

THE ROOTS OF US COUNTER TERRORISM POLICY *

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Introduction

Scholars, as in the history of past empires¹, play a major role in developing ideologies for governments. Ideally, the moral conscience of the state, the transformation of their roles is widely apparent in times of conflict and war. Policy-makers, to whom scholars give advice, transform such ideologies into practical strategies that benefit the government. Even today, occasionally we witness politicians debating the need for a new “worldview” to defeat terrorism.²

In addition, the emergence of a breed of specialists acting as “voices of conscience” is familiar in times of conflict.³ Calling themselves Terrorism or Counter-Terrorism experts, their backgrounds range from ex-law enforcers, criminal investigators, ex-military personnel, to government advisers, policy-makers, academicians and the like. With a flood of books, articles, commentaries, and regular appearances on the television, radio and electronic media, these personalities instantly turn into household names at home and across the globe.

September 11 challenged the world as to the best response to the looming threat of terrorist attacks. The US meanwhile, took it upon them-

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1. Refer to Stephen Howe. *Empire: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford, 2002 for more details.
2. For instance in the Bush-Kerry 2004 Elections Debate
3. Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, London: Vintage, 1994, pp. 18-25.

selves not only as victims, but also as the sole superpower, to take pre-emptive action to defend themselves.⁴ However, not long after realizing it should not do it alone, they made a call of allegiance to form a world coalition against terrorism. The UN succeeded in pushing one of the fastest unanimous resolutions, symbolizing their sympathy and commitment to the US. Even old foes that previously defied the US in other matters expressed solidarity and were prepared to cooperate against a common enemy.⁵

After receiving the "mandate" to lead the war, the US began to accelerate their counter-terrorism policies and tactics. Moreover, as it was implied that either the world was "with the US or the enemy," the world followed suit, albeit hesitantly and cautiously. Indeed the connotation signified that all states, no matter what their circumstances were, should adopt the ways of the Americans in fighting terrorism. In the end, although initial reactions were mixed, states had little choice but to conform and be seen as doing something in order to receive US *assistance*, not necessarily for the "war on terrorism."⁶

Influential voices suggested that the world should adopt a single standard counter-terrorism policy.⁷ However, this poses a problem especially in light of ongoing conflicts in different parts of the world such as Kashmir, Chechnya and not to mention Israel/Palestine. Israel for instance, in a bid to show solidarity, was quick to point out that an event like September 11 was not a rarity in their backyard. More so, when suicide bombing is deemed a major security threat, it was argued that, only a fierce counter-terrorism policy would do the trick.⁸

4. Michael Bothe, "Terrorism and the Legality of Pre-emptive Force". *EJIL* (2003), Vol. 14 No. 2. pp. 227-240.

5. Ben Clarke, *International Law*, NSW: Lawbook Co., 2003, pp. 90-98

6. James Bovard, *Terrorism and Tyranny: Trampling Freedom, Justice, and Peace to Rid the World of Evil*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

7. Alan M. Dershowitz, *Why Terrorism Works : Understanding the Threat, Responding to the Challenge*, Carlton North, Vic.: Scribe, 2003, 168.

8. UN News Service, 24 March 2004, "Top UN Human Rights Body Condemns Assassinations of Hamas leader Sheikh Yassin" [Online] (<http://www.un.org/News>)

With these, what is the connection between ideology, policy and security in the war on terrorism? How far is counter terrorism rooted in a specific worldview, that is to say from the declaration of war to the calling of enemies? This essay will try to decipher the ideas which have influenced some notable scholars, policymakers and security experts to maintain their on-going worldview in relation to the "war on terrorism." This includes the use of religion, Orientalism, Zionism, and some influential ideas of Samuel Huntington, Bernard Lewis, Alan Dershowitz, Rohan Gunaratna and the RAND Corp. Finally, we will assess the consequences of such mixed ideas on the wider "war on terrorism."

