TERRORISM, TERRORIZATION OF ISLAM AND ITS IMPACT ON ISLAMIC CHARITY ORGANIZATIONS

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Introduction

Today's Muslims are facing the most crucial time of history since the last few decades. They are victimized by the irresponsible streotyping attitude due to September 11, 2001 and the London Bombing on 7th July, 2005.

It has become a common fashion that Muslims are being charged with terrorism for every single terrorist acts in any part of the world. Western criticisms towards Islam seem to have increased more than ever before. Muslims are being terrorized in the name of 'anti-terrorism' everywhere, as a result, Muslims suffer in almost all countries of the world.

Islamic organizations, vastly in the poor and affected Muslim nations, like Afghanistan, Palestine and many others, have been shut down and restricted; their offices have been raided; the officers are held for trials and tribunals besides the ongoing 'security' measures taken against the Muslims. Muslims are being laughed at as 'culprits' and 'terrorists.'

This paper discuss the issue of terrorism, its causes, Islamic funda-mentalism and *Jihad* in relation to terrorism and its overall impacts on Islamic charity organizations. Finally, it suggests some steps required for muslim to face the today's challenge.

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Terrorism and Terrorization of Islam

The word 'terrorism' was first used in France to describe a new system of government adopted during the French Revolution (1789-1799). The *regime de la terreur* (Reign of Terror) was intended to promote more a democratic state. But it was negatively accepted when violence and oppression went on in the name of terreur. Yet, it did not gain much of popularity until 19th century, until a Russian group described their violence against the Tsarist rule.[1]

Terrorism generally is used to mean the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear for bringing about political change. All terrorist acts involve violence or—equally important—the threat of violence.[2]

The ultimate target of the terrorists is to bring about political change in the society. They argue that they did not have any other options open except this. The famous aphorism "One man's terrorist is freedom fighter for the other" underscores how the use of the word is highly subjective depending upon one's sympathies with the terrorists or with the victims.

Jenkins and Laqueur defined terrorism in a very similar approach, according to them terrorism is illegitimate force used against innocents for political purpose,[3] although acknowledged that its definitions are fruitless, as it's a controversial term. On the other hand, FBI definition includes an addition of social motives to political: 'the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a Government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in further-ance of political or social objectives'.[4]

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1. "Terrorism", Encarta Reference Library 2004 CD ROM, Copyright © 1993-2003, Microsoft Corporation.

2. Todd R. Clear, "Foreword." in Jonathan R. White, Terrorism: An introduction Wadsworth (3rd ed.), 2002., pg. xi

3. Jonathan R. White, Ibid., pg. 8

4. Quoted from: http://www.fbi.gov/publish/terror/terrusa.html

The State Department, U.S., defines terrorism as:

Premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.[5]

Besides, Boaz Ganor, the Director of the International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism, attempts to define it this way:

Terrorism is the intentional use of, or threat to use violence against civilians or against civilian targets, in order to attain political aims .[6]

In his speech on 17 September 2002, George W. Bush says:

The United States of America is fighting a war against terrorists of global reach. The enemy is not a single political regime or person or religion or ideology. The enemy is terrorism—premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against innocents.[7]

Whatever the definitions may be, the basic concept of this act can be summed up to be a deliberate act to bring change in the political arena with specified interests, where the main victims are the innocent civilians. Benjamin Netanyahu, former Prime Minister of Israel, adopted a similar definition.[8]

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5.   Boaz Ganor, "Defining Terrorism", Quoted from: http://www.youmeworks.com/definingterrorism.html

6.   "Defining Terrorism", Quoted from: http://www.ict.org.il/articles/define.htm

7.   "The Bush Doctrine", Encarta Reference Library 2004 CD ROM, Copyright © 1993-2003, Microsoft Corporation.

8.   Benjamin Netanyahu, (ed.), Defining Terrorism: How West Can Win, Jonathan Institute: NY, 1986, pg. 9.

Neo-Terrorism through Media Terrorism

'Neo-Terrorism' refers to the biased presentation of 'communication media technology' against specific groups of people, in order to achieve aspired goals.

Here, the act is an intentional, but illegitimate, with the use of power over the media networks, to violate and defy a targeted group of society for self-benefaction or privatized interests. It is usually implied through media to influence the other factors.

The invasion on Iraq, with no clear proof of Weapon of Mass Destruction, was a clear manipulation of media to gain support for it. At the end of the day, human rights are violated, UN's decision disregarded, millions become homeless and the U.S. galvanizes 'neo-terrorism' through media propaganda in the name of 'anti terrorism.'

Jason McCue, a lawyer and adviser on counter-terrorism and restorative justice, argues that the war against this 'neo-terrorism' has three fronts: technological (an arms and intelligence race over security), financial, and the ideological battle waged through the mass media. He adds Neo-terrorism uses the media not just to publicize its ideology but to instill fear into every home with a television, as a recruiting device and to justify its actions to the public.[9]

Root Causes of Terrorism

Terrorism has occurred throughout history for a variety of reasons. Its causes can be historical, cultural, political, social, psychological, economic, or religious—or any combination of these.

