his “right” to celebrate, because that was the first step “in the one-thousand mile journey towards the rout of America by knock-out”.²³ Another columnist, this time a woman whom one would have expected to show more sensitivity to human suffering, also states in no uncertain terms, her elation:

I cannot hide my feelings, nor restrain my joy. For the first time in my life I can observe with my own eyes the collapse of American arrogance, tyranny, vanity and evil. For the first time in my life I am asking myself: Has Allah finally listened to the prayers of mothers and the supplications of the victims in Palestine, Iraq and Libya...Am I expected to be hypocritical, like all the others, condemn the killing of civilians, express my sorrow about the American and other

victims, and pray and donate blood for them? Why are we trying to satisfy the Master in the White House of our innocence? Throughout history we have never been caught red-handed with the blood of the innocent: Indians, slaves, Vietnamese, Palestinians, Iraqis. I want no alliance with America; I have had enough with the shame brought upon us in Iraq. I wish neither to pray for the Americans nor donate my blood to them. I do not want to condemn what has happened. It is America that killed them, as it had killed us in Iraq, and as it is continuing to slaughter us in Palestine....²⁴

Other columnists called upon the US to “withdraw from the world, both as thieves and as policemen”, and to choose between “respecting other nations or die”. There were writers who stated that they were not happy for the death of civilians, but for the fact that “America’s honor had become a mop to trample upon”.²⁵ The peak of jubilation came, ironically, in the organ of the Egyptian “Liberal” Party, which rejoiced over the rout that America suffered which demonstrated that she was a “paper tiger”.²⁶ Very tellingly, one such “liberal” author complained about the pressures exerted on him and his likes by the powers-that – be, to contain his joy:

We were banned from demonstrating the happiness and delight we feel so as not to hurt American feelings, although in this case, expressions of joy are a national and religious obligation. For America is Israel’s protector, and when we watch her crumble instantly, and her heroes run away in horror, to prohibit public jubilation is an unbearable burden. But we were deprived of it and forced to show sympathy to our executioners.²⁷

Sarcasm too was resorted to by some writers in order to “expose the hypocrisy of those who are now whining for the American losses”. One of them suggested that he could have hired the services of a professional weeper, but no one would agree “even if he paid her \$100 for each tear”. How could a columnist, asks he, who believes that “America did get what she deserved for sucking the blood of other nations” escape the lies of the hypocrites who “volunteer to shed tears, to donate blood and to put their intelligence apparatuses in the service of their cardboard Master”? And more: “If you are killed by a thug, that is unfortunate; but if you are forced to attend his funeral, that is the peak of humiliation. Sorry, America, we have no tears left to participate in your sorrow.”²⁸ These unbearably horrific words were surpassed by another writer who described his watching live the horror as moments of

a beautiful and glamorous hell, the best and dearest of my life. I saw the towers, the walls, those symbols of power which constituted a modern and scary monster, penetrated by a courageous hornet... The hornet stung that mythological monster, who looked horrific as he cried, shouted and collapsed like a hell. All the media who ply to America, broadcast once and again those pictures, that all the past and future generations will envy us for having been privileged to witness...²⁹

These harrowing remarks were not criticized by anyone of stature in the Arab or Islamic worlds, because all those were busy containing similar outbursts of callous rage and furious indecency in their own countries, lest their “national interest” be harmed by the exposure of those statements to international scrutiny. Many decent Muslims were certainly mortified by what has happened, but not all necessarily because of the human tragedy involved. Any number of them are embarrassed that so much killing has been occasioned in the name of their faith, or that so many violent movements across the Muslim world purport to represent Islam or to urge the believers to Jihad against non-Muslims; others fear that the tragedy might backfire on them, elicit international hatred of Islam or pass a negative blanket judgment on it. And if this is the situation in the countries most closely associated as “allies” of America,

how much more so in overtly hostile environments to it, where words of compassion, or of criticism of the popular mood, are not even allowed, such as Iran, Iraq, the Sudan, Libya and Afghanistan, and among any number of other Muslim and Arab countries and organizations, notably Muslim fundamentalist groups where hostility to the West is very deeply embedded.

