

Islam and the West: roots of conflict and future way

A.R.M. Imtiyaz, MLA, Ph.D
Department of History, Nanjing University

Relations between the Islam and the West are now in deep tension. The attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon not only shook the United States of America and its western allies, but also damaged more severely existing poor relations between the Islam and the West. If truth were told, relations between the Islam and the west have been in tension since long time. Some research even argues that September 11 attacks were symbol of the negative relations between the Islam and West. Nevertheless, the tension has its unfathomable roots in political and social issues, which has put the ground to two sides to expose their differences. Thus, the purpose of this paper is carefully grasping the past issues to identify roots and will try to look forward the future in a constructive manner.

The West and The Islam: Roots of Conflict and Future Way

*A.R.M. Imtiyaz, MLA, Ph.D
Department of History, Nanjing University*

Relations between the Islam and West are now in troubled condition particularly after September 11, 2001 subversive attacks against the Pentagon, which is regarded as a United States of America's military head quarter and the World trade Center, capitalist economy's financial hub. Bunch of scholars have connected the incident with cultural conflict as Samuel P. Huntington had predicted few years ago. Huntington believes that world politics is entering a new phase, in which the great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of international conflict will be cultural. Civilizations-the highest cultural groupings of people-are differentiated from each other by religion, history, language and tradition.¹ However, Huntington's theory has failed to address the roots of the conflict between the Islam and West. Therefore, it is very important to identify the roots from the history, otherwise, we will not be able find a right answer for the conflict, which put two great cultures hooked on the tension. Hence, this article's central objective is to examine nature of the growing tension between the west and the Islam by carefully grasping the past issues to identify roots and will try to look forward the future in a constructive manner.

In this work, the West refers to those North American, West European and Australian democracies that share similar political, economic and military alliance with the US leadership since the Second World War. Despite different approaches to some international conflicts, these countries' class base lies on the capitalist class political and economic agenda. The "Islam" refers to all Arab and non-Arab followers of the religion of Islam, whether living in countries where Islam is the dominant religion or residing as minorities elsewhere. As West, Many Islamic countries and movements' leaderships' class nature places on the capitalist class political and economic agenda despite their strong denial.

Since the advent of Islam in the early seventh century, relations between the West and Islam have been registered remarkable progress and peaceful coexistence despite some political and military tensions. Peaceful coexistence produced examples of majestic cooperation, tolerance and fruitful results in all fields of human endeavor, but the periods of tension were created or exploited by those elements from both sides that found deterioration of relations advantageous to their causes above and beyond religion. In

¹ Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72: 3 (summer 1993): 21-49

today's world, peaceful coexistence no longer exists between the West and Islam, instead the conflict and tension occupy major place in relation between the two cultures.²

Islam and Christianity, which is core religion of the West, share much in terms of both beliefs and values. One of the central elements of Christianity 'is [to] do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with ...God'. Christianity has evolved the great preaching based on the principle that one must not do to others what one would not want others to do to you. The Islam also emphasizes same teaching. In the Qur'an that strongly advise the notion of justice as closest to piety, and the value of compassion, forgiveness, mercy, modesty, humility and persuasion as central to earthly existence to gain reward in the world hereafter. The Qur'an commands: 'O Ye who believes, be upright for God, witness; and let not hatred of a people cause you to be unjust. Be just-that is closer to piety' (Sura V: 8 :)

Qur'an urges its followers to respect all God's apostles and revealed books that came before Mohammed and the Qur'an. Qur'an strictly maintain that the believers of Allah should treat non-believers of Allah respectfully and provide them protection and freedom to follow their religion under Muslims rule. However, Qur'an maintains that Muslims must embrace Islam and its Prophet book as final. That is to say, Muslims should not follow non-Muslims religion or embrace their way of life. Briefly, while Muslims respect and protect others identity and life, they should adhere to Islamic life values, which had exposed clearly in Qur'an and Prophet's life examples. Therefore, it is evident that Islam does not support the action that hurt non-Muslims belief and life.

This is not to state that Islam always opens the door for the tolerance. Islam courageously asks its followers to defend their belief and life style once peoples of other faiths target it,³ for example, Sura IX has many such injunctions, where the command is to fight those who violate your religion and betray your trust, as is the case with: Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which had been forbidden by Allah and His Apostle, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the people of the Book, until they pay the Jizya with willing submission and feel themselves subdued' (Sura IX: 29). Moreover, Qur'an puts a high premium on the value and sanctity of life. According to Islamic preaching, only God, as creator and mover of the universe, is empowered to give and take life. This does not mean that Islam goes against the practice of self-sacrifice in the way of God or in defence of Islam. The Qur'an states: 'Nor take life-which Allah has made sacred-except For just cause. And if anyone is slain wrongfully, We have given his heir authority (to demand Qisas Or to forgive): but let him not exceed bounds in the matter of taking life: for he is helped (by the Law' (Sura XVII). These Islamic arrangements evidently pave the way for the backing of the Islamic notion of martyrdom, which signals the concept of *Jihad*.⁴

² Amin Saikal, *Islam and the West: Conflict or Cooperation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 24.

³ James P. Piscatori, *Islam in a World of Nation-States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), ch.1.

⁴ *Jihad*, which literally means struggle, effort and exertion, has had multiple meanings and methods of application in the course of Islamic history. In general, *Jihad* carries ' the basic connotation of an endeavor toward a praiseworthy aim', including struggle against one's evil inclination or an exertion for the sake of Islam and Ummah.

Though *jihad* has own its value and limitations, many non-Muslims share deep misunderstanding over the interpretations of *jihad*. There are basically two types of jihad: the greater jihad or personal, spiritual struggle; and lesser jihad, or the warfare form of struggle.⁵ Islam urges Muslims repeatedly to stick to the first form of *jihad* unless their religion and life threatened by the non-Muslims. However, it is important to mention that though Islam authorizes second form of jihad (violent form) in unavoidable circumstances, it still appreciates peaceful solution to the conflict and encourage people who stand for love and harmony. Qur'an says that Allah loves those who are just (Sura LX: 8). However, sadly, in recent history, what we have experience is gaining popularity and increased publicity is a tradition of the lesser jihad in the form of a 'holy war'. Most recently, these have ranged from the Afghan Islamic resistance forces (the Mujahideen) – a mixture of moderate and radical Islamists - which waged *jihad* with the full support of the USA against the Soviet forces which were occupied Afghanistan in the 1980s to the Palestinian Hamas, Lebanese Hezbollah or Kashmir separatist Harakut al-Mujahideen.