In general, democratic countries have provided more fertile ground for terrorism because of the open nature of their societies. In such societies citizens have fundamental rights, civil liberties are legally protected,

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9.   "Spinning Past the Gates of Hell," *The Observer,* March 28, 2004.

and government control and constant surveillance of its citizens and their activities is absent. By the same token, repressive societies, in which the government closely monitors citizens and restricts their speech and movement, have often provided more difficult environments for terrorists. Examples include Russia under tsarist rule and the Communist-ruled Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, besides China and others.

In broad terms the causes that have commonly compelled people to engage in terrorism are grievances borne of political oppression, cultural domination, economic exploitation, ethnic discrimination, and religious persecution. In some cases, it was due to the political inequities as during the 'Baader-Meinhof Gang' of Germany, and the 'Red Brigades' in Italy came to existence.[10] Other terrorists have sought to fulfill some mission that they believe to be divinely inspired or 'millennialist '.[11]

On the other hand, there is also experienced state-sponsored terrorism, to further its foreign policy. State sponsorship has proven invaluable to some terrorist organizations—by supplying arms, money, and a safe heaven, among other things. In doing so, it has transformed ordinary groups, with otherwise limited capabilities, into more powerful and menacing opponents.[12]

The psychological roots of terrorism depend on psychological states of humans, i.e.: Normal, Tensed, Desperate and Extreme. Naturally, in a peaceful environment, like that of Malaysia, a child is born in the 'normal' state. Here, he gets no chance, nor he thinks even, to terrorize others. On the other hand, in a state like that of Palestine, present day Iraq and Kashmir (this indicates the psychological state of 'desperate' and 'extreme'), where the child is born in an environment where terrorization is an ongoing process; he experiences this act as an indivisible part of his life,

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10. "Terrorism" in Encarta Reference Library, op cit.

11. Lindsey Hal, There's a New World Coming: An In-Depth Analysis of the Book of Revelation, Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 1984. pg. 253

12. "Terrorism", Encarta Reference Library, op. cit.

thus, ends up with a similar practice in life, as he finds no other means but to adopt it. Although, we Muslims don't consider the phenomena in Palestine as terrorism, as they are fighting for their right to free Palestine, the Jewish illegal occupation of the state is indeed terrorism and this leads the innocent to adopt the act.

Besides, the cultural roots of terrorism has been widely and successfully penetrated by Hollywood and its media allies, to the innocent minds of the youths, widening the gate to crime, violence, murder, sensual activities and terrorism. Besides its hatred towards the Arabs and Islam in general are also among the heinous acts of terrorization.

Considering the hue and cry widely circulated by the US to "modify" the curricula (aimed at the religious curricula) of the Muslim world, as claimed to be propagating 'terrorism' in the Muslim minds, but why can't we see USA demanding Israel to revise its curricula or change its foreign policy against Palestine. Education curricula in the Muslim world were never a root cause for terrorism.

It was indeed an urgent necessity for the Muslim world to bring about changes in the curricula (especially the religious curricula) and reform it, keeping inline with the concept of 'Islamization of knowledge.'

The main factors to this phenomenon described by Prof. Yusuf Al-Qaradawi can be :

1. Absence of moderate line of thinking. It is important to come into an open interaction, instead of going underground.

2. Absence of true scholars who are capable to convince with the proofs from the Qur'an and Sunnah. This lead to a market of unqualified so called 'Ulema' for the authorities.

3. Oppression on the people and lack of democracy. It lead to take actions on own hands and violence perpetrated.

4.   Negligence of Shari'a law.

5.   Corruption and proliferation of oppression in the society.

Islamic Fundamentalism and the Current Crisis

Islamic fundamentalism, as perceived by the West, is a threat to the Western values and culture, especially to the supremacy of the West after the Cold War era. They view Islamic revivalism (or Islamic fundamentalism, as they widely depict), the approach to set back Islam in its original canon as a scheme to re-inculcate Islamic values, while Islam has lost its supremacy after the downfall of Granada and later after the colonization of the Muslim world followed by the fall of the Ottoman Empire after World War I.[13] They have replaced, at least in their imaginary minds, Islam as the major threat and rival after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

While considering the literal meaning of 'fundamentalism',[14] why don't we mull over the adherents of capitalism and democracy as 'fundamental capitalist' and 'fundamental democrats?'

But, historically, 'fundamentalism' is a concept evolved within the Christian theology. It has been later negatively worn in the media. More specifically, the term 'fundamentalism' and secular negativism toward it dates back to the latter part of the 19th century. Even until the late 1850's, the dominant trend, especially in North America was to emphasize the uncritical authority of the Bible. But, soon the parishioners as well as a

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13.   For further reading, see Davidson Lawrence, Islamic Fundamentalism, Greenwood Press, 1998, pg. 3

14.   Every ideology, concept, theory, whether economic, political, familial or religious, is based on certain characterizing features or the least common denominators so to speak. These features of a given ideology are its fundamental principles. Logically, then, fundamentalism would mean an attitude, an effort or a movement which adheres to or tries to promote these fundamentals. In that case, free market policy and privatized economy are fundamentals of capitalist economic system, on the other hand, freedom of speech, thought and choice are the fundamentals of a democratic government.

number of church leaders started demanding a more liberal understanding of the Bible in the light of historical and scientific information. The controversy became so acute that in 1878 a Bible conference was convened in Niagara Falls, New York. The conference laid down nine fundamental principles. The signatories of this declaration named themselves 'fundamentalists' and called their challengers heretics.[15]

Islamic fundamentalism, like its Christian counterpart, holds fast to the basic dogmas and beliefs of Islam. Protestants did not tolerate any criticism to their religious beliefs and demanded a total unconditional submission to their faith. Islamic fundamentalists use this term to identify themselves as the ones attaching firmly with the Qur'an and Sunnah. They call on to establish the fundamentals of Islam in every facets of life.