Sheikh Yusef al-Qardawi, one of the senior spiritual leaders of the Muslim Brothers, and an authoritative doctor of the Holy Law in Sunni Islam in general, who was one of the first to sanction “suicide” bombing, had argued that the martyr who goes to his death for the sake of Islam, as a matter of fact wages jihad as an active agent who seeks the extermination of the enemy of Islam, therefore he is justified in launching his attacks even though he might kill himself in the process. However, while in previous bombing incidents against Israel he was more permissive of wanton killing of the enemy in general, the horror of September 11th apparently prompted him to effectuate some fine tuning to this rule: he said that the Shari`a Law was against indiscriminate killing, and that only enemy combatants who carried weapons were free prey for the Muslim Jihad fighter, while innocent civilians were to be spared. He even stated that those who commit this sort of atrocity cannot be called Muslims. Nonetheless, this ruling is mitigated by so many caveats as to make it ineffective, or at the very least questionable. His main points were:

1. It is the West which turned Islam into its enemy since the Crusades, by coveting Muslim lands and resources, while Islam, in his words, did nothing to justify its enemy status. How about the Islamic conquests in the Middle Ages, which threatened Europe and the entire civilized world at the time, or the present-day onslaught on Christians throughout the Muslim world, or the multitude of wars and acts of terror perpetrated in the name of Islam. He did not elaborate on these;
2. If the West attacks Muslim countries we cannot enter into any alliance with it, unless it is proven that they authored or sponsored the act of terrorism. Just to harbor terrorists does not mean that the harboring country can be accused of participating in the murder. Exactly as one cannot attack Egypt or Algeria just because Sheikh Abdul-Rahman or some Algerian have done something, so is Afghanistan exempt of any attack;
3. This attack against the US is the fruit of hatred, whose roots have to be investigated, for if Bin Laden is killed, another thousand like him will emerge. Is this what the world desires? Besides, neither the Taliban nor Bin Laden could have had any relation to this;
4. The Shari`a Law forbids collaboration with non-Muslims against other Muslims. Such collaboration is a sin and an act of aggression. Moreover, Shari`a Law obliges every Muslim country to rush to the help of any other Muslim state under attack, in money and fighters.
5. It is also prohibited by Islamic Law to surrender a Muslim to non-Muslims, for this is opposed to common sense, since Islam does not recognize any geographic borders, race, color or language differences between Muslims. They are all one *umma* (nation) dwelling in *Dar al-Islam* (Abode of Islam), united in its belief in Islam and in its Islamic fraternity.
6. It makes no sense that Pakistan should assist foreigners to invade its Muslim neighbor, no Muslim scholar would countenance such a prospect, and I do not understand why the Pakistani scholars of the Holy Law can allow this to pass;
7. If Bin Laden should be proved guilty, I have no objection to have him handed over to Muslim justice in Egypt or Saudi Arabia. But who can prove that he recruited, trained,

financed and dispatched the culprits? This would be very difficult, for terrorists exist all over the world and it is not inevitable that Bin Laden or the Qa`ida should be involved;

8. There is no doubt that the Zionist entity is the one which stood to gain most from this crime; the US supports Israel, and Israel is the greatest terrorist in the world;
9. There are two lines of terrorism: the one pursued by people who defend their rights and homeland, which is sanctioned by the Qur`an, as the Believers are enjoined to “cast fear”³⁰ in the enemy’s heart; this is the kind of terrorism practiced by the Hamas, the Fat`h and other Palestinian movements who defend their land. If this is terrorism, then this is the best kind of terrorism, because it is a Jihad for the sake of Allah. The other kind of terrorism, which is illegitimate, is Israel’s terror, which kills illicitly and desecrates Muslim holy sites. But even though the US supports this Israeli terrorism, we should not attack civilians in the US. We could, instead, boycott America and compel it to retreat as we did in Durban.

