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Facts and Fables in the Mythology of Islamic and Palestinian Terrorism

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Executive Summary

Myths and fables abound concerning the origin and characteristics of the most lethal threat to the existence of the Free World today – fanatical Islamic terrorism – *Jihad*. This paper explores some of the fallacies, including:

- Hideous Lies as Successful Propaganda;
- The Post-Colonialism Syndrome;
- Homicide Bombings: The Poverty and Education Syndrome;
- Islam and Modernism: The Civic Culture Syndrome;
- Islam and Modernism: The Democratic and Developmental Syndrome.

The aim is to expose the ignorance of the world regarding the reality of Islamic terrorism, fanaticism and its real objectives.

The Free World needs an urgent wake-up call as a warning that it must deal with this lethal phenomenon, immediately, before it's too late, and fighting off this danger exacts a too-high price in human lives.

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Islam is a cultural civilization, a totally committed way of life and a missionary of an ever-expanding religion. Religious Islamic classical and modernist leaders put it simply:

It is the nature of Islam to dominate, not to be dominated; to rule and not to be ruled; to impose its belief system on all the nations, not to be imposed religiously; to be superior and not to be inferior; to extend its power to the entire planet, not to be governed by infidels.

From their vantage point, the *Qur`an* supersedes all other Scriptures – past, present, and future; the Islamic community, the *Ummah*, was chosen by *Allah* above all other nations, and it is its duty to take possession of its heritage and impose it upon the world, so that *Allah*'s word will reign supreme.

This is the optimal “perfect” vision. However, in reality, the situation is different, and the huge gap between the vision and the situation is the cause of their reactionary and violent terrorism. The phenomenon of the “return to Islam”² has many names, according to the observer, however The Islamic Apocalyptic Global *Jihad* Groups reject them all, and refer to themselves simply as Muslims or *mujahhidun* (warriors of *jihad*) in the way of *Allah*, and use the *Qur`anic* commandments as the legitimacy for their activities:

He has sent down his Book which contains some verses that are categorical and basic to the Book, and others allegorical. But those who are twisted of mind look for verses metaphorical, seeking deviation and giving to them interpretations of their own. But none knows their meaning except *Allah*...only those who have wisdom understand.³

No less crucial is their commentary to the Islamic commandment, as an impetus to their radical activities:

O believers, do not forbid the good things *Allah* has made lawful for you.⁴

The Islamic Apocalyptic Global *Jihad* Groups call their organizational activity “an Islamic awakening” (*al-sahwah al-Islamiyah*), or “the call to Islam” (*al-da`wah*), that is the propagation of Islam. For them, it is the right way in the service of Islam to be called a *mujahhidun*, and their activity *da`wah*, since they believe that Islam deserves – and is even its destiny – to rule the whole world – by military means or by persuasion. Peace will be established on Earth only after all people and all nations have submitted to Islamic domination. Chris Waddy quotes a Palestinian sociologist, Ali Issa Othman, who states his conviction that

The spread of Islam was military. There is a tendency to apologize for this, and we should not. It is one of the injunctions of the *Qur`an*, that you must fight for the spreading of Islam.⁵

A) In the Eye of the Beholder: Hideous Lies as Successful Propaganda

The Muslims' own image is that they are peace lovers and peacemakers. Islam preaches love and cooperation and not violence and war. Yet, what causes the Muslim peace lovers and peacemakers to change their approach and become violent and aggressive? The Islamic

answer is very clear: when Muslims are attacked severely and violence is used against them, then it is their right to fight oppression and evil. So, from the Muslim point of view, they can use violence and war as a defensive and retaliatory policy. This is the inherent issue. The Arab-Muslims attack at almost every possible opportunity; at any circumstances with all their means, by stating self-defense, and they only act against oppression and retaliate to aggression. At the same time, they paralyze the Free World and shut its mouth by accusing it of being racists and colonialists. This two-fold strategy of attacking aggressively and violently while at the same time, accusing the other, is one of the salient characteristics of the Arab-Muslim fanatics.

The loose and vague definitions of the situation, when and why they can attack aggressively, depend only on their perspective and interpretation. It is their own decision to commit any action against the others, whether they are infidels or polytheists, in the Islamic abode (*dar al-Islam*) or in the war abode (*dar al-harb*),⁶ whenever they find it possible. By stating that they only retaliate against oppression or act against aggression, and to defend themselves, their religion and their land, according to the principles of self-defense, they justify committing any act of violence and terrorism against the other, being non-Muslim, or even Muslim, as the case in the Sudan, in Iraq, and in Algeria. The Tunisian intellectual and thinker, al-'Afif al-Akhdar, analyzes and criticizes Arab cultural values and characters:

All the peoples of the world are moving forward along the course of history towards globalization, a society of knowledge, and political modernization – all but the Arabs, who race in the opposite direction. The Muslims are moving with rapid steps from backwardness into sub-backwardness, and from poverty into sub-poverty. The peoples of mankind are governed by the law of progress, while the Muslims are governed by the law of regression. This deep-rooted culture of tribal vengeance in Arab collective consciousness is a fundamental driving force, which has transmuted this consciousness into a fixated, vengeful mentality, instead of transforming it into far-sighted thought and self-criticism. The policy of vengeance that prevails especially among the influential elites has banished any rational policy from the domestic decision-making, just as people afflicted with depression.⁷

All four Islamic schools of law (*hanafi*, *shafi'i*, *maliki*, *hanbali*) and most of Islamic classical exegetes view Planet Earth as consisting of two zones: the abode of Islam/peace (*dar al-Islam*) and the abode of war (*dar al-harb*) or the abode of infidels (*dar al-kufr*).⁸ Between these two there is potentially a continuous war, and as a dynamic relation system, Islam is the initiator, the motivational power. The Islamic peace zone consists of three parts: first, “the two *harams*”, the nucleus of faith in Mecca and Medina, in which non-Muslims cannot live; second, the Hijaz region of Arabia, because its holy location, in which non-Muslims can travel for business reasons, but not permitted to live permanently, and not to be buried there; and third, the lands which were conquered by Islam through the years, in which non-Muslims can reside as *dhimmi* (protected people).

Indeed, Arab-Muslim groups and organizations are violent culturally and politically, yet, they cover it by the religion's legitimization, always using religious argumentations as an excuse for their violence. Whether they butcher and cut off heads of infidels of the West and terrorize Shi'ites in Iraq and massacre black Muslims in the Sudan; or when they organize an Islamic conference in Germany and call for the elimination of all infidels in Europe; or when they establish Islamic institutions, a part of many mosques in Western states for the preaching (*da'wah*) to Islam; or when they demolish the Twin Towers; or when they commit all acts of horrible homicide bombings and terrorism against Israel – they claim they do it for the defense of their religion and as a retaliation to their enemies' racism and oppression. They

commit the atrocious and horrible acts of terror and violence, and still see them as a defense of their religion, their life and their land.

Another issue is the astonishing fact that Muslims and Arab exegetes, preachers and researchers speak only in complete and absolute terms about their religion's values, without the slightest criticism and doubts. "Islam is absolutely a religion of peace and harmony"; "Islam is totally devoted to promote peace around the world"; "*jihad* is absolutely and totally defined in terms of defense"; "aggression is used only rarely, when the Muslims have no other choice to defend their religion"; "there is nothing in Islam that is against tolerance, democracy, human compassion, love, and peaceful relations." One finds these slogans abound in books, article, and media resources. They are so pervasive and totalistic, that it becomes almost impossible to argue and debate with them, so that one cannot even cite facts. An example (out of many) are Ahmad Ali's words:

Almost all Muhammadan and European writers think that the religious war of aggression is one of the tenets of Islam, prescribed by the *Qur'an* for the purpose of proselytizing. I do not find any such doctrine in the *Qur'an* or in Muhammad's preachings. His sole mission was to enlighten the Arabs to the true worship of one God. These have nothing to do with popular *jihad* and exterminating the idolaters. All the verses of the *Qur'an* relate only to defensive war without exception, and none of them has any reference to make warfare offensively. All fighting injunctions in the *Qur'an* are only in self defense, none of them have any reference to make warfare offensively. There are several passages in the *Qur'an* which forbid taking offensive measures and enjoin only defensive war.⁹

In the booklet, "The Basics of Islam at a Glance", prepared by The Islamic Cultural Center in Tempe, Arizona, we read:

There is no historical proof that Islam was spread by the sword. Even non-Muslim scholars now admit that this is nothing more than a vicious myth which cannot be substantiated by historical fact. Islam is a religion of love and peace and forgiveness, based on *Qur'anic* commandments.