Islamic Fundamentalism should not be coined together with radicalism. In the West, Islamic fundamentalists are usually perceived as the extreme radicalists who wage war on all fronts against the West. There are many moderate Islamic groups who work for the social welfare, establishing schools, orphanages and for just causes of society. There are some radical groups who embrace extreme ideology in the name of Islam. But such radical beliefs have no place in Islam.

Islamic fundamentalists believe that Muslim world is in a state of decline; and the reason for it is the departure from the true teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. The remedy therefore is the total submission to the comprehensive teachings of the Qur'an. It is incumbent on all Muslims to establish just society based on Islamic shari'ah as enshrined in the Qur'an, Sunnah and illustrated by the rightly guided Caliphs. Islamic Fundamentalism is against Westernization and secularization, but not necessarily against modernization. It accepts science and technology provided that it does not contradict with the real teachings of Islam.[16]

15.   Mustapha Ahsan, "Islamic Fundamentalism" in Essays on Islam (Essay Competition, Winning Entries 1995), FOSIS, Islamic Foundation: UK. pg. 79.

16.   John Esposito, "Islamic Fundamentalism", Encarta Reference Library, op. cit.

Islamic fundamentalism, in a general sense is also coined as 'political Islam' or 'Islamism.' But the question here is, 'is Islamic fundamentalism a root cause of terrorism?' Well, the answer can be both 'Yes' and 'No,' depending on the context and the perspective it is answered from. From the Western and the Orientalist's perspective, the answer is 'Yes.' Moussalli describes that the Defense Department looked at Islamic fundamentalism to be an ideological and geopolitical threat which requires elimination.[17] He further mentions of a study entitled "The Green Threat," published by the Cato Institute, Washington, summarizes the need for creating a new enemy which is represented by the Middle Eastern Islamic fundamentalism.

Meanwhile, The Economist invented a term "fundie" as a creature who looks like Ayatollah Khomeini armed with radical ideology and equipped with nuclear weapons with the full intention of declaring war against Western Civilization.[18] In a similar instance, Washington Post reports that the rise of political Islam in North Africa and in Egypt, as well as the establishment of Muslim states in Central Asia, in addition to Iranian and Sudanese foreign policies, has fuelled the push to picture Islamic fundamentalism and, along with it, Islam, as the new enemy of democracy, the United States and the West.[19] In another report, it said that Islamic fundamentalism is revolutionary and aggressive, like that of Bolshevism, Nazism and Fascism [in which] the United States should smother it at its inception.[20] The West fears that 'Islamic fundamentalists,' if comes to the power, would suffocate the West, and here lays the 'clash of civilization.'

While, the answer to whether Islamic fundamentalism is a root cause to terrorism, is 'No' from the Islamic perspective. Fundamentalism is not

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17.   Ahmad S. Moussalli (ed.), Islamic Fundamentalism: Myths and Realities, Garnet Publishing Limited: UK, 1998, pp. 4-5

18.   "Fear of Fundie", *The Economist*, 15 February 1992. pp. 45-6.

19.   Washington Post, 19 January 1992.

20.   David Ignatius, "Islam in the West's Sights: The Wrong Crusades?", Washington Post, 8 March 1992.

a new concept in Islam, prophet Muhammad, the rightly guided Caliphs and most of the early Islamic rulers in the history of Islam, ruled according to the divine guidance (but not theocratic rule, nor complete democratic too, Mawdudi calls it 'Theo-Democracy'), where these are the fundamentals of Islam, i.e. Qur'an and Sunnah. The Qur'anic rules, beside the Sunnah never permits terrorization or acts of terrorism. It was, thus, never experienced in the long run rule of the Muslim Ummah from the seventh century up to the end of the fifteenth century. The Western claim of 'terrorization' by the Muslims, in the present day scenario is not Islamic fundamentalism per se, unless it is better dubbed as 'fanaticism.' There are, no doubt, some people in every sect, who due to ignorance create trauma in the name of the religion or ideology they belong to, but this cannot be claimed to be a fundamental characteristic of that religion or ideology. For instance, the IRA[21] members are mostly Christians, but why they are not hailed as "Christian terrorists" and the Jewish illegal occupation in the Palestine as "Jewish terrorism?"

A fanatic is one who has knowledge of the ideology with greater ignorance, on the other hand, a fundamentalist is one who has the knowledge of that ideology with due understanding. Consequently, a Muslim fanatic is not a Muslim fundamentalist. It is worthy to mention the comment of Prince of Wales "devout Islamic revivalists should not be confused with 'fanatics' or 'extremists' who use this devotion for political ends."[22]

Does 'Jihad' Lead to Terrorism?