It is significant to point that Prophet Mohammed and his companions, who succeeded his religious and political leadership, engaged in so-called holy war or violent form of *jihad*, but their sole purpose was to defend Islam and the Islamic community. As such, when they called for lesser *jihad*, they essentially called for a conceptually defensive act, proportionate to the Islamic emphasis on the sanctity of life- a concept of jihad that comes closest to what is described in Western literature as 'just war'.⁶ The Qur'an orders: 'And fight in the way of God those who fight you, but do not commit aggression. God loved not the aggressors' (Sura II: 190). In this case, Muslims are ordered by Qur'an to engage in self-sacrifice, without intending or actually harming non-combatant civilians of the opposite side.

Despite the resistance from Christians and Jews to Mohammed's claim of prophecy in Mecca from 612 and the Islamic arrangements for *jihad*, Muslims and Christians were lived together peacefully during the first five centuries of Islam. . This was instrumental in fostering bridges of understanding and trust between the followers of the three faiths. These examples had continued even when Islam extends its influence beyond the Arabian Peninsula following Mohammed's death in 632. This background not to claim that there was complete harmony between Islamic rulers and non-Muslims, of course there were acts of violence and assertion of religious superiority, but many Christians and Jews who came under the rule of Islam in their respective destinies, enjoyed protection and allowed to live free of any religious persecution. These qualities were manifested prominently and critically in the wake of the Islamic conquest of Jerusalem in the mid-630s as they were in the subsequent Islamic reign of the Abbasids (750-1250). Under the 'Omar agreement', named after the second Caliph (ruler) of Islam, Omar Ibn al-Khitab, the Arab Muslim forces established Muslims political rule over the city but accorded full recognition to the right to freedom of religion for Jews and Christians in Jerusalem.

⁵ John L. Esposito, *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), ch.2.

⁶ Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York: Basic Books, 1992) p. 55.

Jonathan Bloom and Shelia Blair write:

In the Islamic lands, not only Muslims but also Christians and Jews enjoyed the good life. They dressed in fine clothing, had fine houses in splendid cities serviced by paved streets, running water, and sewers and dined on spiced delicacies served on Chinese porcelains. Seated on luxurious carpets, these sophisticated city dwellers debated such subjects as the nature of God, the intricacies of Greek philosophy, or the latest Indian mathematics. Muslims considered this golden age God's reward to mankind for spreading His faith and His speech over the world.⁷

Islam's total rejection of race, ethnicity, color and any form of compartmentalization of life, its tolerance of other religions, and treatment of Muslims, Christians and Jews as all the children of Abraham opened the door to a variety of peoples, including those who did not embrace it, to live in its domain with protection and dignity, and participate and contribute to its achievements and be rewarded for them. It must be pointed that Qur'an and Prophet Mohammed life and his values did not go against the harmony and peaceful existence. This great practice also maintained even during Prophet Mohammed successors' rule in the Arabian Peninsula and beyond.

However, the situation changed rapidly when Muslim world came under subsequent Western imperialist control. The Crusades against Muslims, the Crusaders' capture of Jerusalem twice between 1099 and 1229, and final recapture of the city by Muslims by the mid-thirteenth century left lasting imprints of distrust and residual enmity between many of the orthodox followers of these religions. The Crusaders were spectacularly severe in capturing Jerusalem in 1100. They not only brutalized and humiliated the Arab Muslim citizens of Jerusalem, but also made the Jewish inhabitants of the city suffer to the extent that many of them felt they had more to fear from the Christians than from traditional Muslim rulers. Although the Muslims eventually dislodged the Crusaders, the whole incident changed the favorable view that Muslims had held so far of Christians, and many Muslims remained wary of them for a long time to come.⁸

Though Crusaders disturbed Muslims, Muslims did not engage with any organized violence on Christianity, which was existed strongly before Islam spread in the Arabian Peninsula. This attitude remain prevailed long after the decline of Abbasids into the periods their Turkic successors. Under Ottoman imperial Islamic rule (1350-1918) the situation continued.

Karen Armstrong writes:

The Ottoman armies continued their conquest of Europe and reached the gates of Vienna in the 1530s. The sultans now ruled a massive empire, with superb bureaucratic efficiency, unrivalled by any other state at this time. The sultan did not impose uniformity on his subjects nor did he try to force the

⁷ Jonathan Bloom and Shelia Blair, *Islam: A thousand Years of Faith and power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), pp.79-80.

⁸ Amin Saikal, *Ibid.* pp. 32-33.

disparate elements of his empire into one huge party. The government merely provided a framework which enabled the different groups-Christians, Jews, Arabs, Turks, Berbers, merchants, ulema, tariqahs and trade guilds – to live together peacefully, each making its own contribution, and following its own beliefs and customs.⁹

All this good development has totally changed the world's political map when the Western (especially British and French) colonialism penetrated the Muslim world from the sixteenth century. Rise of the Western powers solidly paved the way for the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. From the eighteenth century, the French, Spanish, Italians and British made inroads into North Africa, the Persian Gulf to secure bases and protect their sea lanes, and as a result all started nibbling away different parts of a weakening Ottoman Empire, especially at the edges. Further, the Russians encroached on the northeast of the Islamic world in Transcaucasus and Central Asia, and the British and Dutch on its southeast extremities in Malaya and the East Indies. Muslims regarded all this Western expansion and domination as painful humiliation as well Christian attempts against their identity, religion, culture and way of life.

Though Western colonialism somehow influenced some sections of the Muslim in the different parts of the world to accepting modernization, it largely drove heavy negative reaction towards Western occupation. Some of the Islamic elements called for return to the basic teaching and values of Islam as enshrined, in their view, in the Qur'an and Hadith; some even advocated extremism as the path for change. The Islamic reformer Ibn Tammiyyah (1263-1328) played great role to shaping Islamic reaction towards Western colonialism and values. It's important to mention that Ibn Tammiyyah's ideas and teaching largely helped to develop the source for Islamic militancy, which is later considered as an Islamic fundamental radicalism by the capitalist class oriented Western leaderships. Ibn Tammiyyah influenced few key Islamists including Mohammed ibn Abd al-Wahab (1703-87) whose ideas eventually paved the way for origin of the Wahabi movement, which has been playing considerable influence in the modern Saudi state though its largely depend on the Western particularly the United States for its security and defense.