The Roots of US Counter Terrorism Policy

Generally, the decision to go to war entails the support of the masses. In their efforts to convince the people, a government would need to send a message which contains universal appeal. This creates a problem because the society consists of different classes of people with different intellectual capacities. Usually, ideals and beliefs play major roles in the development of widely accepted pretexts for war. It is therefore not surprising that one of the most persuasive elements of international relations is religion.⁹ In the war on terrorism, both sides of the equation seemingly holds steadfast to the concept of a "just" war.¹⁰ This is because the approach confirms the idea that the one fighting in the name of religion is the righteous. Inevitably, the concept of fighting for God leads both sides to have a Manichean outlook based on good and evil,

Ironically, Bruce Lincoln, a professor of divinity at the University of Chicago, studied Osama bin Laden's words taped in early October following the destruction of the World Trade Center and found him constructing "a Manichean struggle, where Sons of Light confront sons of darkness and all must enlist on one side or the other." To his followers and

9. Petito Fabio and Pavlos Hatzopoulos, *Religion in International Relations*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p. 147.

10. James Turner Johnson, *The Holy War Idea in Western and Islamic Traditions*, University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997.

the world, bin Laden said: "I tell them [the Americans] that these events have divided the world into two camps, the camp of the faithful and the camp of infidels. May God shield us and you from them." He exalted that America would now feel what the West had done to Islam. The second Manichean view came from Washington. Professor Lincoln explained how George W. Bush, in his October 7, 2001, address to the American people, approached the confrontation in a similar way but with the sides reversed: "Every nation has a choice to make in this conflict," said Bush. "There is no neutral ground. If any government sponsors the outlaws and murderers of innocents, they have become outlaws and murderers themselves. And they take that lonely path at their own peril."¹¹

The intertwining of religion and politics has resulted in a backlash of other concepts and ideologies as well. The separation between church and state as we know it is a unique concept embodied in Christianity, whilst in Islam the extent of separation between spiritual and secular elements is still debatable, but the concept of man vicegerency is settled.¹² In the Jewish society, the concept is somewhat complicated with the birth of Zionism. Nonetheless, we have seen as in the case of Bosnia¹³ and the Israel/Palestine¹⁴ conflict that the justification for extermination or ethnic cleansing, was done supposedly under the adherence of their respective religions.

To better understand this, we begin by looking at the idea of Orientalism.¹⁵ The idea of putting down the people of the orient was

11. Kevin Philips, *American Dynasty*, New York: Viking, 2004, p. 236.

12. Khaled Abou Al-Fadl, *Islam and the Challenge of Democracy*, New Jersey: Princeton, 2004.

13. Emran Qureshi and Michael A. Sells, *The New Crusades: Constructing the Muslim Enemy*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2003, pp. 314-351.

14. Mazin B. Qumsiyeh, *Sharing the Land of Canaan: Human Rights and the Israeli-Palestinian Struggle*, London: Pluto, 2004, pp. 67-84.

15. Media Education Foundation, c2002. Edward Said on Orientalism [videorecording] Northampton, MA.

a widely practiced ideology during the days of colonialism and imperialism. It was necessary for people in power to justify their actions by imposing a picture on colonised peoples as a lesser breed.¹⁶ However, despite the church and state separation, these governments have gone beyond racial lines by even discrediting the religions of the east.¹⁷

Islam, as the last of the Abrahamic religions, is most often attacked in terms of its origins, namely for having an Arab as a Prophet. However, despite the fact that Judaism does not recognise Jesus Christ as a Prophet, Islam gives due acknowledgment to all the Prophets, forming a single chain from the Prophet Adam to the Prophet Jesus who were all Jewish.¹⁸ The hostility towards Islam and the Prophet Muhammad is further expressed by discrediting its holy book, beliefs and the people who subscribe to their belief in the beginning, namely the Arabs.¹⁹

After a few centuries of war between the people of these religions,²⁰ the enmity towards one another has significantly reduced, save in more subtle ways. Arguably, there are some modern scholars and religious personalities who choose to adopt the old line of thinking, especially in how they perceive the historical Orient. In fact, scholar Stephen Zunes recently highlighted the emergence of a supposedly religious ideology which has now intermingled with ambitious political aspirations.

In many respects, much of the American right may be at least as concerned about how Israel can help the United States as about how the United States can help Israel. Due to the anti-Semitism inherent in much of Christian Zionist theology, it has been recognized that U.S. fundamentalists support for Israel does not stem from a concern for the

16. Stephen Howe, *Empire: A Very Short Introduction*, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

17. Edward W. Said, *Covering Islam*, New York: Vintage, 1997.

18. F. E. Peters, *Islam*, New Jersey: Princeton, 2003, pp. 1-29.

19. M. M. Al-Azami, *The History of the Qur'anic Text*, Leicester: UK Islamic Academy, 2003.

20. Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1997.