The gravest misconception regarding the term '*Jihad*' is that it is often translated into English as 'Holy War', which synonymizes 'mania of religion.' The Western writers and the Orientalists claim *Jihad* to be the

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21   Irish Republican Army (IRA) is an illegal organization which wants Northern Ireland to be politically independent of the UK and united with the Republic of Ireland. See Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

22.   The Guardian, 28 October 1993. cit. in Shahanara Begum, "Islamic Fundamentalism" Essays on Islam (Essay Competition, Winning Entries 1995), FOSIS, Islamic Foundation: UK, pg. 92.

foremost source of terrorism, inspiring a worldwide campaign of violence by self-proclaimed 'Jihadist' groups, as claimed by Daniel Pipes, in an article posted in New York Post, December 31, 2002.[23]

Mawdudi clarifies the causes of such misunderstandings about holy war. He argues that, whenever it is addressed about *'Jihad'*, the Western view happens to be laid on two misconceptions, i.e. first of all, that they view Islam as 'religion' in the conventional sense, and secondly, they view Muslims to be a 'Nation' in the technical sense of this term.[24] It did not only misinterpret the term *'Jihad'* per se, rather Islam as a whole and the positions of Muslims too.

In the conventional sense, religion means a set of strongly-held beliefs, values, prayers, rituals and attitudes that somebody lives by. In this case, it designates to be a private affair, which requires no 'sword' for its promulgation. If Islam is regarded in the conventional sense of religion, if, indeed, Islam be, then it cannot be justified to have 'Jihad' in Islam.

Likewise, Muslims are not merely a 'nation' rather an "Ummah." A 'nation' upholds its own interest of the clan, tribe or national concern. Contrarily, the concept of Ummah advocates universality, anti ethno-centrism, totality, freedom and mission appointed by Allah s.w.t. Therefore, Muslims are not a nation in the literal sense, but an 'Ummah.'

In reality, Islam is the international revolutionary ideology aiming for the rebuilding of the whole world in the light of Islamic tenets and faith. And, Muslims are the group of people selected to accomplish the mission, while *'Jihad'* is the utmost effort and exertion to reach the goal. Had *'Jihad'* meant 'holy war', wouldn't it have been wiser for Allah s.w.t. to use the term *'harb'* or *'qital'* which better denotes it, rather than *'Jihad'*, which literally means 'struggle.' But Allah s.w.t. did not mean *'Jihad'* as

23. Daniel Pipes, "What is Jihad", New York Post, December 31, 2002.

24. Syed Abul Ala Mawdudi, Jihad in Islam (3rd ed.), Islamic Publications Limited: Lahore, 1980, pp. 1-5.

'holy war' nor 'crusade.' The nearest proper literal meaning of *'Jihad'* in English, as presented by Mawdudi is: "to exert one's utmost endeavour in promoting a cause ."[25] He further reminded that this struggle should be 'for the cause of God'- in the way of God- which is an essential criterion for Jihad. Otherwise, we all struggle in our daily lives; it is considered *Jihad* as long as it is for the cause of Allah s.w.t., It's well rehearsed in the Quran that:

> *Those who believe fight in the cause of Allah, and those who reject faith fight in the cause of Evil.*
>
> (An-Nisaa (4): 76)

The role of media in visualizing Islam, *'Jihad'* and Muslims should also be well noted. An American TV program "The Sword of Islam" portrayed a sword, with 'kalima' written on it, leashed the civil society. Penetrating fear of Islam through such programs is not less in quantities either. The Sunday New York Times 'Week in Review' drove home the western positioning of Islam in its headline of the January 21, 1996 issue with "The Red Menace is Gone, But Here is Islam."[27] In another context, Sa`id (1997) quoted Zachary Karabell like this:

> Ask American college students, in the elite universities or elsewhere, what they think when the word 'Muslim' is mentioned. The response is inevitably same: gun-trotting, bearded, fanatic terrorist hell-bent on destroying the great enemy, the United States .[28]

Scope of Jihad

The word *Jihad* literally means 'to exert one's best effort in promoting a cause,' 'to struggle,' 'to strive,' 'to endeavour for the best.' *Jihad* is never a

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25. Ibid., pg. 5

26. Cit. in Muhammad Musa, "Globalization, Mass Media and Muslim Unity." Paper presented at the International Conference on Muslim unity in the 21st century: opportunities and challenges organized by International Institute for Muslim Unity, IIUM: KL. 1-2 October 2003.

27. Edward Sa'id, Covering Islam, Vintage: London, 1997.

tool of waging war against the innocents; it's never a means of flexing muscles or bullying the weak and oppressed. *Jihad* in Islam is something unique, established to defend the divine message from being eliminated or hindered by its enemies. In the juristic view, *Jihad*[28] has been divided into four types:

1. *Jihad* against own self (*nafs*).
2. *Jihad* against Satan or evil forces that tempt people.
3. *Jihad* against autocrats and articulate vices.
4. *Jihad* against the enemies of Allah (the infidels, hypocrites and others).

It is therefore clear that fighting against the enemies of Allah, when there be a serious need, is the last and final resort, and not the primary and initial one. The primary *Jihad* should be done against our selves in developing our moral characters, behaviour and attitude, through proper knowledge and action (*'ilm and 'aml*), to overcome satanic temptations and to purify our own selves (*tazkiyyatun-nafs*). Does it make any sense in going for *Jihad* against the enemies of Islam, before making *Jihad* against ourselves to purify our souls and develop our understanding of Islam? Or before we could enhance in our basic requirements, strengthening the stand for the greatest *Jihad* against the enemies of Islam? The Prophet (saas) is reported to have said: "The best form of *Jihad* is to constantly struggle against one's own desire."[29]

Here, the Prophet considers *Jihad* in our daily life as the best form of *Jihad*. From the life of the Holy Prophet, we can note the urgency of a step by step development of our inner self and the own self, followed by establishing a platform for it before going on for the greater task.