This is the political language of the Islamists, and indeed all Muslim scholars and spokesmen. Yet, if this is the situation, what about the processes of Arabization and Islamization imposed by the Arabs after the invasion from Arabia, by conquering the vast areas from Morocco to India? Between the years 710 and 712, Islamic troops were battling *jihad* wars in the territories of India and China in the east, and Spain and France in the west. Were these wars of *jihad* defensive? Were they fought for the defense of the Islamic religion and the Arab-Islamic land originated in Arabia?¹⁰ The same are the Islamic conquests during the Ottoman Empire, in the 15th and the 16th centuries. Indeed, these *jihad* wars had nothing to do with defense of the Muslim religion or Arab souls, but were all aggressive-expansionist. For Donner, the decision to launch the invasion out of Arabia was conducted under a religious banner and intrinsic part of Islamic doctrine and ideology, as a compulsory *jihad*.¹¹

These historical facts which show the radical nature of Islamic exegesis, are also revealed in the claims of Murad Hoffmann, a German who converted to Islam, with regard to democracy, modernism, human rights, equality, women, and other issues.¹² As to the issue of tolerance vs. violence, he declares:

In almost every *sura*, the *Qur'an* also encourages man to contemplate, to use his powers of reasons; to harvest the fruits of his thought, instead of simply repeating the authorities parrot fashion. Islam rejects extremism, excessive emotions and hatred, violence and revolution.¹³

He quotes verses from the *Qur'an* to prove Islamic tolerance, yet the problem is that he quotes only part of them, neglecting the full text, which denotes to a different reality. For

example, he quotes *sura 18 ayah 29*¹⁴: “Say: the truth is from your Lord, so believe if you like, or do not believe if you will.” Yet, the verse continues as such:

We have prepared for the sinners a fire which will envelope them in its tent. If they ask for water they will be helped to liquid like molten brass that would scald their mouths. How evil the drink and the resting place.

This section is of course not mentioned. Moreover, the record reaches the peak by his statement:

I could complete a chapter with a single sentence: the concept of holy war, even the phrase, does not exist in Islam.¹⁵

Another example was the Muslims and apologists of Islam in the West, wishing to show that Islam disapproves violence and killing, came out with the *Qur`anic* quote: “whosoever kills a human being shall be like killing all humanity.” Yet, these wonderful sounding words are quoted out of context. The orderly quote is:

That is why we decreed for the Children of Israel that whosoever kills a human being, except for murder or for spreading corruption in the land, it shall be like killing all humanity; and whosoever saves a life, saves the entire human race. Our messengers brought clear proofs to them, but even after that, most of them committed excesses in the land.¹⁶

This brings us to a prominent exegete of Islam: Mahmud Shaltout¹⁶:

Muhammad revealed a book containing the principles of happiness. It commands to judge by reason, it propagates science and knowledge, it gives clear rules, it proclaims mercy, it urges to do good, it preaches peace, it gives firm principles concerning politics and society, it fights injustice and corruption. The Islamic community is commanded to do only what is good and is forbidden to do what is reprehensible and evil. The Islamic mission is clear and evident, easy and uncomplicated. It is digestible and intelligible for any mind. It is a call of natural reason, and therefore not alien to human intellect. This is the mission of Muhammad to humanity.¹⁷

Perhaps the best answer is the reformist Arab diplomat who writes under the pseudonym Abu Ahmad Mustafa:

We have become accustomed to not asking questions and not searching for the truth. We must examine our history, our books, and our stories with an open mind without hatred and blaming of the other. “Islam is the solution”, is not true. Islam is not the answer. It is hidden in sick minds brainwashed with hatred for the brethren living nearby and peoples living miles away. How can an intelligent person state or assert that we are a nation that preaches love among people, when in our own home we carry out ugly deeds and are silent about the disgrace? What is to blame is the culture of submission which comes from the clerics of past and the idols of today. Our struggles are connected to the past, not to health, not to education, not to human rights, not to general freedoms and political reform.¹⁸

This is the crucial point that the Free World must bear in mind. The excuses of the Islamic Apocalyptic Global *Jihad* Groups are many: they take revenge only at acts that are committed against them; for humiliating their honor; as a reaction to economic and political discrimination; for defense of their nation or soil; and all other sorts of fairytales for the consumption of the Western media to publish and public opinion to impress. Yet, these Groups are violent, anarchistic, deniers of modernity and progress and perpetrators of hideous and inhuman terrorism. The fact is, that they murder and butcher and perform all kinds of horrible acts of violence for Islamic religious reasons, but no less important as a result of cultural reasoning. When they attack in any part of the world, it is an offensive activity, a war

in the way of *Allah*. They do not feel any shame or guilt remorse, and from their vantage point, they are entitled to possess everything, as it is promised in the *Qur`an*. They have never given up the prophetic message to fulfill the words of *Allah* that Islam must dominate the world and subdue it, as a compulsory mission. And they have all the patience (*sabr*) in time, which is culturally different from Western time, to bring these ambitions come true.

Al-`Afif al-Akhdar discusses these issues very blatantly and vigorously:

Why is it that our countries are among the wealthiest in natural resources and poorest in human resources? Why does the world's human knowledge double every three years while with us, what multiplies several times over is illiteracy, ideological fear and mental paralysis? Why do expressions of tolerance, moderation, rationalism, and appeasement horrify us, and in cries for vengeance, we all dance the war dance? Why do other people love life, while we love death and violence, slaughter and suicide, and even call it heroism and martyrdom? Distorted thoughts lead the Muslim to think that he belongs to "the best nation created for human beings", that *Allah* designated it to guide and lead humanity. This is the reason why the Muslims find it impossible to imitate others and learn from them. Ethnocentrism leads them to believe that since the language of the Arabs is the mother of all languages, anyone not completely fluent in it is considered an animal and a barbarian, and that since its culture is the most divine, and its religion is the only true religion, then the other cultures are unworthy and other religions are mere vanity, and both deserve to disappear or to be subjugated.

Muslims still believe that Islam is the supreme religion, and the Arab nation is the most important of all nations. However, the Arabs' repeated defeats tell them that they are the last in line among the nations. This contrast-ridden discourse is the source of the Arabs' psychological and social ills, and of their grave identity crisis. The religious media and education to this situation provide an easy answer: Since we have given up our religion, *Allah* has given us up. Therefore, let us set out on a campaign of return to *Allah* and to the Golden Age, riding on a belt of explosives. Religious education systematically produces generations of people stricken by the madness of pure religious identity, such as the racial-purity-madness of the Nazis. This belief of Islamic identity led them to megalomania, fanaticism, self-segregation, and terrorism.

Arab-Muslims must give up the requirement to confront the infidels, not to use *jihad* until the Day of Judgment; to abandon the loyalty to the *Qur`anic* "Verses of the Sword"; to change the attitude towards the rational, the women, and the non-Muslims; to give up the dreams of liberating Palestine to the last grain of earth, and regaining Andalusia. Yet, the most important is the total change in educational teachings of the youth in which the Arab world remains locked.¹⁹

B) The Post-Colonialism Syndrome: Orientalism or Ignorance?

This issue, so prevalent in Western complexities, regarding the Third World frustrations was advanced, admittedly very sophisticatedly, by Edward Said, with its highlight to eliminate Western Oriental research.²⁰ However, he was not the first. The 20th century witnessed Abu al-A`ala al-Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb, the two most important exegetes of the Apocalyptic Global *Jihad* Groups, demanding forcefully and vigorously exactly the same objective. Said, although a Christian, had imitated them, but because of his reputation, a distinguished Professor at Columbia and a Palestinian, took the ideas and spread them much more effectively. The main theme is that Western imperialist sins are the source of the reaction against Third World peoples, and it is not only understandable but also legitimate. Said had almost invented the intellectual claim which legitimizes the Islamic rage and turned it to a radical multi-cultural stand, a basis to a new victimology religion. He accuses Arab-Muslim

hatred toward the West, teaches them the art of miserability and victimization, and put the blame of all their faults on colonialism, Imperialism and Zionism. By this, **Orientalism** has become the most influential book in the Western world in the last two decades dealing with the Arab world, silencing Western liberals and academia to become self-censored and ever-justifying of its aggressiveness.

Yet, this is not only mistaken but hideous false and evil “research”, for two reasons. First, the international situation shows very clearly that only Muslims and Arabs revolt in fanatic terrorism, and all other Third World nations do not. Some of them, in Asia, try very successfully to bring themselves to the modern democratic Western world, and some of them, in Africa, try very hard to survive with the harsh conditions they suffer, since most of the international support goes to the Palestinians. Second, the ideology and the issues raised by the Apocalyptic Global *Jihad* Groups have nothing to do with post-colonial reaction nor to humiliation and wretchedness, but to a fanatic ideology which falls under domination-expansionist dreams. This murderous ideology originates from the *Khawarij* of the 7th century, through Ahmad ibn Hanbal of the 8th century, to Muhammad ibn Taymiyah of the 13th-14th centuries, and embodied in Saudi Arabia’s *Wahhabiyah* and Egypt’s Muslim Brothers’ *Salafiyah*. This religious-cultural ideology is well fitted to bin Laden in Saudi Arabia and Ayman al-Zawahiri in Egypt. Said uses elusive-deceptive arguments, draws misleading claims, full of lies, slanders and insults, and blames Western researchers of being collaborators and continuing the West’s vigorous domination on the Middle East.