In other words, terrorism in the eyes of the venerated Sheikh, who is looked up to in vast sections of Sunni Islam, is not a mode of operation that is absolutely forbidden under any circumstances, but it all depends who does the killing and against whom: When Muslims fight for their “rights”, which they alone are authorized to determine, then a “human bomb” is permissible even among innocent civilians; if the enemy of Islam defends itself against Muslim onslaught, it is he who is the terrorist, even when he uses more discriminatory modes of fighting than the Muslims would adopt. In either case, the definition of who is the terrorist, what is the subject matter that can be deemed as justifying Muslim “suicide bombing”, what is the criterion for morality, right, justice, crime etc. are all determined at the discretion of Muslim Law, and not matters of universal human rights, justice or internationally agreed definitions and conventions.

What is appalling is that these points of view are not only shared by journalists who shape public opinion or are shaped by it, and Muslim fundamentalists in the Arab and Islamic worlds whose uncompromising anti-Western stance we have explored, but also by people who have intellectual pretenses, such as writers, and politicians who set the tone of discourse in their societies. As has been already pointed out above, many Arab and Muslim leaders who nominally joined the American coalition, or have been knocking at its door, due to the promises it may hold, have set themselves on a collision course with their peoples and in the long run may have undermined their own regimes. But the others, who either openly loath America and its coalition, or see no prospects of joining it, do not mince their words when they analyze their perception of the September 11th events. So much so that an Egyptian movie critic, Samir Farid, wrote that he was “ashamed of the commentaries I read in the Egyptian press...; in towns and villages of Egypt processions marched exclaiming the abominable slogan ‘We shall redeem you with our soul and blood, O bin Laden!’”³¹

Thus, the Chair of the Arab Writers’ Association, found no other place than the *Literary Weekly* (Damascus), to give vent to his disturbing trend of thought which was found to merit depiction in harrowing detail in a supposedly humanistic artistic journal.

...I ache the death of innocent people, but the day the power symbols of America collapsed on 11 September reminded me of the daily funerals of so many innocent people in occupied Palestine...; of the day of the American-British aggression against Tripoli (Libya), when they tried to destroy the house of its leader while he was asleep, but they only succeeded in burying his daughter under the ruins; of the oppression of peoples in Korea and Vietnam... So, my soul was filled with disgust and bitterness towards a country which failed to register anything but a history of oppression and support to the racism of Nazi Zionism and apartheid in South Africa, a

country which has itself founded its “civilization” [quotation marks in the original] on the robbery of other nations and the imposition of tyranny, in the name of fighting tyranny...

The American Administration, which is ruled by Zionist decisions and supports the occupation and racist deeds of the “Israelis” [quotation marks in the original], have numbed my feelings. The American Administration has contaminated my soul, and when I saw the multitudes running away in terror, in the streets of New York and Washington, I was telling myself: “let them taste from the cup they have forced upon all nations and upon us in particular...”

When the Twin Towers collapsed... I felt as if I were extricated from the bottom of a tomb, as if I were hovering over the arrogant mythological symbol of American imperialism, which has covered up the crimes it had committed... My lungs filled with pure air, and I breathed deeper than ever before... Even when I thought about the innocent who were buried under the rubble... I was sorry that my humanity had been soiled by Zionist America and world Zionism... But minutes later I learned new facts from the media: that Arabs and Muslims are accused as the culprits, and threats were voiced calling for revenge against them...

This has returned me to the spiritual tomb where I was submerged by aggression, arrogance and distortion of facts. But my inner stamina which saved me from drowning, enabled me to breathe again over the surface: we shall live, be victorious and bring justice to the world because we are ready to sacrifice ourselves for our existence, our rights, justice and the world's humanity... The American people has to wake up to the image that his policy has created of him, that is a dirty policy that does not bring respect to its initiator.. That moment of 11 September has to produce a re-examination of policy, strategy and ideas... Maybe even the American brain will understand that military and economic power deprives him of true humanity...