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28. This discussion is based on *Ruknul Jihad* by Ali Abdul Halim Mahmud, *Darul Tawzi' wa al-Nashr al-Islamiyyah.* 1995. pg. 36.

29. Nasiruddin Al-Albany, *Sahih al-Jami' al-Saghir*, Hadith No. 1099, vol.1, pg. 198. Another Hadith reported in this context is that "We have returned from a 'lesser Jihad' to a 'greater Jihad' is not authentic. Ibn Taymiah says: It has no basis. How could it be imagined that the Prophet's march towards Tabuk for fighting against Romans be insignificant and lesser Jihad? No scholars accept it as Hadith. See Ibn Taymiyah, *Majmu' al-Fatawa*, 11/197, also Albany, *Al-Jami' al-Saghir*, 1/851.

Considering the cases of *Jihad* during the time of the Prophet (saas), none of it was to create fear, terrorize the civilians, apprehension of the mass or to destabilize the government. Most of the battles fought were to defend, and some were to wash out the division created among the Muslims, such as battle against the false prophet Musaylamah and the battle of apostasy (*riddah*). Moreover, the Prophet (saas) and also the Companions never let the commanders go for war unless warned them and urged them not to kill any child, woman or the elderly, in addition not even to destroy any plant. The greatest example that history ever experienced is the Victory over Mecca, with ten thousand troops but no significant bloodshed, let alone lives. The motives behind none of these battles fit terrorism, at all.

Iterates that Prof. Muhammad Ramadan Abdullah, Dean of the faculty of Da'wah at the Islamic University in Baghdad, "*Jihad*, further, is applied for enemy countries that fight against Muslims or oppresses them. It is even urged by Islamic legislation to put an end to terror and violence rather than the legal acts of self-defense and resisting occupation".

It is to be emphasized that terrorism against the innocent civilians, whether through aggression or suicidal means, is under no circumstances permissible in Islam. Islam encourages the oppressed people to struggle for their liberation and it commands other Muslims to help those who are oppressed and suffering,[31] but Islam does not allow, under any circumstance, terrorism against non-combatants and innocent people. Terrorism is not *Jihad*, it is *Fasad* (mischief). It is against the teachings of Islam.

Impact on Islamic Charity Organizations

After the colonization era, the Western fear of dominion was central to the cold war state. But after the cold war, they feel the need to have an opponent, lest it dominates over them. Keeping all these in mind, they have tactfully set the tracks to defy Islam and the Islamic organizations,

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31.   Qur'an, An-Nisaa (4): 74

specially the charity organizations, which should let them reach the peak. Whenever an attack has taken place, the Muslims and Islam were to be blamed first, with inadequate or no proofs. After the Oklahoma City bombing, they have raided the Muslim institutions and held them for trials, but at the end of the day, a former soldier, Timothy McVeigh was found guilty and executed on June 11, 2001. Likewise, right after the September 11 tragedy, all around the world, Muslims were 'hunted for' and Islam was threatened with no ends. Many Islamic organizations have been shut down, accusing them to aid the 'terrorists' and 'channeling money' to the attackers of the twin tower event.

It is even more astonishing to learn that Federal Bereau of Investigation (FBI) suppressed reports of investigation of the attack. In a press conference on May 30, 2002 FBI agent Robert Wright said that his bosses "prevented," "thwarted," and "obstructed" his investigations into al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups, and that they "intimidated" him with "retaliation" for his efforts. One reason Wright cited was that these terrorists laundered huge amounts of money through US banks which were tied to powerful US interests. And, in another instance, the lead hijacker, Mohamed Atta, is reported to have received $100,000 shortly before the September 11. This was wired through the Director-General of Pakistani military intelligence (ISI), Mahmoud Ahmad, which clarifies an intimate tie with the ISI and the CIA.[32]

Regardless of whatever the causes, Islamic organizations and the Muslims had to bear the fate for it. Multiple reports have been posted noting the closure and the restriction of various Islamic organizations, causing a mass famine in the Islamic nations, such as Palestine (Over 60% of Palestinians live below the poverty line)[33], Nigeria and other African nations besides posing threat to many students in furthering their studies and livelihood. In a report, it's mentioned that an Israeli 'Civil'

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32.   Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed, September 11, 2001: The Great Deception, Thinker's Library: Kuala Lumpur, 2002, pg. 220.

33.   Al-Jazeera, "Israel Shutting Down Aid Workers.", December 2003.

authority cites "security reasons", when asked him why the shipment of 2200 boxes, each containing 24 tins of canned meat, had been withheld at the Ashdod port since 25 March.[34] "There's been a greater trend since September 11 to restrict funds being provided to Palestinian NGOs.

It is not just United States Agency for International Development (USAID) money, but The US influence on other money provided by donor countries and agencies," said Vicki Metcalf of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, in another Al-Jazeera report.[35] The Palestinian Monetary Fund demanded the accounts of 39 charities and NGOs working in the occupied Gaza Strip should be frozen, including al-Salah Islamic Society, the charitable wing of Hamas. The move affected two schools teaching 720 orphans, eight kindergartens, four medical centres visited by 15,000 patients monthly and 3200 families who receive a total of $250,000 in monthly financial.