The best account is Bernard Lewis’ answer to the challenges of Edward Said, as the main exponent of anti-Orientalism. Said’s main thesis is that Orientalism derives from a particular closeness experienced between Britain, France and the Orient, which until the 19th century really referred only to India and the biblical lands. To prove his thesis, Said not only made arbitrary decisions about the Middle East, but rearranges both the geography and the history of Orientalism. His attitude is not merely false but absurd, and reveals a disquieting lack of knowledge of what scholars do, and what scholarship is about. Yet, Said expresses contempt for modern Arab scholarly achievement worse than anything that he attributes to his demonic Orientalists.

One of the most puzzling features of Said is the way he treats the facts on which it purports to be based: the Orientalist was the agent and the instrument of the Imperialist. His interest in knowledge was as a source of power, to penetrate, subjugate, dominate and exploit. Even more remarkable is Said’s transmutation of the events to fit his thesis. Beyond many mistakes and wrong evaluations which Lewis finds in Said’s book, the most astonishing is that his attitude to the Orient is far more negative than that of most of the Europeans whom he condemned. At the same time, Said accuses the Orientalists of racism, hostility, and desire to dominate. The success of his book, in spite of its science fiction and his lexical Humpty Dumptyism, is because of his profound hostility to the liberal democratic West. This responds well to the sentiments of anti-Westernism in the West, and meets the view that the United States is the source of all evil in the world, and that all the national, social, political and economic problems of the Arab world stem from a single grievance focused in the West (including Zionism). Orientalists have dealt with all the cultures of Asia (India, China, and Japan) and Africa, but the reactionary attitude and hostility come only from the Arabs.

Lewis quotes the Egyptian intellectual, Fuad Zakaria, who divides the anti-Orientalists into two main schools of criticism: the first is religious and apologetic, and the second is political and cultural. Zakaria concludes:

Orientalism is surely not without blemish, but the greater danger would be if we denied our faults. Our cultural task is to take the bull of backwardness by the horns and criticize ourselves before we criticize the image, even if it is deliberately distorted, that others make of us.

For Lewis, the most important question, least mentioned by the current wave of critics, is the scholarly merits and validity of the Orientalist findings, and prudently, the anti-Orientalists hardly touch on this question. Scholarly criticism is legitimate and necessary, not a criticism of Orientalism, which would be meaningless, but a criticism of the research and the results of the scholars.²¹ *Orientalism* is a book of ignorance, evil, false historical-analytical basis, and above all, non-scientific, unacceptable and deserve to be thrown into the garbage can.

Ibn Warraq accuses that Edward Said's *Orientalism* taught an entire generation of Arabs the art of self-pity and victimhood: "were it not for the wicked Imperialists, racists and Zionists, we would be great once more." He encouraged the Islamic fundamentalist generation of the 1980s to silence any criticism of Islam, stopped the research of eminent Islamologists who felt their findings might offend Muslims sensibilities, and who dared not risk being labelled "Orientalist". The aggressive tone of *Orientalism* is "intellectual terrorism", since it does not seek to convince by arguments or historical analysis, but by spraying charges of racism, imperialism and Eurocentrism on anyone who disagrees with Said. He obviously thinks it justifies his using any means possible to defend it, including the distortion of the views of eminent scholars, interpreting intellectual and political history in a highly tendentious way, in short – twisting the truth. Said's book is indeed a "Third World Intellectual Terrorism".²²

Said attacks not only the entire discipline of Orientalism, which is devoted to the academic study of the Orient, but accuses it of perpetuating negative racial stereotypes, anti-Arab and anti-Islamic prejudice, and claims that much of what was written about the Orient in general, and Islamic civilization in particular, are false. The Orientalists also stand accused of creating the "Other", the non-European, always characterized in a negative way; passive, weak, and in need of civilizing. For a work that purports to be a serious work of intellectual history, *Orientalism* is full of historical howlers, twisted facts, false claims, and hideous accusations.

In order to achieve his goal of painting the West in general, and the discipline of Orientalism in particular, in as negative a way as possible, Said has recourse to several tactics. One he prefers, is to depict the Orient as a perpetual victim of Western imperialism, dominance, and aggression. It is to this propensity that we owe the immature and unattractive quality of contemporary Middle Eastern culture, self-pity, and the belief that all its ills are the result of Western-Zionist conspiracies. As for the politics of victimhood, for Said, the web of racism, cultural stereotypes, political imperialism and dehumanizing ideology holding in the Arab or the Muslim, is very strong indeed. From Said's perspective, it is correct that every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric. In other words, not only is every European a racist, but he must necessarily be so.

Had Said delved into Greek civilization and history, he would have encountered two features which were deep characteristics of Western civilization and which he is at pains to conceal and refuses to allow: the seeking after knowledge for its own sake, and its profound belief in the unity of mankind. The golden thread running through Western civilization is rationalism. As Aristotle said, "man by nature strives to know knowledge for knowledge's sake." Westerners by nature strive to know, to get at the truth, and this striving for knowledge results in science, which is the application of reason. Intellectual inquisitiveness is one of the hallmarks of Western civilization, which Said so deeply lacks. The massive indifference of civilizations and their lack of curiosity about other worlds is a vast subject. Why, until very

recently, did Islamic scholars show no wish to translate Latin or western European texts into Arabic? Europeans wanted more. They wanted to explore. The desperate attempts by Said to smear every single Orientalist with the lowest of motives are not only reprehensible, but fail to give due weight to this golden thread running through Western civilization.²³

Ibn Warraq quotes the following researchers concerning Said's twisted "research":

Conrad has shown with his superb scholarship, how Said's account is not just flawed, but fundamentally wrong.²⁴

Berg has complained that Said's influence has resulted in a fear of asking and answering potentially embarrassing questions, ones which might upset Muslim sensibilities.²⁵

Even scholars praised by Said do not particularly like his analysis, arguments or conclusions. Rodinson calls his polemic and style "Stalinist".²⁶

Vatikiotis wrote that Said introduced McCarthyism into Middle Eastern Studies.²⁷

Dewey claims that Said's book was so bad in every respect, in its use of sources and in its deductions, that it lacks rigor and balance. The outcome is a caricature of Western knowledge.²⁸

Keddie talked of the disastrous influence of **Orientalism**, so that it can encourage people to say: "You Westerners, you can't do our history right, you can't study it right, you really shouldn't be studying it, we are the only ones who can study our own history properly."²⁹

Hourani claims that Said's book is dangerous. "Muslims will say nobody understands Islam except themselves. Orientalism has now become a dirty word."³⁰

Makiya states that Said's Orientalism is premised on the morally wrong idea that the West is to be blamed for everything in the Middle East. It makes Arabs feel contented with the way they are, instead of making them rethink fundamental assumptions which so clearly haven't worked.³¹

Al-Bitar finds Said's generalizations hard to accept, and is very skeptical about Said having read more than a handful of Orientalist works. Said does to Western Orientalism what he accuses the latter of doing to the Orient. He dichotomizes it and essentializes it. The most pernicious legacy of Said's **Orientalism** is its support for religious fundamentalism, and on its insistence that all the ills of the Arab world emanate from Orientalism and have nothing to do with the political and ideological makeup of the Arab lands and with the cultural historical backwardness which stands behind it.³²

Arab liberal columnist, Zuheir Abdallah, blames Arab fascism, tyranny and Islamism for failing to achieve any accomplishment:

The world went on a stable path of progress, while the Arab world failed to ride the same wagon, and were taken over by despotic tyrannical regimes. The economic and scientific growth regressed and reached the bottom level, in comparison to the rest of the countries in the world. Arab fascism and fundamentalist Islam have nothing to offer the people, except empty slogans revolving around the themes of resistance and struggle. Discussing with Arab educated citizens, about the reason for our backwardness, you get a preset answer the West is stopping the Arabs from progressing.

Is this the situation? Let us ask ourselves, Arabs and Muslims, what did we offer for ourselves and the rest of the world, from human sciences and inventions or any other added value to civilization? Unfortunately, the answer is: almost nothing.³³

C) “Understanding” Homicide Bombings: Poverty and Education Syndrome

One of the most important Western perceptions on terrorism concerns explaining the reasons and motives of homicide bombers, and “trying to understand them”. These horrific hideous atrocities are explained by expressing identification with the distress and the wretchedness of the peoples; or by the psychological-behavioral explanations of the “homicide bomber personality”. Yet the most pervasive explanation, and perhaps the biggest fallacy, is the “poverty and lack of education syndrome”. Indeed, this is the most prevalent argument and so mistakably taken. This is exactly the misperception of Western political culture. Poverty, misery, economic distress, social despair and lack of education **do not** lead to homicide bombings in particular and terrorism in general, but are led by totally different reasons.

This is followed by the assumption that remedy is addressed from its root cause: removing poverty and hunger, and providing the population with a high level of education will lead a reasonable society who wishes to eliminate poverty and achieve economic prosperity. This in turn will lead to political moderation, which will put an end to terrorism. This reasonable formula, a simple and logical solution, is clearly exactly the mirror image which reflects Western reality. Fanatic ideology, religious zealotry and total political attitudes are the causes and motivations for terrorism. These are cultural and religious-ideological causes and have nothing to do with poverty, humiliation and lack of education.