Jewish people per se but rather from a desire to leverage Jewish jingoism to hasten the Second Coming of Christ. Such opportunism is also true of those who-for theological or other reasons-seek to advance the American Empire in the Middle East. And though a strong case can be made that U.S. support for the Israeli occupation ultimately hurts U.S. interests, there remains a widely held perception that Israel is an important asset to American strategic objectives in the Middle East and beyond.²¹

With that, another influential ideological point of view, given the established ties between the US and Israel,²² is Zionism. Historically, the relationship between Muslims and Jews are as good, if not better than between Jews and Christians. In fact, before British colonization plans were implemented, scholars had good things to say about Arabs as opposed to Europeans.²³ This, however, changed dramatically when the British, not least for their own benefit, gave birth to the idea for a more hostile outlook of the Arabs. Inevitably, this would mark the beginnings of a gruesome conflict that is still counterproductive today.

The belittling of the Palestinians and Arabs in general has resulted in the concerns of trivializing the disparagements in the Middle East conflict.²⁴ Although the world recognizes the Palestinian resistance against the occupation, the Zionists have often portrayed the issue of suicide bombers as negating the Palestinians of their right for self-determination. Thus, instead of assessing suicide bombing from a social, medical and

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21. Stephen Zunes, "The Influence of the Christian Right on U.S. Middle East Policy", *Foreign Policy In Focus*, Silver City, N.M: Interhemispheric Resource Center, June 28, 2004.
 22. Paul Findley, *They Dare to Speak Out*, West, CT.: Lawrence Hill and Co., 1985; "U.S. Assistance to Israel," Jewish Virtual Library: http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/US-Israel/U.S._Assistance_to_Israel1.html (2003).
 23. Martin Kramer, ed., *The Jewish Discovery of Islam*, Tel Aviv: The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 1999, pp. 1-48; www.martinkramer.or/pages/899528/index.htm.
 24. Naseer H. Aruri, *Dishonest Broker: The U.S. Role in Israel and Palestine*, Cambridge: South End Press, 2003, pp. 81-102.

psychological point of view, some prefer to dismiss it as simply an act of terror on innocent citizens and soldiers. Furthermore, some regard it as a normal trait of Arabs and Muslims in responding to problematic situations and in getting the world's attention.

Benjamin Netanyahu's *Fighting Terrorism* holds that Arab enmity toward Israel is simply a continuation of millenarian political hatreds between Islam and Christendom. "The soldiers of militant Islam and Pan-Arabism do not hate the West because of Israel," he writes, "they hate Israel because of the West." So focused on Islamic "rage" and "modernity," Lewis and his admirers have trouble accepting the possibility that many Arabs have concrete grievances against the Israeli state: i.e., hundreds of thousands of post 1948 and post-1967 refugees living in squalor, human rights abuses amply documented by Amnesty International, and several studies that have shown that twenty to thirty times more Arabs have died at the hands of the Israeli military and Jewish settlers than Israelis killed via Arab sources of terrorism. Netanyahu explains away Arab terrorism as a kind of nihilistic evil, based on the pure delight of carrying out grisly murder and fabulous destruction. The various real or imagined reasons proffered by the terrorists to justify their actions are meaningless," he reports.²⁵

In association to this, there are groups who see Islam as the driving force behind the violent acts of Arabs and Muslims.²⁶ To some extent, the Zionists sometimes advocate and resort to violent means, and often justify their actions by portraying the enemy as fundamentalists and therefore are non-negotiable. Accordingly, it gives them the authority to deprive certain basic human rights which they think are undesirable for

25. Emran Qureshi and Michael A. Sells, *The New Crusades*, op. cit., pp. 99-100.

26. Duane Oldfield, "The Evangelical Roots of American Unilateralism: The Christian Right's Influence and How to Counter It," *Foreign Policy In Focus*, Silver City, NM: Interhemispheric Resource Center, March 2004. (www.fpif.org)

their enemies to possess. A writer has expressed the predicament below:

The fact that Zionism historically has been unable to perceive the Arabs as human beings carries grave doubts about the possibility of military restraint in the future... In short, the hardline Realpolitik of Zionist policymakers tend to strengthen the case for militancy on the Arab side is strictly rational terms. Given the multi-dimensional nature of Zionism and its successes in building up a variety of constituencies, the Arabs find themselves driven to responses which appear emotional and irrational, even though they can be supported by logic and prudence.²⁷

The spread of globalisation however force states to withhold any display of animosity towards other nationalities in order to secure political and economic interests. This is true even in the past when people from around the world traded regardless of the embedded animosity that existed. Although most states genuinely preferred not to highlight differences in the name of trade relationships, it still depended on the empire that was in control at that time.²⁸ Having said that, for whatever convenient reasons, politicians do try to find ways to pursue the "outside threat" agenda. Samuel Huntington, the founder of "the clash of civilizations" thesis, has somewhat succeeded in providing this opportunity by convincing the United States and others, that there is such a thing separating "us" from "them" in international relations.²⁹ The significant "other" he has chosen is Islam. Indeed, although much of the Islamic world has been divided into states as a result of colonialism³⁰, the Cold War mentality he adheres to, forces him to see the Islamic civilization as a formidable opponent as in the past. Arguably, this explains the expanding

27. Abd. Al-Wahab Kayyali, *Zionism, Imperialism and Racism*, London: Croom Helm, 1979, pp. 246-248.

28. Stephen Howe, *Empire: A Very Short Introduction*, *op. cit.*

29. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*, London: Simon & Schuster, 1997.

30. John L. Esposito, *The Oxford History of Islam*, New York : Oxford University Press, 1999.

militarisation and unrelenting US support for tyrannical regimes that benefit them. One commentator has this to say:

Huntington regards the search for enemies as crucial to achieving proper recognition of one's cultural identity. Huntington sees the "enemy" as necessary for identity formation as well as for promoting cultural hygiene, but the Cold War had put a lid on and deflected hatreds that are more deep-rooted, perhaps the very essence of many civilizations. Huntington believes there are roughly eight or nine civilizations in the contemporary world: Western, Latin American, Orthodox, African, Islamic, Sinic, Hindu, Buddhist and Japanese. In his scheme the Western, Latin American, and Eastern European Orthodox civilizations have grounds for warm collaboration in the future world order, but one grouping is prone to promote discord with the West: Muslim civilization, or what Huntington famously calls, "Islam's bloody borders."³¹

In addition, the massive work of earlier orientalists have left researchers and historians with insurmountable literature on the Middle East and Islam. With technology, people who want to read about terrorism in those areas can refer to these 'historical facts' without much difficulty. And in the busy world we live in today, we assume that most of what has been written must be fairly accurate. But is this really the case? In other words, can we really be sure that the references we are making are authentic so as to help us make conclusions and formulate solutions for the future?³²

Bernard Lewis, a scholar on Middle Eastern studies, may not be familiar to the public before September 11. But among policymakers and politicians in the US, he is considered one of the top experts on this subject. His famous writings, not least because they portray an interesting

31. Emran Qureshi and Michael A. Sells, *The New Crusades*, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

32. Curtis White, *The Middle Mind*, London: Allen Lane, 2004.

outlook of Arabs and Muslims, are unique because they paint a picture of Arabs and Muslims as having violent tendencies mainly as a result of their religion.³³ Prominent scholars Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke had this to say about Lewis:

The eminent historian Bernard Lewis, although primarily a historian of the Ottoman period, has lent his considerable authority to the broad-front neo-conservative assault on Islam, his position as Princeton professor emeritus obscuring the fact that he is an influential, tactical, and partisan player in the contemporary policy debate.³⁴

If we look at George W. Bush's rhetoric of how the enemies hate the freedom US embodies and how they hate the US because the US is good, we find that he too somewhat identifies with Lewis' proposition that Muslims are inherently backward and they are simply reacting as a result of their own deficiencies as peoples.³⁵ Lewis puts forth that Islam teaches the doctrine of the House of Peace and the House of War much like Huntington's thesis of a "clash of civilization."³⁶ Therefore, he claims that Islamic fundamentalists are the ones making the US a convenient enemy namely because Muslims lack the values that the West and US possesses.