Apart from above-mentioned Islamic movements, various groups actively functioned as movements against to the western ideas. Mahadis or followers of those Islamic leaders who claimed to be Mahdis (the 'divinely guided' or 'awaited' ones sent by God) and who mounted revolts against European colonialism in different parts of the Muslim world. This group vigorously campaigned for what they called pure Islamic state as opposed to European political and cultural hegemony. Moroccan Sufi reformer Ahmad ibn Idris (1780-1836), who emphasized the importance of education, but ruled out the Western culture and ideas. Mohammed ibn Ali al-Sanusi (d. 1832), who found the Sanusiyyah movement, which remains play importance role in organizing form of Islam in Libya to date.

⁹ Karen Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History* (New York: Modern Library, 2000), p. 132.

Al-Afghani (1839-97), whose origins are disputed between Afghanistan and Iran, was a remarkable, though controversial, *ijtihadi*¹⁰ Islamic thinker played important role in his time not only in the Muslim world but also in Europe. It's important to mention that Al-Afghani was attracted by the Western political, legal and educational institutions. However, he did not approve Western domination on the Muslim world. He left behind few of his strong followers who carried out his ideas after his life. Egyptian Mohammed Abdu (1849-1905), whose idea largely reflected Al-Afghani, went against the Western cultural and political domination on the Muslim world. He desired Egypt's freedom and worked to transform Egyptian society into a modern Islamic state through the process of reforms.

In the beginning of the last century, Hassan al-Banna (1906-49), an Egyptian teacher, emerged as one of the most prominent and effective campaigner against the Western domination. He hunted revival of Islamic life in all forms of Muslims life. Although al-Banna died in 1949 and the Egyptian authorities attempted to curb the organization, the Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwan ul-Mulimun*) went on to become a mass movement, with some two million members by the late 1940s in Egypt and beyond. One of its most influential followers who emerged was Abul Ala Mawdudi (1903-79) in Pakistan. He was born in predominantly Hindu India; however, after partition of India in 1947, he located in predominantly Muslim Pakistan. Mawdudi vehemently rejected secularization and Western domination and called Muslims for unity against the enemy of Islam and Western ideas. His teaching and campaigns touched thousands to wage jihad against Western domination and its local Muslim ruling classes who sufficiently enjoyed privileges from the Western boss.¹¹ He was a founder of Jamaat-I Islami (Islamic Societies) in Pakistan and affected Pakistani politics to the extent that in the constitution of 1956 the country was described as an Islamic republic, the first of its kind in the Muslim world.

Though Islamic movements influenced thousands, they ultimately failed to achieve their common goal of uniting Muslims against their own Muslim ruling rulers who collaborate with Western leaders and Western intervention and influence, which were systematically planned by the Western leaders who had great influence on the Muslim ruling classes. However, Muslim Brotherhood played significant role influencing local ruling classes.

The end of Second World War created new world order. The new order dominated by the two leading camps, which were sharply divided by the conflicting ideologies capitalism and socialism. This development finally led new war that is largely sharpened by political and economic domination. This rival commonly described as a Cold War Remarkably, these conflicting camps did their best to woo other countries into their side. In this critical juncture, Muslim ruling classes and Islamic movements faced difficult choices.

¹⁰ Ijtihad: literally reasoned struggle;

¹¹ John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 120-4.

As common state practice during this period, Muslim countries took the side based on their own political economic and class interests. However, some Muslim countries did not take asylum under these big ideologies camps; instead they maintained “No West No East but Islam”.

Washington adopted a strategy designed to curb communist Soviets from further expansion, on the one hand, and to sap their energy and resources enough to cause the eventual collapse of Soviet power, on the other. As far as Muslim countries concern, USA applied major strategy to keep off Soviet influence in the Muslim countries: it supported firmly on the side of anti-communist conservative elements, which regarded Soviet communism goes against their religious belief and class interests. In the meantime, it made no difference to Washington whether the force was theocratic, autocratic or democratic. Washington decided to support those Muslim countries as long as they were anti-communist and ready to offer there cooperate with the USA imperialism. Washington maintained its theory that if ‘they are not with us they are against us’. And treated every nationalist as a potential communist. Washington made all attempts to woo Muslim countries into its side. The purpose of this effort was to become a global power.

Accordingly, the USA unleashed a serious of operations across the Muslim world. However, Washington, placed great attention on Saudi Arabia, Iran and Turkey, and set out to use its penetration of these states as a base for wider anti-communist and anti- radical activities in the region.

Saudi Arabia that reserves world’s largest oil stock officially declared *wahabism*¹² as its official line of religious status. Saudia Arabia’s religious stand widely provoked anger among its Muslim neighbors. Due to Saudi Rulers class interests and their religious line, they aspired USA’s support. Since end of the Second World War, Saudi Arabian leadership maintained its close ties with the Washington. Successive Presidents of the USA including current President George Bush continued to reassure their long term US support and protection to the Saudi’s theocratic and anti-democratic leaderships. In April 1950, in a secret agreement, the Truman Administration committed the USA to the defence of Saudi Arabia, alleviating its rulers’ long-standing concern about perceived threats from the British-supported Hashemite Kingdoms of Jordan and Iraq. This was followed by upgrading the facilities of the Dhahran airbase, turning it into one of the most important strategic bases in the chain of regional commands America was seeking to build for containment of Soviet communism and for possible large-scale future operations in the region. To all intents and purposes, Saudi Arabia was firmly placed within the US orbit on a long-term basis.

Meanwhile, the USA took all measures to strengthen its ties with the conservative Iranian leadership. Iranian ruler Shah initiated early steps in this regard. Shah due to his class affiliation largely influenced by the Western ideas and education. Further, he was very aware of radical nationalism, supported by the pro-Soviet Iranian communist party, Tudeh, which swept Iran during the allied occupation and peaked just after the war, the Shah cooperated in transforming Iran from a non-aligned country to a close ally of

¹² Wahabbism: Puritan, literal interpretation of Muslim holy texts
Modernist panaceas

the USA. When the war ended, the USA stepped up its military and economic aid to Iran. USA's fullest contribution to advancing Iranian military largely helped Shah to consolidate his power by oppressing his opponents. In return, Shaha paved the way for the USA to enjoy Iranian oil resources. The USA turned its blind eyes to all this atrocities and continued supported Shah only due to his fullest cooperation and supports to its aim to become global power. USA continued this policy until radical Islamist captures the power in 1977.