Among other organizations accused for such acts are:[36]

1   Muslim World League (MWL)

2   Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC)

3   Islamic Development Bank (IDB)

4   World Assembly for Muslim Youth (WAMY)

5   Saudi High Commission for relief of Bosnia and Herzegovina

6   International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO)

7   Al-Haramain (it has been shut down by the Saudi govern-
     ment by October 2004)[37]

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34. Al-Jazeera, "Islamic Charities Feel the Pinch", 7 October 2003.

35. Al-Jazeera, "Palestinian NGOs face donor restrictions", 14 January 2004.

36. These claims are based on the article "Institutionalized Islam: Saudi Arabia's Islamic Policies and The Threat They Pose", dated 10 September 2003; published online: http://kyl.senate.gov/legis_center/subdocs/091903_henderson.pdf

37. Al-Jazeera. "Saudis Shut Down Charity", 6 October 2004.

8   Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz Charitable Institution.

9   Al-Aqsa Foundation in Palestine,

10   International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO)

11   Islamic Relief Worldwide

12   Global Relief Fund, etc.

Prime Factors Concerning this Status

Former head of Israel's Intelligence Agency (MOSAD) in 2002 and former director of the Counter-terror Commission of the Israeli government (1996-2000), Brigadier general (Ret.) Meir Dagan, attacking directly to the institute of 'zakat', which is a reflection of the attack on the Islamic charity organizations, accused the 'zakat' system for funding 'terrorist activities' while claimed that these institutes run with no hindrances in both the Muslim and the western nations.[38]

Among many acceptable reasons, the following are of immense significance:

1.   To facilitate the Christian missionary works.

2.   Creating intellectual crisis among Muslims.

3.   A unipolar super power.

4.   To establish 'the kingdom of God.'

1.   To Facilitate the Christian Missionary Works

As most of the Muslim countries in Asia and Africa are poverty affected, the Christian missionaries took it as a chance to propagate Christianity. In these countries, Islamic charities have always been a hope for many

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38.   Yoram Schweitzer and Shaul Shay, The Globalization of Terror: The Challenge of Al-Qaida and The Response of The International Community, (trans., Rachel Lieberman), Transaction Publishers: USA, 2003, pg. vii.

Muslims to further their education, basic health necessities, religious development (like establishing mosques) and other welfare activities. At least 40% of the Muslim community is under national poverty line and at least 46.5% earns less than $2 per day. In such condition, only the rich Muslim countries or the Islamic charities could be the best help for the poor Muslims.

Since many of the rich Muslim countries were made engaged in regional wars, civil wars and other trivial matters, the charity organizations could only reach the poverty affected people and help them alleviate poverty and live a healthy, comfortable life. Once it can be stopped or restricted, the poverty stricken Muslims would suffer and lessen the stability of the Muslim community as a whole.

Christian missionaries select poverty ridden countries to propagate their ideologies in the guise of humanitarian aid. They get all kind of support from the media and the International agencies. It is likely to convert the poor people into the religion of the missionaries. The people look at Christianity as the religion of the powerful, rich and advanced nation.

One such comment was stated by Kenneth L. Woodward, in his Newsweek article. He adds that this resulted, for the first time in history, Christianity has become a religion mainly of the poor, the marginalized, the powerless and, in parts of Asia and the Middle East, the oppressed.[39]

According to this report, in 1900 the total population of Christians in Africa was hardly 10-20 million. By 1970, it had reached more than 100 million, in 1990 it had reached nearly 250 million and in the year 2000 it was close to 325 million, and still rising. And in Asia, the total population of Christianity was hardly 25 million in 1900, where it is more than 300 million in 2000 with a rapid increase still on going. In Latin America, the

39. Kenneth L. Woodward, "The changing face of the Church: How the Explosion of Christianity in Developing Nations is Transforming the World's Largest Religion", Newsweek (Asian Edition), April 16, 2001. pp. 49-52

rise of Christianity is also very promising, with a total population of around 475 million in 2000, which was around 70 million in 1900.

It is therefore very much logical that the Christian missionary workers should be busy with aid work in every such country. Among many other clear examples, one such is Mr. Franklin Graham, a prominent evangelical leader and the son of Mr. Billy Graham, who engaged himself in the aid works in war ravaged Iraq.

2.   Creating Intellectual Crisis among Muslims

Any community in this era of globalization and hard core competition of development in Information Technology and Sciences would surely be pushed aside if they lack in required adequate intellectuals and scientists. This lacking will swell in any community if their promising fellows can be kept out of track or "brain-drained" in different strategies held. Or even if the scholars can be injected with anti-Islamic ideologies and secular thoughts, will prove their planned works. They have in many steps become successful in reaching their goal. Some of these strategies have been suggested by Cheryl Benard in his Civil Democratic Islam, Partners, Resources and Strategies.[40]

In many such ways, the anti Islamic ideas and ideologies have been and are being penetrated into the Muslim minds through their curricula and aid activities. In Bangladesh, many of the NGOs funded from the Western nations, have been accused of propagating anti Islamic teachings, such as atheism, in the name of social welfare, aid, health care and education.[41] Moreover, another report says that the leading NGO in Bangladesh, BRAC, operates more than 30,000 schools throughout

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40.   Cheryl Benard, Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources and Strategies, The RAND Corporation: Santa Monica, 2003, pp. 47- 48. Also see appendix C of the same book, pp. 62-4

41.   For more detailed information, please see Kazi Shahadat Kabir, "Development Agencies, Gender Issues and Clashes between the 'Progress' and 'Backwardness' in Bangladesh", paper presented at the International Conference on Poverty in the Muslim World and Communities: Causes and Solutions, organized by International Islamic University Malaysia: Kuala Lumpur, December 2004.

the nation, and feeds more than 20,000 children twice a day. And these schools are based on the interests of the aiding nations, and not to produce committed Muslims, for sure.