Lewis often blurs the lines between extremism and fundamentalism. Although Islam claims to be a religion of peace he says, it does leave open the question of violence and terrorism. He states that the Muslims in general are in danger of allowing themselves to be controlled by these harsher elements.³⁷ Lewis claims however, that these elements are less

33. Noah Feldman, *After Jihad*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004.

34. Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

35. Emran Qureshi and Michael A. Sells, *The New Crusades*, op. cit., 2003.

36. Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam*, London: Phoenix, 2004, pp. 25-40.

37. Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response*, Oxford University Press, 2002, pg. 99.

visible today. Some Muslims are assimilating into Western culture with considerable success, while others are using this opportunity to get back at the Western world, particularly the US. In most of his conclusions, he emphasizes that fundamental Islam is not compatible with the values of secularism and modernity, and he warns that the safety of the US and the West largely depends on the effort of "civilizing" the Middle East and the Islamic world as a whole.³⁸

Beyond that, the Zionist perception of Palestinians and Muslims has penetrated many so-called experts on terrorism and counter terrorism as well. Similar to Orientalism, the threat element is often presented in their discussions and formulations of solutions. Professor Alan Dershowitz, a civil liberties lawyer and Harvard academician, who himself wrote 'Why Terrorism Works' and 'The Case for Israel', looks at the terrorism issue much through the eyes of the Israeli government. He is undoubtedly a strong advocate of civil liberties in the United States but forms his opinion about terrorism by largely referring to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Suspects of terrorism, according to Dershowitz, should have limited civil liberties because they are an immediate threat to the society. He states that, "Terrorists are combatants who are preparing to kill civilians. We need not wait until they succeed - or even until they are ready to act. If there is a high level of proof that a given person is actually engaged in planning or carrying out an act of terrorism, and he is not reasonably subject to apprehension or arrest, it is appropriate to stop him by the use of lethal force, just as it is proper to use such force against a dangerous felon who cannot otherwise be apprehended... It might be the right-or the least wrong-option to pursue."³⁹

Although he does not support torture as a method of interrogation, he mentions that if torture is an option for the government, it should be carried out with a warrant from the court. Proper guidelines should

38. Bernard Lewis, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-140.

39. Alan Dershowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

present that it starts out as a threat and ends with its implementation in cases of non-cooperation especially in ticking bomb scenarios.⁴⁰ The failure with this argument however is with the practice of the Israeli government in carrying out torture, which he uses as the main reference that has resulted in outrageous human rights abuses in many documented cases albeit repeatedly denied by the said authorities.

Dershowitz also justifies other methods of counter-terrorism which the Israeli government employs. Among them, he also champions the deprivation of any sort of justification for suicide bombing, collective responsibility of the community caught harbouring alleged terrorists, targeted assassinations, the demolition of houses, not out rightly rewarding the Palestinian people and the confiscation of occupied land altogether as a punishment for causing death and damage on the Israeli side.⁴¹ All of these according to the Harvard Professor should be taken into consideration by other governments. His equation of Yasser Arafat and Usama Bin Laden, Hamas and Al-Qaeda, he concludes that the international community should consider responding to these situations in similar fashion regardless of the geo-political environment. In the end, he rejects any notion of difference between terrorism, and the struggle against occupation, or a legitimate opposition towards oppressive actions of governments.⁴²

In relation to that, in the months following September 11, news programs and interviews were filled with experts claiming to have insight into terrorist activities and their perpetrators. One such individual who received the media spotlight was a self-proclaimed terrorist expert named Rohan Gunaratna. Gunaratna claims to have penetrated the Al-Qaeda network and succeeded in understanding its goals, operations and typologies. Many governments and bodies including the UN have referred

40. Jack Rabbit, 11 March 2004, Why Torture Doesn't Work: A Critique of Alan Dershowitz' Case for Torture.

41. Alan Dershowitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 173-78.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 171.

to him as a source of reference and rely on his research to anticipate future attacks in their countries.⁴³