Meanwhile, another dimension was added to US involvement in the Middle East: it stemmed from US support for the creation of Israel and its subsequent adoption of the Jewish state as a strategic ally. From former President Truman to current President George Bush Jr, successfully extended their support to Israel existence and moved rapidly to arm Israel in the face of opposition from Arabs particularly common Arabians. It's significant to mention that USA's support to creation of Israel also invited opposition from the US Congress. Secretary of State George Marshall, who favored UN trusteeship of Palestine, and strongly advised against recognition of a Jewish state, for fear of creating an enduring bloody conflict, has inspired much controversy over the years. The USA leadership completely motivated by its political, defence and economic interests rather than common people aspirations. The president Truman decided in favor of recognizing Israel, for three important reasons. First, King Abdul Aziz had let him know that while he was opposed to the creation of Israel, he would not allow this to affect his 'friendship' and 'partnership' with Washington. The second was his personal concern about the plight of the Jewish people in the wake of the Holocaust, as well as pressure from the lobby both directly and indirectly through Democrat leaders who kept urging him to accord recognition due later in 1948. The third was a fear that the Soviet Union might recognize Israel and then gain a foothold in the Middle East by sending troops under Article 51 of the UN Charter to fend off possible Arab aggression against it. The USA recognized Israel within hours after UN approved the partition of Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state on May 14, 1948. This act widely regarded as a gate for violence, tragic, which led to complex conflict in the modern history of the Middle East.

It was obvious from the start that Jewish state could not survive in the heart of the Arab world without the USA's concrete political, economic and military support. By the late 1950s, as Cold War evolved, the USA found it imperative to adopt Israel as a strategic ally, and an important leverage and connecting point in America's attempt to check radical Arab nationalist challenges and Soviet activities in the region.

Further, the USA did not give up its attempts to chase other Muslim countries beyond the Middle East. The end of British colonial rule of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 created new geopolitical realities in the region and helped the USA to exploit the situation. The subcontinent broke up into two independent entities: the Islamic state of Pakistan and the predominantly Hindu but secular state of India, which took one step forward to Soviet side though it claimed it committed to the non-aligned foreign policy. India under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru put solid foundation forming its foreign policy, which would play down its colonial past and raise its credentials as an independent democratic state in its own right.

Pakistan considered India as a real threat to its sovereignty and national security. Given this, Pakistan founding father, Mohammed Ali Jinnah decided to transform Pakistan into an Islamic, but with a secular Westminster democratic system of government.

After partition, the USA worked hard to persuade the Nehru leadership to form its foreign policy to meet Washington interests. In early October 1949, President Truman invited Nehru on an official visit to the USA, where he was given a hero's welcome and reminded that the USA shared with India common goals of independence, freedom and democracy, and was therefore willing to provide whatever assistance it could. However, Nehru did not change his stance of neutrality with friendly relations with all powers, including the Soviet Union.

In fact, Soviet Union described Indian post independence leadership as bourgeois and called for a communist revolution against it. However, Soviet Union was very pleased when Nehru leadership did not open its ears to Washington. This situation caused considerable discomfort to the USA leadership.

India's continuous good relations with the Soviet Union, its diplomatic ties with communist China, refusal to send troops to Korea, and criticism to Japanese Peace Treaty damaged the USA hope on India beyond the reparations. As a consequence, the USA rapidly turned away from India to embrace India's archenemy, the Islamic state of Pakistan. Pakistan openly declared its support on the USA's position on Korea with a contribution of 5,000 troops, of the Japanese Peace Treaty, and of assurances that its Islamic ideology would provide no fertile ground for communism. The USA soon released various economic and military aids to Pakistan as a response for Pakistan's decision to back the USA.

Meanwhile, the USA moved swiftly to reap benefits from Ataturk's pro-Western secularist legacy in Turkey, and exploit its traditional ant-Russian posture and postwar fear of Soviet communism. While encouraging suppression of local communists, Washington rapidly extended to Turkey, as it did at the same time to Iran and Pakistan, large amounts of American economic and military aid. Ankara even went a step further than Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to accommodate American bases, enabling it to claim a special status for its relationship with the USA.

By the mid-1950s, the USA had achieved a position of eminence in most of the key states in the Muslim block. Its influence in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey could not be underestimated, and its inroads into pro-Western monarchical Jordan and Morocco (independent from 1956) appeared substantial. The USA was able to maintain these tight ties to develop US-sponsored triangular relationship between Iran, Saudi Arabia and Israel upon which it could solidly rest long-term American dominance.

The USA, however during this period faced huge challenges from the Muslim countries nationalists to maintain and benefit from its ties with the Muslim countries. The Arab nationalist challenge was articulated by the new revolutionary pan-Arabist republican regime of Gamal Abdul Nasser, which seized

power through a coup in July 1952. Though Nasser was a Muslim, he was fairly secularist. His ambition was to transform Egyptian society into a modern, independent state, and unite and radicalize the Arabs as one people against what he called all forms of feudalism, colonialism, imperialism and Zionism, as well as pro-Western Arab conservatism.

Nasser's domestic policies largely reflected Arab socialist system, which had all the weaknesses of a closed, command based political and economic order. His foreign policy, while partly successful especially in relation to nationalizing the Suez Canal and turning the Arab Anglo-French-Israeli attack on Egypt in 1956 into a political victory that made him an Arab hero almost overnight- divided the Arab world into radical nationalist or Nasserite and pro-Western conservative camps. Nasser's foreign policy also alienated the USA, which rejected Nasser's radical form of nationalism and his tilt towards the Soviet Union from 1956. In fact, it was this factor, which led Washington to withdraw its offer of World Bank funds for building Nasser's most important domestic project, the Aswan High Dam-a development which in turn prompted Nasser to nationalize the Suez Canal. As after the Suez war he learned more towards the Soviet Union for support. Soviet Union was very pleased with new development and responded by withdrawing its recognition of Israel, supporting the Palestinian and Arab cause. Soviet Union also extended its generous economic and military aid. Due to Nasser and his group-Soviet Union 'friendship' and 'ties', the USA turned its back on Egypt.