Americans have to understand that their commitment to support racist Zionism and its Nazi deeds... causes the entire Arab nation to rejoice when America suffers death and destruction... The symbolism of destroying one of the five wings of the Pentagon and of killing one thousand people there, is far more important than the fact that it continues to exist and to threaten other nations and especially Afghanistan and Bin Laden. This means that it is enough that one person has decided to die for his honor, rights, nation, faith and civilization, in order to attain his goal even against a superpower and in the heart of its territory... Consequently, if nations wake up and evince this kind of will power, and set out to resist tyranny, dictators, racists, arrogance and imperialists who drink their blood... then it is easy to imagine what will happen then...

...American policy causes hatred in support of racist occupiers, whose entire history is shameful, bloody, destructive, scandalous and full of plots against others. The hands of their leaders are soaked in the blood that was spilled by their racism, which had collaborated with the Nazis. The [the Jews] distort history, religious faith and facts. They despise Gentiles and Prophets, crucify them, and treat other humans like animals which were born in human shape in order to serve the Jews...

Something has collapsed in America, and this is the beginning of America's collapse as the sole superpower... This collapse will be followed by the building of a new base for the victory of the oppressed and miserable people,... for all tyranny will come to an end, force will be routed by force, and there will be no limit to human will when it determines to take on the arrogance of force...

Sure as I am that many of the victims do not deserve compassion, due to their belonging to the blood suckers of other people, but one should not rejoice at the loss of human life. My

humanity, that American and Zionists policy have attempted to numb, gains the upper hand in the final analysis over hatred and hostility...³²

Hypocrisy Masquerading as a Policy

In the face of these explosions of inhumanity, that were rather popular among the Arabs and Muslims, contrary to the reserve of their rulers who huddled to be embraced by the American coalition, the isolation and illegitimacy of the rulers grow ever more acute, insofar as they do not represent their public opinion on the one hand, and are unable to contain it in the long run on the other, to the point of attaining the brink of being swept away when it erupts in earnest. One of their devices to walk the tight rope between popular resentment and their inability to respond to the American challenge to join the world war against terrorism, and their need to do the latter, is their attempt to draw differences between various kinds of terrorism. Theirs is considered, of course, “national liberation”, while moves of self-defense by the US, Israel or any country that does not toe their line, is “state terrorism”, or simply “true terrorism”. Even those who recognize America’s legitimate anger are afraid lest it retaliate in “illegitimate terms”, thus hurting its own and others’ interests.³³ All this rhetoric can be simply construed, however, as the third stage in Arab and Islamic reactions to the horror of September 11th.

The first stage was of unlimited joy and a bursting sense of revenge at the sight of what seemed as defeated and hapless America. Then, as the voices of harsh retribution rose among the American administration and public, and the growing evidence unfolded of Arab and Islamic involvement in the disaster, denial set in: suddenly the Arabs knew nothing and heard nothing, and all insinuations about their possible connection were categorized as “bias” against them. Finally, when the culprits were framed, and concrete plans started to crystallize regarding the targets for retaliation, differences between various kinds of terrorism were found, according to who performed them, not to the mode of their execution. In this fashion, the grotesque situation arose where some of the champions of terrorism began to condemn it (not its perpetrators), meaning the terrorism of others, and so they thought that they could gain the status of “coalition members”, and see themselves removed from the terrorist list of the State Department.

Because of that sequence of events, the Arabs and Muslims have been pressing for UN involvement, where they have an automatic command of one third of the votes, to re-define terrorism and to commandeer any international measure taken against the perpetrators of the New York and Washington acts of terrorism. They do not hide their view that in the case that their position is adopted, they would be able to indict Israel for her “crimes” which amount to terrorism in their eyes, while their brand of terrorism against her would gain international legitimacy, since in their view it is the Arabs who have “always fought against terrorism”. Therefore, according to this logic, it would be futile to search for Arab or Muslim culprits. For even if Bin Laden threatened America, this does not make him any more susceptible in their eyes than, say, Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel, who had once, in their view, “threatened to burn Washington”.³⁴ The attempt to deviate world attention from the arrested Arab and Muslim suspects in America, and from the direct indictment of Afghanistan and Bin Laden, naturally put many Arab and Muslim leaders on the “Israeli track”, claiming that since the Zionists stood to gain the most from “blackening the faces of Muslims across the world”, they were the primary suspects as perpetrators of that horror.