De Tocqueville, in his study on the French Revolution discovered that violence and revolutions break out precisely and specifically with an improvement in the socio-economic condition. By that he meant, only when one has leisure time and the education to understand and evaluate the situation, will he then have the ability and incentives to act. Indeed, when one is hungry and lacks education, having neither time nor knowledge, let alone an ability to fight for values, since he is totally preoccupied with bringing food and nourishing his family.

It was the famous Egyptian-American, Fuad Zakaria, who explained this so ably:

The radicalism virus of the Islamic fanaticism resembles the Nazi ideology, and it has nothing to do with poverty, wretchedness, social disorders and personal humiliation. Like all ideologies, fanatic Islam flourishes among the educated and well-being classes. Extreme ideology belongs to people with plenty of leisure time.³⁴

Most of the Third World countries are hungry and their socio-economic reality is miserable. Nevertheless, they did not create so profound an infrastructure of organized inhuman terrorism, backed up by religious ideology. Africa is the poorest continent in the world, and its peoples are really in a deep situation of humiliation and wretchedness, but it did not establish fanatic terrorism, nor a state-like institutionalized terrorism, like the Palestinian Authority, nor a state-sponsored terrorism like Saudi Arabia, and not social homicide groups like the Palestinians. India, which was harshly repressed and exploited by the British colonialists, not only does it not support international terrorism, it is even a democracy. And if occupation is what it is all about: Egypt was under Western control for 67 years, Syria for 21 years, Iraq for only 15, and Saudi Arabia was never under Western control. Contrast this with Southern Spain, which was under the Muslim yoke for 781 years, Greece for 381 years, and the splendid new Christian capital that eclipsed Rome, Byzantium, is still in Muslim hands. Ibn Warraq does not know of any Spanish or Greek politics of victimhood.³⁵

Researchers approach regarding nationalism employed by Eli Kedourie, supports these positions³⁶: The national flag is brandished when there is food, leisure time and, perhaps most importantly, a higher education. Theories of criminology and social psychology prove that

motives of security and group affiliation precede hunger. Indeed, poverty, which is really a huge problem of our world, may lead to violence and crime but it never leads to terrorism.

The proof is very simple: the leaders of the Apocalyptic Global *Jihad* Groups are members of the middle and upper classes. Most have a higher university education, and many have doctoral, medical or engineering degrees. They have never asserted that the reasons for their activities were poverty, ignorance and hunger. They speak of Western crusaders, whom they are attempting to expel from Arab-Islamic lands; of Israeli aggression, they wish to destroy as a national entity; and of Arab regimes, which they struggle to overthrow. They have no plans for social advancement and economic well-being. They have no intentions to provide employment, education or welfare to the masses, and they consider themselves the revolutionary elite, the vanguard. They are a malicious phenomenon lacking any humanity; they are educated and intelligent fanatics without human inhibitions; and they are extremists who control a vast fortune.

Palestinian uprisings, violence and terrorism are the best proof that it has nothing to do with weak economy, social wretchedness or lack of education. A hundred years of continuing violence, no matter the changing political situation and economic conditions,

- as a clan society under British Mandate, refusing to agree to the territory to be called Palestine rather than Southern Syria, and
- refusing to be called Palestinians and not Arabs; under Arab occupation from 1948 to 1967; and
- under Israeli occupation from 1967 on,

is the proof.

The years 1936, 1987 and 2000, have witnessed rebellions of terrorism which erupted precisely during periods of economic growth; when the economy was prosperous and the standard of living was proportionately high. If one compares the Palestinian economic and social situation to that in many Arab states, let alone African states, it is much higher and better, and their rate of education is the highest in the Arab world proportionately. The year 2000 was the best in the Palestinian economic history with GNP of \$1,600, and this was the year in which Arafat opened his war of terrorism.

Indeed, Palestinian terrorism of homicide bombings and vicious violence prove this reality. It does not stem from poverty and lack of education, but is motivated by political and ideological reasons and extreme national total demands. Since the Oslo Agreements in September 1993, through the end of September 2000, 63 homicide bombers were counted. Between September 2000 and May 2003, 197 homicide bombers were sent on suicide actions, among them, 35 women. Of all the 115 successful homicide bombers, more than 50% had a university education; most of them came from al-Najah University in Nablus. In the Middle East you don't attend high school or university without a prosperous economy at home. Indeed, the homicide bombers are not hungry or miserable. They are in total repulsion of Jews and Zionism, and are motivated by the Islamic fanaticism of dehumanization of the Israeli-Zionist existence.

The terrorists of September 11 all lived in the West, were all economically prosperous, and all had higher educations. Fifteen of the 19 came from Saudi Arabia, from well-off families. They were not poor and wretched. What motivated them was not poverty and social misery, but rather a profound hatred of all that Western culture stands for: permissiveness, secularism, liberalism, logic and reason; placing man at the center and focusing on sovereignty of the mind, rather than submissiveness and devotion to *Allah*. No less important is the fact that they

receive publicity in full amplification, much more than many other organizations, corporations, and even states. And they get all these free of charge, as celebrities of great attention and importance.

The Islamic fundamentalist organizations are rich, since terrorism is big business. Their leaders and activists are well-educated and rich. Terrorism is one of the biggest businesses in today's world. The terrorist organizations enjoy a great flow of monies – much more than many states in the world. Without money there is no terrorism. The businesses of terrorist organizations amount between \$1-1.5 trillion a year, most of it *al-Qa'idah's*. Second are the Palestinians, which under Arafat's corrupt rule accumulated \$14 billion from terrorism money. According to Israeli intelligence sources, 75% of the total terrorist activity within the Palestinian Authority comes from *Hizbullah* in Lebanon, and 90% of *Hamas* activity comes from Iran and Saudi Arabia. The transaction of the monies is very simple, mainly through legitimate bank accounts, charity organizations, exchange bureaus and personal messengers.

The Free World is almost helpless in dealing with this "legitimate financial realm". The problem is how to keep economic-liberal freedom flowing and free bank activity continuing, while at the same time putting all their efforts to stop the money flow which moves and motivates the wheels of terror. If we do not manage to stop it, it will be almost impossible even to pretend to win this crucial war against terrorism. The challenge is not only to identify the charity organizations that support terrorism, but to convince the Free World's governments to work at three phased levels: to outlaw the charity organizations, to act decisively against the banks that cooperate with them, and to isolate economically and politically all the state-sponsored activity. This is the most important junction to international cooperation, money laundering control, and supervision of the security services, with the aim of establishing a multi-dimensional new international organization to struggle against terrorism efficiently.

Arab columnists have published articles critical of the view that the main motivation to terrorism is poverty or despair. For them it is crystal clear that the main reasons and most important factors in motivating terrorism are cultural and religious. The incitement by religious and political leaders encourages conducting terror operations. A Saudi columnist, Muhammad Mahfouz, claims that terrorism undermines the stability and the security of all human societies, and any external and superficial probing of the problem will not be effective until we delve deeply into its Islamic cultural and ideological roots. This may explain the reason why youths belonging to rich families and others from high positions in society are implicated in terrorist crimes. Financial and economic factors cannot be associated with this fanatic ideology and terrorism. It is the cultural and religious factors that motivate murdering innocent people. The only way to put an end to the wave of violence and terrorism is to fight an ideological-cultural battle. Without fighting this fateful battle, we will never succeed in eliminating the menace to civilization. Any delay in fighting this ideological-cultural battle will drag us to the abyss of instability. We need, more than ever, to dismantle the cultural and ideological incubators which feed this phenomenon. The elimination of terrorism and violence are associated with uprooting the culture of violence which promotes killing, justifies terrorism, and provides it a legitimate cover. The security battle will not help much in putting an end to this phenomenon, since this is a battle of culture; to fight and defeat terrorism in all its stages.³⁷

For `Abdallah Rashid, it is clear that the greatest mistake of social and political commentators is their attributing the cause for the spreading of terrorism in the Arab and Islamic world to the lack of social justice, the situation of poverty, and the harsh social conditions in most of the Arab and Islamic countries. The socio-economic situation of most of the terrorists who

participate in the criminal operations around the world is very good. They are from well-off families, with higher education and good jobs, and many of them are even married with children. Most of the volunteers who went to Iraq to join *al-Qa'idah* terrorist groups are from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States (61%), and they come from families who are not poor, and from a social environment that does not suffer from economic problems and social wretchedness. Only 10% of the terrorist acts in Iraq are against the United States and Western allies, the rest is Arab Muslim-Sunni terrorism against Muslim Shi'ites. The simple reason is the terrifying brainwashing suffered by most of the Arab youth at the hands of "religious clerics", the media, and particularly at the hands of the extremists with backward views. They nourish the Muslim youth with various kinds of racist views, destructive extremist principles, and nurse them with hostility, hatred, and resentment towards others.³⁸

Dr. Abd Al-Hamid Al-Ansari, dean of the Faculty of Islamic Law in Qatar, stated that modern Islamic *Fatwas* distort the meaning of *jihad* to justify the aggressive ideology. How did these suicide bombings come about? There were those who said that it was out of ignorance. But can the great *sheikhs* teaching the creed of the faith in distinguished universities be ignorant? There were those who said that it was due to oppression and lack of freedom. But these people are not interested in human freedoms. There were those who said that it was due to few work opportunities and high unemployment. But how does this correspond with the fact that those who carried out the operations had money and weapons, besides living in rich societies? There were those who said it was due to America's pro-Israel bias. But the *jihad* organizations have only recently begun to wave the banner of Palestine. The explanation for terrorism and violence lies in the educational system, and in the religious, cultural, and media discourse.³⁹

Indeed, the terrorism of homicide bombings and slitting throats phenomenon is clearly religious and cultural, reinforced by preaching and incitement in the mosques; the educational system's curricula; supported and disseminated by the Arab media and the ethos of Arab-Islamic superiority.