The USA leadership was aggravated with the Nasser leadership and took some effective measures to contain Nasser's radical nationalism by identifying it with international communism' and supporting anti-Nasserite forces wherever possible in the region. In fact, Nasser made some sound progress to formalizing Arab nationalism in the wake of USA's determination to hinder growing Arab nationalism. Nasser foreign policy did little to advance the Palestinian cause, contain Israel's growing power, or limit US support for Israel. However, Nasser found difficulties to advance his Arab nationalism due to lack of 'expected' support from Soviet Union and huge containment from the US leadership. By the late 1960s, Nasser had realized the need to come to terms with the USA, but died in 1970 before he could take some positive measures towards this direction.

Nasser's successor Anwar al- Sadat (1970-81) took some drastic measures to 'de-Nasserize' Egypt and turned Egypt's foreign policy to mollify the US leadership's interest in the region. The USA was quite satisfied with new leadership and encouraged him to come to terms with Israel, which was regarded as a hurdle of the peace in the region: Sadat made peace with Israel by concluding the Camp David Agreement of 1978, which was backed by Washington. In fact, this agreement stamped Arab nationalism and leaving the Palestinians, the Syrians and their Arab supporters in the hard situation. Sadat's decision to side with the US leadership and normalize relations with Israel largely provoked radical Islamist opponents. Sadat's Islamist opponents targeted him and assassinated him in October 1981. Though Sadat's allies were shocked by his death, they easily found another person who carried out Sadat's policy.

Husni Mubarak succeeded Sadat and pursued Sadat's legacy to cement Egypt's position as trusted US ally.

Husni Mubarak sufficiently provided room to the US to consolidate its interests in the region. This noticeably improved US regional dominance, and strengthened Israel's position to take military strikes against Lebanon in 1982 and weak the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). This development negatively induced Islamists and radical nationalists not only in Egypt and, but also across the Arab and Muslims world to fight against the US dominance in the region.

The US foreign policy, which designed to dominate the middle East particularly Muslim world for the US' strategic and capitalist economic interests not only aggravated tensions in the Middle East but also goaded in Indonesia, Afghanistan and Muslims as whole in the world. In fact, containment strategy locked the USA into a very narrow mindset. It limited its option to a policy of penetrating and co-opting whichever country it deemed necessary. It also encouraged intolerance, intimidation and intervention towards those who go against its international position. The USA did not take honestly any logical actions to encourage the democracy in the region, though it always claims itself as a master of democracy in the world, in the contrary, the USA spared no efforts to back, promote and even impose regimes in the Muslim world. Why Washington does not support democracy in Muslim countries? One of major reasons was its relation to the Middle East. Industrialized nations particularly the USA interests in cheap oil and the survival of Israel are better served by authoritarian regimes which will resist demands for a fairer share of oil revenues or for a fair deal for the Palestinians.¹³

It is important to mention that the regimes, which were encouraged and supported by the US in the Muslim world, were painstakingly corrupt and contrary to all the democratic and liberal values. Amin Saikal rightly points the situation:

It paid little or no attention to the suffering and aspirations of the peoples living under such regimes, and upheld its stand on human rights very selectively and only in relation to its adversaries, not in respect of those it wished to subordinate. Washington repeatedly ignored what its policy behavior was supporting in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan and Indonesia or for that matter many other Muslim countries. Only very occasionally, and even then under intense pressure, did it find it necessary to cajole a friendly regime towards reform, as in the case of Iran in the early 1960's but without going the distance necessary to ensure the success of the reforms. Its opposition to radical nationalist forces, through fear of their becoming susceptible to Soviet communism or a conduit for anti-American subversion whether in the Arab world or elsewhere in the Muslim world, proved very costly in the long run, depriving the USA of the opportunity to develop a firm understanding of what these forces were all about, and to come to terms with

¹³ <http://www.newint.org/issue345/democracy.htm#key>

them as embodying the aspirations of peoples who had suffered greatly from and under European colonialism.¹⁴

Successive American administrations, from Truman to current George Bush, Jr., could not concentrate to build people friendly and pro-democracy governments beyond their own interests. American administration always claims that they are encouraging democratic values, but the fact clearly demonstrates the different picture. The USA's post1945 preoccupation with the three goals of defeating Soviet communism, controlling oil and other significant natural resources in the Muslim world, and protecting Israel despite its inherently expansionist and discriminatory nature as a confessional state, led it to become too self-indulgent and self-righteous and disinclined to develop strategies which could win people's minds and hearts in the Muslim world. In fact, successive US administrations achieved their 'goals'. The US leaderships nevertheless, in later staged paid sufficient price for their narrow-minded capitalist political and economic agenda in the region.

The US' political game to maintain its capitalist political and economy interest in the Middle East eventually brought Islamist radical into power. These radicals naturally got kind of Islamist political and economic program, which directly or indirectly goes against the American interest in the region. Iranian revolution and Afghanistan's awakening were typical example in this regard.

In Iran, Shah came to power in 1953 with full backing of the USA. Shah acted as a bridgehead for US influence in Iran. Shah's policy was severely criticized by his Islamists opponents and Soviet Union. Amin Saikal notes the consequences:

The overall result was that Iran in the 1970's became more dependent on the United States, and thus more open to American political, economic and social [and military] influence than ever before, though the nature of this dependence was different from that in the past. Particularly in view of a fast-growing number of Americans with influential positions in the Iranian administration, economy, armed forces, and social services, many Iranians became increasingly convinced that the Shah was essentially an American puppet, who had sold their country to the United States. They felt that their cultural identity, traditional beliefs, and values as well as traditional yearning for freedom and justice were being exploited to benefit foreigners more than Iranians... They felt that the country had been led in a direction... not of their own choosing, and that was contrary to their needs and expectations. They could not help but implicate the United States continuously in what the Shah was imposing on them.¹⁵

Shah did not care much about domestic criticism that rose against him. In fact, Shah was very unpopular in the end of the 1978. There were two under-ground militant groups, Fedayeen Khalq (People's

¹⁴ Amin Saikal, *opcit*, p. 67.

¹⁵ Amin Saikal, *The Rise and fall of the Shah* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp.207-8.