In many Muslim communities, Islamic charity's aids are the only support for the Muslim students to go for higher education. With a restriction put on these charity activities, or closure in many cases, it will undoubtedly hinder the flow of Muslim student's learning and getting well-equipped with their ideologies and firm beliefs.

Moreover it will also restrict re-building of Islamic institutes in many poor countries, hence check the scope of Islamic education. This will, on the other hand, urge the people to educate their children in the, existing and emerging, pro-West and secularist schools.

3.   A Unipolar Super pPower

From right after the cold war, US have found a clear path to proceed towards its sole dominance in the world, which is also a great threat to the Islamic nations in the form of globalization. Based on facts, it is clear that the September eleven tragedy has made the way smoother for the US to create a unipolar superpower. And it was utilized through the restrictions put on and closure of the Islamic aid organizations. Implementation of such heinous agenda also embraces the attack on the Muslim countries in the name of anti terrorism, 'war against terrorism,' and such fancy illustrations. The dominating strategic plan of the US was to control the Eurasian nations-everything (roughly) east of Germany to the North Pacific Ocean, is the key to the world-by any means. In the book "The Grand Chessboard," former US National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski cites:[42]

> A power that dominates Eurasia would control two of the world's three most advanced and economically productive regions. . . . About 75 percent of the world's people live in

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42.   Zbigniew Brzezinski, The Grand Chessboard, Basic Books: New York, 1997.

Eurasia, and most of the world's physical wealth is there as well, both in its enterprises and underneath its soil. Eurasia accounts for about 60 percent of the world's GNP and about three-fourths of the world's known energy resources.

Most of the Islamic charities are funded from the Middle Eastern countries, the neighbours and also a gateway through Afghanistan to the Eurasian nations. It is therefore not irrational to see US attacking Afghanistan, Iraq and targeting Iran the next. They found that the only way to convince the world is to put the accusation of aiding the terrorist groups on Islamic charity organizations, and hence raid the host countries in the name of anti terrorism. This will in one way, restrain the help provided by the Islamic charities to the poor Muslims, on the other side, keep them busy in defending their selves. The ultimate result will turn up to the authorization of US hegemony in the Eurasian region leading to a complete dominance- a unipolar superpower- in the world.

4.   To Establish 'The Kingdom of God'

The Christian fundamentalists believe that the 'Kingdom of God' will be established one day, where the true people will be rewarded. In their zeal to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, the Christian fundamentalist are committed to converting the masses in the Muslim world, and the poverty stricken nations of Africa and Latin America too. Arif Zakaullah, in his book The Cross and the Crescent, elaborated how the Christian fundamentalists are working in order to establish their Kingdom of God on earth:

> The Muslim countries which suffer from poverty, unemploy-
> ment, disease, sanctions, war, internal injustice, corruption,
> lack of basic needs, etc are a fertile ground for the missionary
> activities organizations which send missionaries a qualified
> professionals like health workers, teachers, rural development
> technical staff, etc who posses skills that the country lacks.
> Given the pre-millenialist worldview which calls for
> establishing the Kingdom of God on earth, the convergence
> of missionaries on the trouble spots of the world were

people suffering from war, unemployment and poverty demonstrates that in addition to the domestic socioeconomic agenda, the Christian fundamentalists have an elaborate goal."[43]

According to the finely researched article of Newsweek,[44] it reports that in Nigeria, there are at least 1,200 churches growing on every month. This astonishing number of increase and the rapid growth of Christianity in the poor countries is definitely a sign for the Christian fundamentalist belief to the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. Since it is only possible through the charity and welfare works of the missionaries, the only threat they fear from the Muslim counterparts is the Islamic charity organizations. And it is therefore, very clearly identified as the hindrance to their aimed goal of the Kingdom of God on earth, which should be eliminated from their destined path.

Suggestions and Conclusions

At this very crucial milieu of the Muslim Ummah, besides all the Muslim authorities, nations, scholars and preachers (*da`ee*), the Islamic charity organizations should play its active roles to protect Muslims from the danger. For this, it is proper to relay here some of our most important tasks to be accomplished:

1.   Uplifting Moral Characteristics

The first and foremost task of the Muslim community would be to uplift our moral characteristics and prove ourselves as the best of the nations. Mawdudi noted a combination of basic moral characteristics, Islamic moral characteristics and physical strength.[45] He also described

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43.   Arif Zakaullah, The Cross and the Crescent, TOP: Kuala Lumpur, 2004, pp. 156-7

44.   Kenneth L. Woodward, op. cit., pp. 46- 52

45.   Syed Abul Ala Mawdudi, The Islamic Movement: Dynamics of Values, Power and Change, Islamic Foundation: London.

the fall of nations due to the downfall of moralities. This may include the following:

- Proper knowledge on Qur'anic issues, Hadith literatures, Islamic literatures and other contemporary sciences.