The Egyptian commentator, Muna al-Tahawi, has claimed against the double talk and externalizing the guilt:

The time has come for us to declare resolutely that the claim heard whenever Muslims stage a terror attack – "George Bush made me do it" – is a stupid one. The time has come for us to stop rebuking others. We all know the extent to which extremism has increased in our societies, but it is easy to ignore this fact and to say "we aren't like that" and to accuse the other instead of dealing with the matter. The time has come to talk in one single voice and take responsibility, and not in two voices – one addressed to the West and the other to the Arabs. The Arab world is fed up with violence, and has suffered greatly from it.⁴⁰

D) Islam and Modernism: The Civic Culture Syndrome

This syndrome is founded on Western mirror image conceptions. One of its cultural expositions is related to the idea that the Apocalyptic Global *Jihad* Groups are a small, extreme fanatic minority, and the majority of the people, Arab and Muslim, are against them. This Western naiveté and ignorant attitude, designed with the politically correct approach, runs rampant. True, there are radicals among the Arabs and Muslims just as there are in all societies, but they are a minority, "weeds". On the other hand, the majority is different; peace-lovers, non-belligerent, and one must not generalize. This is exactly the problem with all of its severity. The relevant questions are:

- 1) If that is the true situation – how do we know this? Are there corroborating studies and data to substantiate this view? Or, do we only assume this is the reality, by the mirror image of our society? Perhaps, only perhaps, the opposite is true, and the fanatics are the majority?
- 2) Even if a different majority exists, is its voice heard and does it influence the shaping of policy and the decision-making processes? Do we only supply excuses to the horrific phenomena we don't understand? Or is it only in our personality conceptions?
- 3) How many pressure groups and interest groups are there which actively function against Islamic fanaticism and *jihad* terrorism? To what extent do they influence? Do we just ignore reality out of confusion? Or do we think that our presumptions are the true reality?
- 4) Where is the voice of public opinion, the political parties, the media, which prove, through their loud and clear activity that there are other tendencies and other voices? Or are we only assuming that this is the situation?
- 5) How many NGO's (non-governmental organizations) are there acting against the terrorist organizations and preventing aid from their reach? Do they even try to convince anyone that the terrorists are mistaken? Or do we just want to believe that they are mistaken?
- 6) If there are moderate peace-loving political leaders, where are they? What influence do they have? Is their voice heard? What do they declare and what do they do after the horrible acts of terrorism, besides blaming the US and the CIA, Israel and the Mossad? Do we hear voices from somewhere?
- 7) Indeed, there are intellectuals and educated liberals who wholeheartedly condemn the hideous terrorist acts of the fanatics. However, who controls the Islamic communities and the streets? Whose voice is heard and written in the communication media? Who is more influential and admired by the youth in the *madrassahs* and in the mosques? Or do we just imagine there are others?
- 8) How many peace movements and pro-peace demonstrations can we recognize? How many masses marching and rolling for peace and against the terrorist perpetrators can be identified? Or is it our imagination alone that we see?

Indeed, Nonie Darwish is correct by putting the blame on the “silent Muslim majority”. He is silent seeing the outrageous brutal inhumane terrorist attacks, and does not act against medieval-style behavior and practice in the Arab-Muslim world. Their silence, in fact, means aiding and abetting the cruel culture of hate, terror, torture and beheadings. Most professors of Islamic studies and Islamist groups in the West never criticize their culture of origin, and are silent in the face of Muslim poverty, corruption, neglect of human rights, oppression of women, honor killings, beheadings and stoning. Indeed, the silent majority is the problem. Their silence is empowering terrorism, dictatorships, and social pathologies.⁴¹

Where, in the Arab-Islamic world are the trends so characteristic of Western democracies – the daily political give-and-take, the heated political debate, the variety of positions and opinions, the pluralism of attitudes? The reality is that there are few who take a stand against the horrific acts of homicide bombings, heated hatred and hideous violence; and their influence and their ability to shape policies and points of view are almost non-existent. This phenomenon does not stem only out of fear of repressive government, but is due rather to a tradition of authoritarianism at the foundation of the Arab tribal frameworks and the Islamic religion, as well as a lack of awareness and consciousness of sovereign citizenship. Although

there is a reawakening of Arab intellectuals who harshly criticize Arab and Islamic regimes and societies and fanatical terrorism, the problem is that they remain an inconsequential minority lacking any influence. Although they must be encouraged and provided with all forms of assistance, it is yet a hope that their entreaty will be larger in size and hold more influence. Unfortunately, Western policy suppresses them, unintentionally, because it does not fight fanaticism and aggressiveness, and pays lip service to the issues out of political considerations.

It is clear that the Muslim majority does not play an active role in terrorism and incitement, and the perpetrators of the Apocalyptic Global *Jihad* Groups are perhaps a small minority. However, it is equally true that the majority does not oppose terrorism, fanaticism and violence. On the contrary, all indications are that they support it, admire the heroes, and are willing to assist them. Those who wish to comprehend the severity of this issue need only investigate the place and the role of the youth, those youngsters in all the Arab-Islamic states, including where they reside abroad in the West.

A no less important perspective to bear in mind, is that the Arab masses were never significant political players, and the leaders never took their opinions into consideration. The masses never participated in politics and did not influence decision-making processes and policymaking. They have never chosen leaders or overthrown regimes. Arab-Islamic politics have always unfolded at the level of the political elites: religious leaders and army officers. Indeed, the majority does not make their voice heard and do not express opposition to the atrocities, and this inaction transforms them into collaborators with evil.

The relevant questions:

- Are there more mosques today than 20 years ago?
- Are there more people returning to their religious roots?
- Are there more children named Osama?
- Are more Islamic communities organizing and acting in the framework of the *da`wah*?
- Is education more modern or does it continue to be traditional-religious?
- Are more women wearing traditional clothes and a veil covering their faces?
- Are youth more open to other opinions and positions or are they the ones who are leading the extremist trends?
- Are we perhaps dealing with the fallacies of Western thinking and distorted mirror images? As long as there is no indication of these and other dimensions, perhaps it is more correct to say that no such majority exists.

The Iraqi researcher, Majed al-Gharbawi, accuses that terrorism in the name of Islam has become a real danger that threatens global security, and the cultural suicide ideology is religious:

Terrorism in the name of Islam has become a real danger that threatens global security and the well-being of people. The driving reason is religious ideology. All the bloody acts that struck at Muslims were carried out in the name of religion, and all the disasters from which the Muslim peoples suffered were in the name of Islam. Religion was and remains a cover for justifying acts of terror. It has not educated the Islamist movements to adopt leniency, mercy and tolerance for the other, but rather has educated to hatred of the other and plans to murder and uproot the other – to gain Paradise. This culture is unconnected to human values. There is a need to form a new religious culture that will lay out the borders of the *shari`ah* laws. There is a need to examine

whether it is true that the verse of the sword [*Qur`an* 9:5] really abolished all mercy, leniency, and forgiveness. We must uncover the shame of all those who have enlisted the religion and the religious text for their own political and social goals.⁴²

Why is it so important to put things in their proper place, to call a spade a spade, without the politically correct approach? We would like to introduce an important Arabic phrase: *darabni wa-baka sabqni wa-shtaka*.⁴³ “He hit me and cried out, and then he overtook me and grumbled”: This phrase, if we understand its full cultural depth, explains the aggressive behavior of the Arabs and the totality it demands of the Muslims. They do not blame themselves for any fault or mischief they inflict upon or cause to others. From their perspective, they are always righteous and they are always the victim. Their enemies are always aggressive and they execute horrible acts of massacre as an intended aggressive policy, while they do not harm, and only retaliate to defend their souls, their religion, their land and their honor. They feel no shame by relating all the evils to their enemies, without even trying to ask whether they are responsible, and what they should do to redress the situation. The Apocalyptic Global *Jihad* Groups act with inhuman and inconceivably horrible acts of terror, and at the same time cry out that they are only defending themselves. They experience no remorse, and they feel no shame about their aggressive behavior.⁴⁴ Nothing is wrong with them, and all the wrongs are with their enemies, who, most of the time, are conspiring against them.⁴⁵

Nonie Darwish put it directly:

“Arab” means never having to say you are sorry. To expect Arabs and Muslims to apologize is a reflection of the naïve West and wrong expectations of Arab culture. In the Arab world, taking responsibility and saying “sorry” is taken as an unmanly sign of weakness that may get a person into more trouble. Those who admit guilt, even if it is accidental, are shown no mercy and may end up taking all the blame and being brutally punished. It is a norm for the Arabs to deny a fact and blame another rather than admit to the wrongdoing and apologize. Any admission of guilt is a sign of weakness. Americans should stop judging other cultures with America’s value system, and especially stop expecting the Arab-Muslim culture to respond rationally according to Western standards.⁴⁶