Sacrificers) and Mujahideen Khalq (People's Fighters), stepped up their activities, including targeted assassination of Westerners, especially Americans. Shah simply branded these groups as isolated Marxist and Islamic-Marxist groups respectively and maintained these groups did not have remarkable influence among the public. The USA did not realize the ground situation and continued to believe that Shah had high control in the country. Further, Washington flowed its 'generous help' without suspension. Under the US-Iranian agreement of August 1976, commercial trade between them was to rise from \$10 billion in 1974-76 to \$40 billion during 1976-80; and their military trade, about \$10 billion in 1973-76, was to total another \$15 billion in 1976-80.¹⁶ As late as November 1978, while Iranian students were demonstrating outside the White House against the visiting Shah, Carter praised him as a 'strong leader, and declared, 'we look upon Iran as very stabilizing force in the world at large'.¹⁷

In fact, as mentioned above, the US administrations did not understand the ground situation or it ignored the situation. The Shah's policies angered many Iranians, particularly youth. One of the most active figures was Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1902-89) who provided the leadership to the oppressed Iranians who were long waited an alternative solution to replace the Shah leadership, which appease American administration. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was diligent and clever enough figure in the Iranian political scene. He learned how to change people anti-shah mood into his political agenda. By late 1978, when the revolution had involved every segment of Iran's population, including some upper and middle class supporters of the Shah who had benefited from his policies but no longer found his rule conducive to a comfortable existence; Khomeini and his cleric supporters were able to seize the leadership of the revolution. The US administration was very shocked and paralyzed by the purpose of the revolution. Khomeini vowed to export Iran's revolution to the region against what he called 'US-backed' satanic regimes.

The Iran's new leadership formed its domestic and foreign policies to meet leadership's basic political agenda, which drives from Islamic teaching. The leadership goal was to establish Islamic state in accordance with Shi'ite Islamic line. They paid great attention to applying *Jihadi* to formulate domestic and foreign policies. Iranian hostage crisis in 1979 was great example in the nature. Though Khomeini did not support openly militant's action to seize some 50 American diplomats for 20 months from November 4, 1979, he expressed understanding and sympathy for the militant's action.

The other example was Iran's sponsorship of the Lebanese revolutionary Shi'ite group Hezbollah (Party of God), which is founded in 1982. The movement planned to work for the political agenda that goes in accordance with Iranian leadership's aspiration.

It was essentially Khomeini's and Khomeini-inspired *jihadi* Islamism that led Washington to develop a particular mindset about radical political Islam, and perceive and react to it more through its own bitter

¹⁶The Age, 9 August 1976.

¹⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 November 1977

experience with Khomeini's regime than anything else. The US administration labeled all political forces of the Islam, which come up with the agenda that refuse to accept the US policies and hegemony.

Further, the US administration decided to support any elements in the region to weak the Iranian leadership. In this context, the US administration took side with Saddam Hussein to achieve its objectives. Saddam Hussein was not very happy of Iranian Islamic revolution. It is important to maintain that Saddam's rule in Iraq was secular though he did not tolerate opposition from Iraq people. Saddam was bit uneasy about neighboring country's new development, and waiting for the good opportunity to exploit the situation. Saddam thought that Iran's domestic situation was not healthy and subject to American sanctions, he had an opportunity to attack Iran in order not only to secure favorable resolution of a boarder dispute with it over the Shatt al-Arab, but also to bring down Khomeini's regime. Saddam though that Iraq could be regional power if he bring down the Khomeini's rule in Iran. Though the US administration was publicly showed its neutrality, and called on both sides to disengage, it was colluding with Saddam Hussein's side by providing military and economic as solidarity to the Iraq regime. The US supplied some 30 percent of Iraq's agriculture needs, virtually all under government credit and subsidy programs that eventfully totaled \$ 1 billion a year to Iraq.¹⁸ Despite the US backing, Iran resisted in its capacity. The war was lasted until mid-1988 when finally Khomeini, under the threat of unraveling the Iranian revolution, accepted a UN proposal for a ceasefire.

The US' "cool" relations with Iraq was came to end when Saddam decided to invade fellow oil-rich Arab state and close ally of American, Kuwait, on August 2, 1990. The US, once strong supporter and arms supplier to Iraq now suspected the Iraq regime with Israel about Saddam Hussein's production of weapons of mass destruction, especially chemical and biological arms. The US allied forces under the so-called UN mandate defeated the Saddam Hussein forces in Kuwait. However, the US led forces did not succeed or did not try to oust the Saddam regime in Iraq; it's due to fear Iraq might disintegrate and that Iran might benefit from this because of its sectarian ties with the Iraq Shi'ite majority population. After Iraq's invasion in Kuwait, the US put all out effort to maintain its interests in the region. The US ruling classes understood that Iraq and Iran would be possible threat to its interest in the region. Thus, it now treated both as 'enemies', against whom it vowed to protect its 'friends' who agreed the US domination in the region. It's important to mention that the Democratic Administration of Bill Clinton (1993-2001) continued to regard Iran and Iraq as major obstacles for the US interests in the region. Clinton even went further to punish Iran and Iraq equally.

Iran's politics started to change after Khomeini's death in June 1989. Reform minded Hashemi Rafsanjani (1989-97) succeeded Khomeini. Rafsanjani put good foundation to shift Iran from Islamic traditionalism to Islamic secularism. However, he faced huge challenges from *jihadi* influenced Islamic clerics in Iran.

¹⁸ Barry Rubin, "The United States and Iraq: From Appeasement to War", in Amatzia Baram and Barry Rubin (eds), *Iraq's Road to war* (London: Macmillan, 1993), p.255.

ZXCVAgainst this backdrop Mohammed Khatami rose from the ranks of the ijthadis to be elected President of Iran in a landslide in July 1997. Mohammed Khatami was more aggressive in his reform agenda. To realize his objective; he has campaigned for the Islamic 'Civil Society'¹⁹ as a mean to 'Islamic democracy'. Khatami claims Khomeini would share if he were alive. He argues for plurality of views and freedom to express them as a condition for developing an Islamic civil society.²⁰ He has formulated Iran's foreign policy to enter soft relations with the Western countries. Rafsanjani also promoted dialogue between civilizations and cross-cultural understandings within the international system of nation-states.²¹

Khatami openly invited Washington to engage in dialogue with Tehran and asked to stop hostile towards Islamic state. Bill Clinton administration had frozen its tough policy towards in its second term due to heavy criticism from such influential figures as two former National Security Advisors, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Brent Scowcroft.²² Washington took some measures liken easing ban on Iranian exports to the US, road map to be worked out for eventual government to government contacts. However, substantial progress was hindered by hardliners on both sides. Both hard liners suspect each others.