Towards a Global Policy

President Bush was right in not only declaring a world war against terrorism, but also in coining a whole new vocabulary for dealing with it: its initiators were “wanted”, like in the Old West; they were to be “smoked out of their hiding holes”; they were to be targeted, searched after and destroyed; their protectors who harbored them were to be punished, collateral damage and casualties notwithstanding; the war against them was to be sustained, protracted, determined and all-encompassing until they were caught, defeated, eliminated or brought to justice, and their bases destroyed, their finances dried up, their front-organizations disbanded and their supporters punished or otherwise coaxed to abandon them.

But that kind of policy cannot succeed unless it is global not only in its goals, ways and means, but also in its definitions, norms, standards and modalities. It is impossible to win, for example, if other acts of terrorism that do not concern America directly are dubbed “local” (ETA in Spain, Corsica against the French, the IRA against Britain or the Hamas, the PLO, the Hizbullah or the Tanzim against Israel), and therefore unworthy of the global fight against terrorism. It is also impossible to win, if some acts of terror are accorded “understanding” and various “justifications”. Terrorism is a violent activity against civilians, for whatever reason; therefore, while one can “understand” the struggle of the IRA or the ETA against the security forces of Britain and Spain whom they perceive as the occupiers of their countries, the moment they blow up car-bombs in the middle of Londonderry and San Sebastian, wantonly killing and maiming civilians, they become terrorists who should be combated without relenting.

Defeating terrorism will not succeed, if the vocabulary devised by the President of the US is made invalid when it comes to places other than America. The US has been rightly targeting the heads of the Qa`ida, using airplanes to bombard their bases, sending incursions into their territory to “smoke them out”, cutting off their sources of financing and supplies; but when it puts down and condemns the exact replicas of those actions, when pursued by others, as “assassinations of leaders”, as resorting to “disproportionate force”, as “invading others’ territory”, or as “depriving others of their lawful income”, this does not sound like a universal war, that is launched on universally agreed standards, according to universal criteria. If the war is indeed one of good against evil, then evil cannot be allowed to masquerade as good, nor terrorism as a “war of liberation”. If the clear and ironclad definitions voiced by President Bush are allowed to erode, because of temporary considerations, then the moral basis of the entire American campaign will grow so slim and shaky as to arouse domestic and international opposition to it.

When America searches for allies in its worldwide endeavor, the staunchest among them can only be counted among democracies whose committed leaders have a staying power based on their legitimacy in government. Tyrants, monarchs, military juntas, who have no popular base to their rule, not only cannot pledge a long-standing and unrelenting support to America, but their very collaboration with the West arouses the opposition to both their “participation” in the war effort, and also to their personal hold on government. The fact that the only committed allies of America are democracies, while the others shrink from “attacking fellow Muslim states”, demand “evidence” of Bin Laden’s culpability, insist on novel definitions of terrorism which would sanction theirs (e.g. the Islamic terror against Kashmir or Israel), only points to this trend of thought. Instead of President Bush categorizing the countries of the world into “with us or against us”, something that caused all of them to scramble for shelter under the wings of the virtual “coalition”, he ought to invite all the countries which fought terrorism and eradicated it to join in, while cautioning the others which did not, to straighten

up their act, or else... There would have been no stronger incentive for them to conform, and to embrace the American definitions of terrorism.

The fact that almost all terrorist movements in the world today are Muslim, and all the universal organizations and networks among them are the produce of fundamentalist Islamic thought, ought to cause us review not the “root reasons” for this terrorism, as the Saudi Prince suggested to the brave Mayor of New York who refused to sell out his principles; but to review the childish, uninformed and untruthful declaration by many Western leaders that “Islam is a religion of peace.” If it is peaceful, why are so many atrocities done in its name? Every Muslim and Western leader repeats the mantra that “the acts of terror are un-Islamic.” If they knew something about the division of the world into *Dar-al-Harb* (the Abode of War) and *Dar al-Islam* (The Abode of Islam) that is brandished by the Muslim fundamentalists today to justify their Jihad (Holy War, including terrorism) against the non-Muslims, maybe their spines would shudder at the thought that this core concept is part and parcel of political Islam, not a new invention of the fundamentalists.