To reassure this view, the Egyptian liberal, Dr. `Amr Isma`il states:

Why can’t the Arabs see things as does the rest of the world? Why do we always feel that someone is conspiring against us, and that he is the cause of our problems and our cultural and economic backwardness? Why are we not able to criticize ourselves and see the outside as an enemy of our interests? Why do we talk by means of bullets, car bombs, and violence of suicide bombing? Why do we kill and slit throats in the name of *Allah*, and at the same time protest angrily when others depict Muslims as terrorists? Why are we the only nation that still uses religion, Islam, and the name of *Allah* in everything: politics, economics, science, art and literature? We kill in the name of *Allah*, we blow up people in the name of *Allah*, and we slit throats in the name of Islam. Why we do not ask ourselves why no other religious group perpetrates these acts of atrocity? Why do we not ask ourselves what are the roots of our extremist thinking and who should be blamed? Why we always blame others of intervening in our internal affairs, and we do not look at our own deeds?⁴⁷

By understanding this reality through the phrase *darabni wabaka, sabkni washtaka*, the West will be ready to cope with Arab-Islamic global threat, and with worldwide, total and unlimited terrorism. Why is it so important for the West to internalize the values of the Arab-Islamic political culture? It is not only because they are culturally different from those of the West, but because the West is contagious with two main fallacies of thinking, two misperceptions,

that distort its policies and bring it to fail time and again, culminating in disasters. The issue is mainly cultural, a civilizational gap,⁴⁸ caused by the mirror image and the politically correct approach.

This leads us to the issue of public opinion polls, so prevalent in the West. This phenomenon is critical in its importance and bears implications for scientific research and political implementation. Public opinion polls, based on quantitative data and classified by statistics, are clearly a Western cultural tool and suitable for a participatory political culture. In Western society, where the people who vote are the sovereign and a legitimate political factor, knowing their rights and duties, polls are perhaps a valuable tool, although even in the West there are doubts about their validity and accuracy. However, is this also true in societies with a subject (native) political culture in the best case, and for the most part are parochial, as in the Middle East? The use of polls, which is becoming more and more common, absolutely misses the mark, and might cause severe statistical deviations in understanding Arab politics and society.

In the Arab political system, in which the regimes are authoritarian and the political leadership is patrimonial,⁴⁹ there is no sovereign people and the citizenship is weak and limited. The population is not viewed as a political factor which must be taken into account by the authorities, and the inhabitants (not citizens) do not see themselves as relevant to governmental affairs, as influencing the decision-making process, or as accountable in shaping the political agenda. Moreover, since there are almost no socio-political subsystems or pressure and interest groups in the Arab infra-structure, there is no possibility of influencing the regime's attitudes or its policies, and leaders act in accord with their own personal interests for the purpose of their survival in power. In these circumstances, the population will not try to change their "fate", and will not act to influence changes in policy, not only because they are intimidated by the secret police, but also because of their lack of faith in their ability to make change. After all, even from a historical standpoint, "the Arab-Islamic people" never had an important role in the political process, and this remains true today.

Consequently, surveys of the public's positions and opinions are politically meaningless, and have no relevant scientific value. If the Arab-Islamic person is not viewed as a meaningful political factor to take into account, and if he does not see himself as an important part of the political process, then why should he make his opinions or positions known? Since they are not relevant, they are not susceptible to expressing opinions and views. Also such behavior was never acceptable in the collective, puritanical Arab-Muslim society. The principal immediate question that every respondent in an opinion survey must ask himself is: why are they asking my opinion? What is the relevance of the views that I might express about the political system and governmental operations? After all, I cannot, even if I wanted to, change the government or influence its positions. Especially, why must I respond to political questions that might endanger me with regard to possible reactions by the state?

To expect the people to express their true attitudes and opinions openly without fear is an illusion. An interesting conclusion is derived from Haddad and Lummis' research among Muslims in the United States:

Mosques were reluctant to cooperate and others simply refused, out of fear of misuse or distortion of the information. Many immigrants are suspicious of researchers, because they come from countries where the only people asking questions are government agents or spies. One of the major difficulties we encountered in collecting our research was that of establishing

sufficient trust that our questions could be answered honestly and openly...many of those interviewed were suspicious of our motives and watchful of our methods.⁵⁰

If these reactions and results are taken from research in the United States, one can only imagine the behavior and response of the inhabitants in Arab and Muslim countries, without citizenship and without acclaiming sovereignty. In these circumstances, respondents typically answer what they think the questionnaire is expecting them to answer and not their real opinions and attitudes. There is no scientific cure to such a statistical deviation, and by that we wish to limit, in fact to deny, the legitimacy of public opinion polls and surveys for scientific use in the Arab and Muslim countries.

E) Islam and Modernism: The Democratic and Developmental Syndrome

This fallacy stems from the idea that every society wishes to step towards modernity of social progress and a flourishing economy. However, this is not so simple, and, as we shall prove, linear perception and the Arab-Islamic situation are conspicuously different.

- 1) A report issued by a UN committee, the “World Economic Forum”, in April 2003, found out that the GNP in all of the Arab countries in the year 2000 was on a par with that of 1980. In almost every place in the world there was development, and only in the Arab countries was there a substantial retreat. The total GNP was a bit higher than the Netherlands, and less than Spain. In terms of the percentage of students in school – the Arab countries were at the bottom of list, except for Africa. The level of research and development in the Arab countries is the lowest in the world. The annual GNP of the Arab countries taken together in 2000 was \$500 million, one third of which was from oil production. According to the report’s calculations, it will take 140 years in order to double the Arab’s GNP and several hundred years to bring it to the level of the GNP in the West. Without a liberal revolution, the Arab world will deteriorate to the depths of poverty and backwardness. Without an economic upgrade, there will not be political stability and conditions for peace will not develop.
- 2) A report issued under UN auspices, the “Arab Human Development Report”, by 26 Arab experts, paints a frightful picture of the state of personal freedom and civil rights in all of Arab countries. Newspapers are distributed at a rate of 20% relative to developing countries. Only 2.6% have Internet and 4% have personal computers. Books in Arabic, an overwhelming majority of which are religious, constitute only 1% of world production (even Greece produces more), and translation of foreign literature is negligible.
- 3) The Palestinian economic reality is a good comparison. An official UN report ranks the economic level of Palestinians in 2003 as reasonable and average, out of 177 countries (number one being Norway, and number 177 – Sierra Leone). In other words, the Palestinians are ranked far above most African countries, including some Arab countries. The Palestinian Authority has received grants and aid in sums far surpassing those received by all of the European countries under the “Marshall Plan”. For the sake of comparison: A report published on behalf of the WHO (World Health Organization) and UNICEF, claims that 40% of the world population drinks polluted water. Half of them drink water that actually endangers their health and causes illness and death. Millions of children throughout the world are born into a lack of basic needs. Four thousand children die each day, just because of substandard sanitary conditions (not illness, famine or wars, just polluted water).⁵¹ In late August 2005, the UN declared that

almost 600 million youngsters are hungry and live in poverty in Asia. The Palestinians are probably not on those lists, and the water they drink is Western standard quality. Most importantly: despite the poverty and misery in those countries in Asia and Africa, there are no terrorism and homicide bombers in or from those countries as the Israelis witness from the Palestinians.⁵²

- 4) There is an issue of social liberalization and political democratization. Does Islam want to change and develop? Do the Arab-Islamic regimes aspire to achieve democracy? Arab politics of authoritarian regimes and patrimonial leaders are devoid of democracy, without political liberalism, no civil rights, no citizenship by sovereign electing “people”, and no governmental responsibility and transparency. The political systems are not committed to socio-economic progress. In fact, they are against any action leading to this target, beyond a controlled framework.

Arab and Islamic leaders know that any real economic progress would bring an overthrow of the regime and their own political liquidation. You cannot bring economic liberalization without political liberalization, and political liberalization means the total elimination of the authoritarian regimes, and theirs, as patrimonial leaders. They recall time and again, the rapid economic and social changes that led to the overthrow of the Shah of Iran, Ceausescu in Romania, and Gorbachev, in the Soviet Union.

The same answer relates to the Islamic religious groups. According to them, it is very clear that there is no need for change, since everything is controlled by *Allah*, and due to the profound belief that the *Qur`an* contains all human knowledge from the beginning of history through the end of days, and that any change is heresy punishable by death. In the Middle East, the problem is not economic development that will bring democratization and lead to political moderation. Arab-Islamic political culture demands strong political institutions and governmental authoritarianism, under the code of political stability. This reality is strengthened by the Islamic religion, which emphasizes total obedience to the government, whatever the deeds of the leader. Everything is due to the will of *Allah*, so, there is no regime responsibility.