- Basic qualities, i.e. punctuality, generosity, strength of will, power of decision, ambition, determination, caution and vigilance, discipline and restraint, well plan, organizing ability, mercy, sympathy, truthfulness, trustworthy etc.

- Islamic moralities, like *Taqwa, Khushu, Khudhu* etc.

- Proper practice of the knowledge.

- Dynamism of will and commitment.

2.   Elucidation of The Intellectual Crisis

It has always been an emphasis for the Islamic activists to develop our intellectual faculty. In the new era of technology, we are always the back trackers, never being the front liners. This crisis of the Ummah, if not resolved, would result in the dissolution of Muslim unity one day. In a report of Time, it was shown that the Muslims are of the lowest percentage of education (51%, the survey was done among 123 countries).[46] Dr. Saleh Al-Wohaibi pointed out the significance behind the unity of the Ummah, describing that how more than one and a half million (1.5 million) charity organizations of U.S.A work to reach the people around the world on the basis of health care, education, social welfare works, even conversion to Christianity and other activities. The sad part of it is that the number of charity organizations in the whole of the Arab world does not even reach the number of that of any two states of U.S.[47] The Muslims therefore should focus on the following:

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46.   Time, March 10, 2003, pg. 25.

47.   Saleh S. Wohaibi, *"Dawr al-Jam`iyyat al-Khairiyyat fi Da`m al-Wahdah al-Islamiyyah"*, paper presented at the conference on Muslim unity in the 21st Century: Challenges and Opportunities. 1-2 October 2003, International University Malaysia: Kuala Lumpur pg. 193

1   Establishing more schools, colleges and universities or technical institutes.

2   Providing scholarships.

3   Organizing training programs for the Muslim Youths.

4   Organizing seminars, symposiums and intellectual competitions.

5   Establishing more publication corporations around the globe. This would help generate more Islamic literatures.

3.   A Dire Need for an Islamic Media Network

The Muslims are being thrashed by the means of media. It is easy to broadcast propaganda than to set ruse for the enemy. In one report, it is mentioned that the Bush administration has taken billion dollar satellite TV project for the Muslim youths. The Guardian reports on November, 23, 2001:

> An Arabic language satellite television station financed by the US and aimed at winning hearts and minds in the Muslim world could shortly become a reality. President George Bush has been told of initiative 911, which put half a billion dollars into a channel that would compete in the region with Al-Jazeera and would be aimed at younger Muslims who are seen as Anti-American.........would be a third prong for the US in the media battle along with a beefed up Voice of America and Radio Free Afghanistan......... It would broadcast in 26 languages and would be aimed at around 40 Muslim countries around the world.

At this stage, the Muslim communities have to fight back with counter media networks to expose Islam in the right way, and to dispel misconceptions about Islam. Islamic charity organizations could plan huge investment in the media networks. The following measures could be given due consideration:

1   There is an urgent need for a media network to lessen our dependency on the western media networks, which mostly provide us with biased information.

2   It should have quality reporters, dynamic staff and effective reporting strategies. There should be training to build up reporters from among the youths.

3   There should also be alternative media programs for the youths. These programs should be well attractive to hold the youths from the influx of the Western media.

4   The media networks should also focus on the Islamic cultural values, rather than imitating the western values of culture. It should not only attract the Muslims; but will also attract Western people to its supreme cultural values.

5   It is not sufficient to be busy with one media channel only. Instead, Islamic organizations can help proceed with radio the most common media to reach the mass and the poor people, newspapers, weekly magazines, tabloids etc. Anyhow, TV is the most effective among these, besides internet.

6   These media networks would, in larger scale, create job market for the Muslim graduates too.

7   Well-informative and attractive internet websites should be established for *da`wah* activities. It should present the pristine message of Islam and dispel all confusions raised against Islam.

4.   Financing The Task

These tasks, as mentioned before, require a firm stance on economic basis. Islam does not leave the Ummah in a dilemma to face such situations; rather it offers us the concept for institution of *'Zakat'* and *'Waqaf.'* 'Cash *waqaf*' is a rising concept in the field of economics too.

Considering the case of Bangladesh, cash *waqaf* can help that in the following way;

Population earning less than US$2 a day, in Bangladesh, is 82.8%. Let, then, consider 80% of the remaining 17.8% are Muslims, which equivalents 19.936 million (estimated population is 140 million). If proper motivation and persuasion can inspire them to pay 'cash *waqaf*' of at least US$5 per annum, then, at the end of the year, the sum would be $99.68 million. Assuming only 30% of them contributed in 'cash *waqaf*', the sum would be $29.904 million, which is equivalent to TK$1794.24 million (if $1= TK$60). Likewise, proper research and contributions would help nations to be built again and unite in the name of Islam.

Although Muslims are lacking in education, business welfare works, media dominance and so on, everything, in this critical situation, besides every single individual, groups and nation, Islamic organizations have to come forth towards a greater unity of the Muslim Ummah. Other-wise, the closure and restrictions put on the Islamic organizations would not possibly be prevented. Although this phenomenon does not solve the problem of terrorism, yet it is viewed as one of the greatest threats to the US and the West, for it can unite the Muslims back on one platform. Ultimately, the restriction and closure of Islamic charity works will not prevent, in reverse, boosts terrorism.