At the same time that Muslims across the globe trample American flags and intimidate Americans with horrific acts of terrorism, long lines are formed in the Muslim world to apply for student visas in the West or ask for outright immigration there (yes, that hated West). But those who grant the visas are not aware, or pretend not to understand, that those young students and the rest of the migrants, while they may innocently wish to study or to better their lot economically, are the very stuff that will turn its acquired knowledge against the countries that were courteous enough to dispense it to them, and the very masses who will go on the rampage against the democratic governments that gave them shelter. After all, most of the suspects arrested by the FBI are Egyptians and Saudis, from the very countries that are supposed to be the US’ closest allies in the Muslim world. The fact that America failed to act against Mubarak when he gave shelter to the terrorists of the Achille Lauro and denied it, or against the Saudis who disburse huge sums of money to support the Hamas, could have been interpreted by their citizens dwelling in America and elsewhere that license was given to acts of terror, or at least that the US would look the other way when the terrorists were citizens or originals of the “moderate” regimes befriended by America. In the year of the *intifada*, hundreds of cases were recorded in all Western democracies, of desecration of Jewish sites, of torching synagogues and destroying cemeteries. Those same Muslim migrants, if not checked, will turn against their new governments and compatriots, as the events of September 11th have shown.

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Endnotes

- ¹ Raphael Israeli, “The Islamikaze and Their Significance”, *Journal of Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Autumn 1997), pp. 96-121.
- ² Israel TV, Channel 1 (in Hebrew), December 9, 1994, 18:00 GMT.
- ³ The hundreds of civilians who were accidentally killed in a bomb shelter in Baghdad during the American bombings of the Gulf War (January 1991).
- ⁴ The hundred or so civilians killed by an Israeli stray bomb in Southern Lebanon during the Israeli operation there in Spring 1996.

- 5 The continued bombings by the US and the UK of Iraqi targets in the no-flight zone established there in the aftermath of the Gulf War.
- 6 The retaliatory raids by Israel, using American-made weapons, against Palestinian targets.
- 7 *Al-Risalah* (Palestinian Authority), September 13, 2001, cited (in Hebrew) by MEMRI (The Middle East Media Research Institute), *Terror in America*, No 1.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* (London), September 14, 2001, extracted by MEMRI (Hebrew), *Terror in America*, No 4.
- 10 *Al-Dustur* (Jordan), September 13, 2001. Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 *Al-Ra`i* (Jordan), September 13, 2001, ibid.
- 14 *Al Dustur* (Jordan), September 13, 2001, ibid.
- 15 *Afaq `Arabiyya* (Egypt) September 19, 2001.
- 16 *Tishrin* (Syria), September 13, 2001, ibid.
- 17 *Al-Ayyam* (Palestinian Authority), September 13, 2001, ibid.
- 18 *Al-Safir* (Lebanon), September 13, 2001, ibid.
- 19 *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* (London), September 13, 2001, ibid.
- 20 *Al-Hayat* (London), September 13, 2001, MEMRI No 5.
- 21 *Al-Akhbar* (Egypt), September 17, 2001, MEMRI, No 8
- 22 *Al-`Arabi* (Egypt), September 16, 2001, ibid.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Ibid
- 26 *Al-Ahrar* (Egypt), September 14, 2001, Memri (Hebrew), Report No. 8.
- 27 *Al-Ahrar* (Egypt), September 17, 2001, ibid.
- 28 *Al-Ushbu`* (Egypt), September 17, 2001, ibid.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 The Arabic term is *irhab* which translates the modern word of terrorism.
- 31 *Al-Hayat* (London), October 3, 2001.
- 32 *Al-Ushbu` al Adabi* (*The Literary Weekly* – Damascus), September 15, 2001, MEMRI, Special Report No. 10.
- 33 See, for example the article by Dr Adnan `Amran, the Syrian Minister of Information, in his article in *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* (London), September 21, 2001. Ibid. No 11.
- 34 Ibid.