First, most of the countries to which Democracy spread and in which it became established were Western cultures. Culture is the significant variable. La-Palombara has declared that democratization processes mean Westernization. This is the reasoning in understanding Huntington’s statement that in non-democratic countries, when free elections are held, specifically the religious fanatic Islamic groups won. The reason is, the masses going to election without control, vote for those they are familiar with: Islamic parties, since they, to a large extent, represent public opinion. Thus, Huntington’s unequivocal recommendation: despite the fact that we are all for Democracy, perhaps we have to restrain ourselves before we convince certain countries to become democracies, as long as they still lack the values and conditions for it.

Second, Democracy does not mean elections and parliaments only. Those exist in all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, and in the Arab and Islamic countries, despite the fact that the people have no influence on the shaping of policy and decision-making processes. Democracy includes several crucial dimensions, without which it cannot exist: The rule of law, the supremacy of law, equality before the law, individual freedoms and civil rights as supreme values, sovereignty and citizenship in the hands of the residents and not the government; responsibility, accountability, openness and transparency of the governmental systems; mobility, political participation, equal opportunity and competition; legitimacy and institutionalization of all systems and sub-systems.

Third, in mid-May 2004, a comparative study conducted by the Bertelsmann Foundation between 1998 and 2003, examined the state of democratization processes in the world. The study found that in 31 out of 71 developing countries characterized as democratic, an improvement had transpired in the level of Democracy. Improvement was noted even in Africa, while Asia is considered an economic and political wonder. Only the Arab world remained a “black hole” in terms of its freedom-democratic development. Arab regimes prevent possibilities of development, encourage submissiveness to the government and remained the most oligarchic body in the world.⁵³

Fourth, Democracy is based on a broad middle class. Huntington’s analysis⁵⁴ (which was reinforced quantitatively by his student, Professor Nordlinger) reassures the idea that Arab regimes absolutely reject most of the above values (with the exception of limited economic liberalization controlled from above). The middle class in the Arab world is an absolutely insignificant minority, yet, political participation is primarily among the middle class, which wants to be an active participant in the political process.

Nonie Darwish has ongoing criticism of the Arab-Islamic cultural phenomena:

A once beautiful culture has now decayed; it is very sick, and unable to accommodate other religions or cultures. This sickness is now contaminating the West through the terror of *jihad*. This is a culture in convulsions, using anything and everything as weapons against the rest of the World. Instead of using reason to reform their religion and join the rest of the civilized world, they choose violence through their ancient doctrine of *jihad*.

There is no tolerance in Islamic society to differing views, and freedoms are rare assets. Paradoxically, submission creates people who are extremely sensitive to criticism, with chauvinistic impulses. Thus, you see a loyal, submissive, polite Muslim turn violently angry over the slightest differences of opinion.

The mothers of suicide bombers are speaking and living a life that is against the normal impulses of motherhood. The religious and political indoctrination through tyranny has pushed them against themselves and their child into insanity. Hate is a motivation for *jihad* and also helps unite the Muslims, in compliance. The use of fear and hatred is a very primitive but very effective tool. This manipulation of human beings has reached an art form in Muslim culture.

The infidels are extremely useful in Arab-Islamic culture. There is less cohesion between Muslims as a result of love, compassion, constructive activities for the common good and working together for improving society and the economy. Image and reputation is of utmost importance between Muslims and especially in front of foreigners. Their first instinct is always to lie, even in situations that do not require lying, to show only the good side and shame those who don’t go along with the lie for the sake of saving face.⁵⁵

A Summation

The Apocalyptic Global *Jihad* Groups are the embodiment of evil which prove indeed that it is culture that matters. They start their politics of hatred and *jihadi* ideology from infancy. The children learn to hate before everything, even without knowing why; at home, in the mosques in the *madrasses*, and in summer camps. They hate Jews and Americans, because they are what they are, and not because they know anything about them. The hatred is in their drink and in the air they breathe, and this is the fuel that directs and motivates the massacres, lynchings and the decapitation of heads. It is put well by the progressive author and journalist

Dr. Shaker al-Nabulsi, who condemned the growing support for terrorism and extremism in the Arab world, and the rejection of moderation and reason.

The image is that we have become the most terroristic nation and the greatest spillers of blood in the world. The image is that we have become a nation devoid of reason. Indeed, the Arabs have turned into slaves of blood-drenched religious totems. The Arabs think in a medieval fashion regarding politics, society, economy, and education, and they are still living in the Middle Ages, and are indeed slaves to a medieval mentality and to thinkers from the Middle Ages. The Arabs have distanced themselves from reason, and have begun speaking to the world with the sword, the ax, and armies of masked bandits, robbers, and murderers.⁵⁶

Former Kuwaiti communications minister Dr. Sa`d bin Tefla, rejects the notion of blaming Zionism and Imperialism of the Arab harsh situation:

Zionism and Imperialism have nothing to do with our culture of violence and religious extremism. Slaughter, anarchy, and bloodshed in no way resemble *jihad* according to *shari`ah*. The anarchy and terrorism are indications of a culture of collective suicide. This culture of violence emanates from the spread of the extremist religious trend. We are all responsible for this culture, and Zionism and Imperialism have nothing to do with it.⁵⁷

Indeed, what we really witness today is an Islamic chameleon-like character: It can change its shape and appearance and accommodate itself to its surroundings. The interpretation of the *Qur`an* exhibits a variety of commandments to convert to Islam or how to be a good Muslim – by peaceful means, by convincing measures, by seducing religious measures, or by aggressive measures. This is the reason why Islam can express itself in many ways, and take whatever it can whenever possible, according to the situation and the opportunity.

The West does not want to sober up to face the fact that the aggressiveness and fanaticism of the Apocalyptic Global *Jihad* Groups is an existentially lethal phenomenon. The reason is psychological; it does not want to look into the threatening reality, but rather prefers to live in a wishful-thinking world. The West was busy with what Francis Fukuyama has called “the end of history” and “the end of ideology”, which means the march of victory of the West over Communism politically, and over Socialism economically. However, we should take Huntington’s warning seriously, quoting the Japanese philosopher Takshi Omihara that after the fall of Communism, Western liberalism is the next domino stone. Indeed, the problem is that Islamic fanaticism was washed away from memory and sight for a long time. This lethal danger poses a real threat to the Free World’s existence, by its wish to bring the Arab-Islamic past into the future of our humanity.

Saudi columnist, Muhammad bin `Abd al-Latif Aal al-Sheikh:

The ideology of the *al-Salafiyah al-Jihadiyah* movement is similar to, or even worse than, the Nazi ideology. Both *Jihadi-Salafi* and Nazism are based on hatred and the physical elimination of the other, and they have many other common denominators as well. The question which arises is why, in light of the similarity between these two ideologies, we haven't learned a lesson, and why we are not fighting against the foundations of *al-Salafiyah al-Jihadiyah*, its religious scholars, its theoreticians, and its preachers, just as we deal with criminals, murderers, and robbers?

Imagine that the way of dealing with statements by *al-Salafiyah al-Jihadiyah* is comparable to the West’s way of dealing with Nazism – would a TV channel, like *al-Jazeera* dare to spread this ideology and demand “freedom of speech”? Everybody knows that this channel in particular has had the greatest media impact on the shaping, spreading, and strengthening of this dangerous trend.

Therefore, one of the primary missions of the international community today is to repeat its experience with Nazism and to deal with this dangerous barbarian culture exactly as it dealt with the Nazi culture. If this does not happen, the near future is liable to bring consequences of which will be far more severe for all of humanity than those of World War II.⁵⁸

Leaders and policymakers of the Free World refuse to understand, that Islamic and Palestinian terrorism do not play by the rules of the game: They don't play according to the democratic rules of the game; they don't play according to the Western culture rules of the game; they don't play according to Jewish-Christian-norms rules of the game; they are different culturally, and they are devoted to implementing their interpretation of Islamic religion on the infidels.

Mamoun Fandy called upon the Muslims to issue a *fatwah* against terrorism; to bring back the mosques as a place of peace; and the Western media to take responsibility:

Just as bin Laden and his group describe moderate Muslims as followers of the West and as unbelievers, it is time for the Muslim leaders to proclaim bin Laden himself to be an unbeliever. It is time to strip the title of "mosque" from a place where firebombs are made. When a mosque becomes that kind of place, it ceases to be a mosque, and should be treated as the scene of a crime.

It is not helpful when London Mayor Ken Livingstone invites al-Qaradawi, just as it is not helpful when Tony Blair and George Bush invite people who are likely to become terrorists. It is regrettable that Western media channels, particularly CNN and the BBC, host radical Islamists who support terrorism and treat them as experts and analysts. Only two things can stop terrorism: issuing a *fatwah* removing bin Laden and his supporters from the fold of Islam, and the West ceasing to be naïve about "moderate Islamists". There is no such thing as "moderate Islamists".⁵⁹

Leaders and policymakers of the Free World are mistaken when they try to fix a profile of the homicide bomber. Potentially, everyone can be a homicide bomber: women, the elderly and children, and this has been proven in Israel and in other places in the world time and again. It is not out of poverty, frustration and humiliation, but a mere fanatic ideology.