The relations between the Iranian leadership and the US leadership suffered severe loss after current president Bush assumed power with a manifestly hostile position towards countries such as Iran and Iraq. President Bush was very determined to alter Clinton's policy towards Iran. Moreover, Bush took very strong measures to fight against the potential US enemies in the Middle Eastern region. Bush administration accused Iran of providing sanctuary to fleeing Taliban and Al Qaeda leaders and of causing problems for Hamid Karzai's new government in Kabul. In fact, Iran completely opposed Taliban rule in Afghanistan, and supported anti-Taliban forces in Afghanistan And now Washington accuse Iran sponsoring terrorism in the region, supporting anti-US radical shi'ti groups in Iraq. Iran strongly denied the US accusations.

As far as Palestinian problem concern, the US administrations from Truman to current George Bush did not engage in acceptable ways. They have sided with Israel, and ignored Palestinians reasonable grievances. For example, from 1949 to 2002 US grants to Israel totaled over \$87 billion,²³ and from 1991 the annual amount registered a dramatic rise, reaching a little more than \$4 billion in the fiscal year of 2000.²⁴ Of the total amount, more than \$41.5 billion was in military grants and over \$29 billion in economic grants.

¹⁹ Khatami states in Islamic Civil society citizens enjoy the right to determine their own destiny, supervise the governance and hold the government accountable. An Islamic civil society is not one where only Muslims are entitled to rights, considered citizens. Rather, all individuals are entitled to rights, within the framework of law and order.

²⁰ Khatami, Islam, Dialogue and Civil Society, pp.53-4

²¹ Mohammad Khatami, 'Dialogue and the New Millennium', Address delivered to the 30th General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, Paris, 29 October 1999, p.2.

²² Zbigniew Brzezinski, Brent Scowcroft and Richard Murphy, 'Differentiated Containment', *Foreign Affairs*, 76:3 (May-June 1997), pp.20-30.

²³ Camille Mansour, *Beyond Alliance: Israel in US Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p.190.

²⁴ Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, August/September 1996, p.104.

In Israel, hard line prime ministers hands getting more influence. The election of rightwing Israeli Prime ministers, Benjamin Netanyahu (1996-98) and Ariel Sharon (2001-) essentially represent the growing power of the Israeli Right, dedicated to the triple goals of 'Greater Israel', suppression of the Palestinian resistance by whatever means, and humiliation of Arabs. Washington did not take any measures to stop Israel right wing ruling classes' political agenda, which has systemically planned to hurt Palestinian people. Naturally, this helped galvanize Muslim activists against Israel, and led them to become distrustful and resentful of the United States. Many of them view the US-Israeli alliance as a Jewish-Christian conspiracy and Arab-Israeli conflict, and acting as the main obstacle to resolving them sooner rather than later. Moreover, from ordinary Palestinians to radical Islamists believe that the US strategic partnership with Israel has been critical in enabling the Jewish state to defy resolution of the Palestinian problem. They also viewed that the US peace initiatives only target to help Israel rather than victimized Palestinians. They have been deeply disenchanted by the USA's double standard-one approach for Israel and another for Arabs. People in the Middle East also heavily criticized the US attitudes on the UN Security Council resolutions, which urge Israel governments to adhere to the international norms and recognize the Palestinian rights. Sadly, Washington always vetoes the UN resolutions critical of Israel, for example, the United States vetoed an Arab-backed U.N. resolution Tuesday demanding that Israel halt threats to expel Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. Immediately after the vote, America's U.N. Ambassador John Negroponte reiterated that he said the United States was forced to use its veto because the resolution failed to name groups such as Hamas and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, which have claimed credit for numerous suicide bombings and other attacks against Israelis. Nasser Al-Kidwa, the Palestinian U.N. observer, said the United States had lost its credibility to play an honest broker in the Middle East peace process. He warned that "serious consequences may follow the use of this veto, and the United States will bear the consequences for that."

The last veto of a Mideast resolution was also by the United States on Dec. 20, 2002 ;^a an Arab-backed resolution condemning Israel for the killings of three U.N. workers that U.S. officials termed one-sided. One council diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, said a U.S. veto would send the wrong message, especially to the Arab world at a time that the United States already faces seriously problems in Iraq.²⁵ Another example of Washington double standard was its stand on Iraq. Washington actively engaged to urge Iraq leadership to implement UN resolutions or remain under UN sanctions, but has put no similar pressure on Israel. More, the US alleged Iraq and Iran over the weapons of mass destruction (WMD). But its is open secret that Israel demonstrates WMD capabilities.

Israel is widely believed to have nuclear weapons capability but has not signed on to major agreements, including the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which is aimed at curbing the spread of nuclear arms. Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Maher said: "It is unacceptable that Israel's possession of such weapons should remain a reality that some prefer to ignore or prevent the international community ...

²⁵http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&cid=514&e=2&u=/ap/20030916/ap_on_re_mi_ea/un_israel_palestinians_21

from facing it squarely and frankly." ²⁶Washington argument is Israel is democratic state and it can be trusted, but Arabs and the Iranians are not to be trusted. All this Washington 'narrow' political decisions largely paved the way for Palestinians and Islamic radicals to severely hate USA. On the other hand, Washington's approaches largely induced young Muslims to go after what Washington now describe as Islamic terrorist groups and gave solid reasons to those of movements to recruit young Muslims and target the US interests in the region and beyond. The best out come was attacks on the two World Trade Center Towers in New York on September 11. In my opinion, September 11 attacks were result of the US failure to engage properly in the Middle East. The US foreign policies in the Middle East induced young Muslims to join Bin Laden's fanatic organization. Bin Laden, close associate of Washington policy makers during the Soviet presence in Afghanistan, very tactfully exploited the Middle East situation to realize his political agenda.