Leaders and policymakers of the Free World refuse to comprehend, that the struggle is between two polar cultural concepts: a society that aspires to modernity, liberalism and human rights, against a society of religious extremism, totalitarianism of thought and tribal-traditional values. Islamic fanaticism does not express passivity or defense. Rather, it is a maximal attack, an offensive to restore Islamic order. It bestows an identity and a sense of belonging, and supplies utopian solutions for the masses. It has deep roots in Arab-Islamic culture, and is a means for recruiting broad social support. Above all, this is a much wider and deeper phenomenon than what Westerners would like to believe.

The Tunisian intellectual and thinker, al-`Afif al-Akhdar, claims:

Islamist thought is primitive and is incapable of accepting human thought. They are seeking to prevent the modernization of the Arab and Islamic world that cannot be avoided in the long run. Secularism will lead to disconnecting from negative phenomena in Islam, such as autocracy and theocracy. We call upon the world to condemn the Islamist education and the media, as an imperative step towards eliminating the fanatic ideology of terrorism.⁶⁰

Leaders and policymakers of the Free World must learn that the use of military power against these brutal and vicious Islamic and Palestinian terrorists is crucial. Western political culture is characterized by complacency and serenity. It tends to ignore threats and to be oblivious to hazards. It wakes up only after disasters are here. But, if we do not sober up, if we do not fight

for our democratic society by a strategy of initiation, and not by defensive measures – they will win.

Leaders and policymakers of the Free World must realize that they are facing a new kind of worldwide Crescenterism (a Muslim version of Crusaderism), that will threaten to fulfill the apocalypse of the clash of civilizations, as delineated by Huntington.

Endnotes

- ¹ This article is partly elaborated from the Introduction of the forthcoming book titled: *Jihad and Da`wah: From Muhammad to bin Laden – The Religious and Ideological Sources of the Homicide Bombers Phenomenon*.
- ² And not the “The Return of Islam”, used by most scholars after Bernard Lewis. Islam has never disappeared from the minds and hearts of the believers to reemerge in the political scene.
- ³ *Surah 3*, verse 7.
- ⁴ *Surah 5*, verse 87.
- ⁵ Chris Waddy, *The Muslim Mind*, New York: Longman, 1976, p. 100.
- ⁶ A. Abel, “*dar al-harb*”, “*dar al-Islam*”, *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. 2, pp. 126-128.
- ⁷ <www.elaph.com>, MEMRI, May 4, 2003. Nos. 439, 499.
- ⁸ Islamic exegetes found out a temporary category: *dar al-sulh* (the abode of truce) or *dar al-`ahd* (the abode of contract), to mention a specific situation where the Muslims have reached a political agreement with non-Islamic entity under Islamic sovereignty or consent.
- ⁹ Ahmad Ali, *A Critical Exposition of the Popular “Jihad”*, pp. 114-119. See also pp. 16-27.
- ¹⁰ Khalid Y. Blankinship, *The End of the Jihad State*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994.
- ¹¹ Fred Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981, p. 113.
- ¹² Murad Hoffmann, *Islam the Alternative*, Reading: Garnet Publishing, 1993, pp. 89-96; 130-44. The many researches of John Esposito, John Voll and others are extra-fine twisted works to explain the unexplainable, with the huge amount of acrobatic flexibility of a ropedancer.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 74, 85, respectively. See also pp. 33-42.
- ¹⁴ This *surah* is from the Mecca period.
- ¹⁵ Hoffmann, *Islam the Alternative*, p. 161.
- ¹⁶ *Surah 5*, verse 32.
- ¹⁷ Mahmud Shaltout, *al-Qur`an wal-Qital*, Cairo: Matba`at al-Nasr wal-Ittihad al-Sharqi, 1948.
- ¹⁸ *al-Sharq Al-Awsat* (London), September 13, 2003; MEMRI, September 26, 2003, No. 579.
- ¹⁹ MEMRI Special Dispatch Nos. 499 and 518, <www.elaph.com>, June 15, 2003.
- ²⁰ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995.
- ²¹ Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 99-118.
- ²² Ibn Waraq is, of course, right in his harsh criticism. Yet, Said’s work is not “Third World Intellectual Terrorism” but “Arab-Palestinian Intellectual Terrorism” – being Christian and Palestinian.

- ²³ Ibn Warraq, "Debunking Edward Said: Edward Said and the Saidists: or Third World Intellectual Terrorism", <<http://www.secularislam.org/articles/debunking.htm>>.
- ²⁴ Lawrence I. Conrad, "Ignaz Goldziher on Ernest Renan: From Orientalist Philology to the Study of Islam", in: Martin Kramer (ed.), *The Jewish Discovery of Islam*, Tel Aviv: The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 1999, pp. 137-180.
- ²⁵ Herbert Berg, "The Methods and Theories of John Wansbrough", in Ibn Warraq (ed.), *The Quest for the Historical Muhammad*, Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2000, p. 502.
- ²⁶ Maxime Rodinson, *Europe and the Mystique of Islam*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987, p. 131.
- ²⁷ P.J. Vatikiotis, *Among Arabs and Jews: A Personal Experience, 1936-1990*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991, p. 105. Quoted by Kramer, *ibid.*
- ²⁸ Clive Dewey, "How the Raj Played Kim's Game", *Times Literary Supplement*, April 17, 1998, p.10. Quoted by Kramer, *ibid.*, p. 31.
- ²⁹ Interview with Nikki Keddie, in: *Approaches to the History of the Middle East*, Nancy E. Gallagher (ed.), London: Ithaca Press, 1994, pp. 144-145. Quoted by Kramer, *ibid.*, p. 37.
- ³⁰ Interview with Albert Hourani, in: Gallagher, *ibid.*, quoted by Kramer, *ibid.*, pp. 30, 38.
- ³¹ Kanan Makiya, *Cruelty and Silence*, New York: Norton and Company, 1993, pp. 317-319.
- ³² Nadin al-Bitar, quoted in: Emanuel Sivan, *Interpretations of Islam: Past and Present*, Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1985, pp. 136, 151.
- ³³ *al-Hayat* (London), MEMRI, August 12, 2003, No. 551.
- ³⁴ Fuad Zakaria, *Newsweek*, Hebrew: *Ma'ariv*, July 27, 2005.
- ³⁵ Ibn Waraq, "Debunking Edward Said", *op. cit.*
- ³⁶ Eli Kedourie, *Nationalism in Asia and Africa*, New York: World Pub. Co., 1970.
- ³⁷ Muhammad Mahfouz, *Saudi Gazette* (Saudi Arabia), December 30, 2004; MEMRI, January 26, 2005, No. 853.
- ³⁸ `Abdallah Rashid, *al-ittihad*, January 10, 2005; MEMRI, January 26, 2005, No. 853.
- ³⁹ According to MEMRI, No. 254, November 22, 2005.
- ⁴⁰ *al-Sharq al-Awsat* (London), July 18, 2005.
- ⁴¹ Nonie Darwish, "The Silent Muslim Majority is the Problem", <FrontPageMagazine.com>, January 7, 2005.
- ⁴² <www.elaph.com>, July 8, 2005.
- ⁴³ See extensively: Bukay, *Arab-Islamic Political Culture*.
- ⁴⁴ See extensively: Sania Hamady, *The Temperament and Character of the Arabs*, New York: Twaine, 1960; Raphael Patai, *The Arab Mind*, New York: Scribner, 1983; Frank H. Henderson, *Honor*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994; Fuad Ajami, *The Dream Palaces of the Arabs*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1998.
- ⁴⁵ There are many theories of conspiracy attributed to Arab-Islamic sources, from 9-11 to the Tsunami, see, Daniel Pipes, *Middle East Fears of Conspiracy*, New York: St. Martin's, 1996.
- ⁴⁶ Nonie Darwish, <www.noniedarwish.com>.
- ⁴⁷ Published on the Arabic website *elaph* on October 31, 2004, <www.elaph.com>, from MEMRI, November 7, 2004.

- ⁴⁸ Lee Harris, *Civilization and Its Enemies: The Next Stage of History*, New York: Pergamon, 2004.
- ⁴⁹ Michael C. Hudson, *Arab Politics: The Search for Legitimacy*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977; Howard H. Wriggins, *The Ruler's Imperative*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1969; Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968; Shmuel N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *Post Traditional Societies*, New York: Norton and Company, 1972.
- ⁵⁰ Yvonne Y. Haddad and Adair T. Lummis, *Islamic Values in the United States*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, pp. 9-10.
- ⁵¹ *Ma`ariv*, August 27, 2004.
- ⁵² With the exception of the Tamiles in Sri Lanka.
- ⁵³ The Report: *Yediot Acharonot*, May 14, 2004.
- ⁵⁴ Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968.
- ⁵⁵ <<http://www.noniedarwish.com>>.
- ⁵⁶ <www.rezgar.com>, August 14, 2004; MEMRI, September 20, 2004. No. 786.
- ⁵⁷ Sa`d bin Tefla, Jordanian TV, June 8, 2004; MEMRI, August 24, 2004, No. 770.
- ⁵⁸ *al-Jazeera*, July 10, 2005; July 24, 2005; MEMRI, October 17, 2005, No. 1007.
- ⁵⁹ *al-Sharq al-Awsat* (London), July 25, 2005.
- ⁶⁰ <<http://www.mettransparent.com>>, April 25, 2005; MEMRI, May 7, 2005.