Above mentioned developments emerged from different bases and produced different outcomes. They underline the danger of inadequate sensitivity to the Muslim world's complexities by the USA and other Western states which have been content to follow the US lead. The US policy towards Iranian Islamic leadership, and its radicalism, Afghan Islamic resistance, and Palestinian Islamic awareness and struggle to regain lost rights induced Arabs and Muslims in the region to unite against the US. Bin Laden and his Al Qaeda network were able to draw considerable sympathy from Islamic radicals. This is not prove that majority of Muslims are set ton side with Bin Laden and his fanatic activists, but the US should administration should take into account that Washington policy and actions in dealing with Middle Eastern crisis were able to tap to boost recruitment and support. Further, the Bush administration's recent decision to oust the Saddam Hussein regime without any logical evidence hugely angered Muslims as a whole and Middle Eastern Muslims particularly. The US invasion openly violated the UN rules and norms and totally ignored international community's voice. The president Bush justified his invasion by saying that Saddam had direct involvement with the attacks on the two World Trade Center Towers in New York on 11th September 2001, and Iraq has been producing and harboring WMD. The Point is that above mentioned both charges have not got any evidence yet. Significantly, President Bush recently admitted that Saddam Hussein had no connection with the Al Qaeda network operation on 11th September 2001.²⁷ Therefore, it is becoming increasing impossible for Muslim moderates and progressive sections to urge ordinary Muslims to change their attitudes towards radical Muslim organizations unless the US administration takes initiatives to engage positively in the Arab world.

Conclusion

In the war on terror, the USA and its allies have primarily focused on symptoms of terrorism rather than its root causes. The USA cannot reach its goal in achieving their anti-terrors objectives by use of force alone, by capturing terrorists or killing them. These operations only will provide temporary solutions, it

²⁶http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&cid=1312&ncid=1312&e=12&u=/nm/20030929/wl_nm/nuclear_israel_un_dc_1

²⁷http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/20030918/ap_on_go_pr_wh/bush_saddam&cid=544&ncid=716

cannot stamp out the root of the terrorism as long as very causes and conditions that enabled Al Qaeda to build a multinational network of activities with some western collaborators. And more groups similar to Al Qaeda may emerge in the future. The best way to eradicate terrorism is to address the Arab world political and social problem through dialogue and compromise rather than using force and inflexible manner. The US should engage positively in Middle East crisis. It should understand its responsibilities and duties in this nature. Further, the Washington should find new approach to win Arabs and Muslims hearts and mind such as opening new roads, libraries, help disadvantaged groups. That is to say US should show its human face to the Arab world rather than unilaterally bombing an Arab country under so-called terrorist and WMD threat.

The USA should not try to the reshape the Muslim worlds with help of Israel. The US administration should stop its double standard policy and urge Israel leadership to work for the reasonable political solution that allows both Israel and Palestinian live to gather side by side as two independent states with dignity. Washington cannot claim that world would be better off without Saddam Hussein and bin Laden unless it prepare to change itself, unless it stops thinking Middle East conflict and Bin Laden issue could be addressed through military operations.

The US has been long been champion of advocating democracy in the Middle Eastern. Democratic norms, values and practices are not something that can mushroom overnight; they take a long time to evolve, sometimes involving painful periods of political dislocation and civil disturbance, as the history of Western democracies have shown.

Moreover, the USA and its allies have to recognize that no matter what they think of Islam and its ways, this religion is, and will continue to shape the lives of over a billion Muslims, and that Islam has always served, as it will in the future. As the democratic Islamist and human rights activist Rachid Ghannouchi argues, it is time for the world powers to come to terms with Islam.²⁸

Washington should change its political errors, which helped Muslim radical organizations to exploit the ground situation. It is huge political task. Does Washington have the political guts to do so? There is no positive signal so far from the American ruling class in this nature.

With respect to Muslims, Muslim countries should work hard to reform theory respective countries. Washington must give genuine support in this regard. If Muslim countries continue to refuse their citizens to enjoy basic democratic rights, reactionary forces like Al Qaeda would occupy more room in the heart of common Muslims.

Muslims have to realize that Islam does not provide ready-made answers to all their problems. Rather, it provides an ethical and moral perspective within which Muslims must endeavor to find answers to all

²⁸ Cited in Azzam S. Tamimi, Rachid Ghannouchi: A Democrat within Islamism (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.179.

human problems. The way forward to a fresh, contemporary appreciation of Islam requires moving away from reduction to synthesis and from single literalist interpretation to a pluralistic understanding of Islam.

Primarily, as individuals and communities, Muslims need to reclaim agency. To insist on their right and duty, as believers and knowledgeable people. To interpret and reinterpret the basic sources of Islam. To question what now goes under the general rubric of '*shariah*' and to declare that much of Islamic jurisprudence is now dangerously obsolete. To stand up to the absurd notion of an Islam confined by a geographically bound state. The gates of *ijtihad* have to be thrown wide open so that the basic concepts of Islam can be framed in a broader context.

Serious rethinking within Islam is long overdue. Muslims have been comfortably relying, or rather falling back, on age-old interpretations for much too long. This is why they feel so full of pain in the contemporary world, so uncomfortable and out of sync with the spirit of our time. If the events of 11 September unleash the best intentions "' the essential values of Islam' then the phoenix will have risen from the ashes of the twin towers.

Muslim radicals who were identified as Islamic terrorist by Washington should understand that the way they used to show anger and frustration other word terrorism and violence will ever help to address any problem. As Asghar Ali Engineer correctly points that terrorism not only attracts world-wide condemnation as in the case of terrorist attacks on New York World Center it will also compound the very problem they seek to solve. If they really believe in Islam they should do everything possible to project image of Islam as a religion of peace and compassion, not of *jihad* and violence. These misguided terrorists should seriously as to why Islam today is being equated with fanaticism and violence. Their acts are greatly responsible for this bad image of Islam. The violence torn world needs more of them today to solve our problems with the most morally powerful weapons of peace and wisdom.²⁹

And I would like to firmly state based on my political line of thinking that conflict in the Middle East and other parts of the world is a result of capitalist class political and economic agenda. The west, which is dominated by the capitalist ideology ruthlessly attempted to defeat the communism by several ways including allying with those of Islamic radicals such as Bin Laden who is Washington's principal enemy after September 11 attacks on the two World Towers in New York now turns against is own class elements. In my opinion, Arabic states and Islamic radical elements share capitalist agenda though they claim that they adhere to the Islamic teaching. Therefore, I would describe present conflict between the West and Islam as a conflict within capitalist class. Current chaos can be only overcome through transforming our world into the healthy new world order which give no room for hegemony, aggression and inequality.

²⁹ Asghar Ali Engineer, *Attack on World Trade Centre and Its Implications* [http:// ecumene.org/IIS/csss57.htm](http://ecumene.org/IIS/csss57.htm)