What is unique with his assessments is the lumping of groups (much like Orientalism) into one entity, calling them a network that coordinates attacks around the world. This can either be through training, financing and/or the supply of logistics with the common cause of carrying out terrorist attacks against Western interests.⁴⁴ Gunaratna claims Al Qaeda has a mission and that is to drive out Westerners from Muslim countries, to overthrow undemocratic governments and to establish Islam as the religion in Muslim lands. In order to do so, Al Qaeda operations are usually coordinated with the help of sympathizers who have the same hatred towards the US and their allies.⁴⁵

Throughout his work, Gunaratna often uses the terminology *jihad*. He does not provide an in-depth study and the reality of *jihad* but chooses to use the interpretation of a few Muslims whose reliability is arguable. He puts forth the idea that a great number of Muslims perceive Osama Bin Laden as the champion of Islam.⁴⁶ Muslims in general are susceptible to the claims of Bin Laden and therefore are vulnerable to acknowledge and act upon that call wherever they may reside in the world. Although he agrees with military action in the war on terrorism, he submits that the concentration should be in changing the mindsets of Al Qaeda supporters, namely the majority of Muslims who inherently hate the US and the Western world at large.⁴⁷

Other than that, many research institutions and think tanks, some previously unheard of, have also joined the bandwagon in dissecting the issue of terrorism committed by Muslims. They have tried to look at

43. Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al-Qaeda : Global Network of Terror*, London : C. Hurst, 2002.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 234.

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 235-237.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 235.

47. *Ibid.*, pp. 238-239.

factors within Islam and Muslims societies. To appear more convincing, they have replaced older Orientalist writings with so-called Middle Eastern and Muslim writers who they consider to be the right type of Muslims the US can work with.⁴⁸ This softer approach of counter-terrorism goes more specifically into extreme values of Islam in the same effort to suggest that there truly is a clash between Islam and modernity.

Overall, the solution they cite is a binary theory of "good and evil." Essentially, what the writers imply, as in the war against the Communists, is that the other side is never to be compromised with regardless of their side of the story. Henceforth, there is no use in trying to understand the motivations or the historical relationships which these groups may have had with the US government.⁴⁹ This line of argument, although sugarcoated at times, forms the core reference of a prevailing foreign policy. Scholars have expressed such a phenomenon below:

Knowledge is based on commonly accepted truths and data advanced by intellectuals, politicians, and commentators who, in turn, form public opinion... It is common for cultures to construct what they know about other cultures, in some measure through a binary format of "like and not like." "Like and not like" has been the *leitmotif* reflected in the Manichean world of contemporary neo-conservative thought... The assumption among many neo-conservatives have been that they "know" all that is necessary for their sweeping policy purposes - even when, as (British historian Norman) Daniel points out, "the means exist to know differently." It is here that the insidious and destructive nature of the "echo chamber" effect is seen as administration declarations are repeated and "substantiated" by the neo-conservative network of writers, commentators, and

48. Bassam Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism*, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002.

49. Loretta Napoleoni, *Modern Jihad*, London: Pluto Press, 2003, pp. 188-201; Amin Saikal, *Islam & the West*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, pp. 42-68.

activists. Thus, "knowledgeable ignorance" emerges as a powerful phenomenon in explaining the apparent disconnect between the United States and Islam.⁵⁰

The purported enemies of the "free world" are accused of being extremists simply because they have a different sort of belief system. That belief system is seen as one of the major reasons to defeat these radical groups. Thus whoever adopts similar values, they should be considered a threat to modern civilization, and therefore face either reform or extermination.

It is an America-centric view that dismisses the institutions and social mechanisms of local cultures as reflecting inappropriate values - and certainly not the Enlightenment values that have animated the West...The mere existence of political institutions grounded in Islamic cultural values is defined as a security threat. All this is seen as threatening American interests, and that threat cannot be eliminated by any means other than restructuring - forcefully, if necessary - their social and political systems.⁵¹

The RAND Corporation is an institute that does research on the ways the US should solve the issue of "Islamic terrorism." In a report entitled "Civil Democratic Islam," the Institute has comprehensively outlined the reasons behind extremism implying that Islam, because of its vagueness, is a crucial element in defeating terrorism.⁵² Despite having been written as an objective research, the article exposes the author's portrayal of Islamic teachings as having a tendency towards extremism.

This includes the wearing of the head-scarf (*hijab*) as a form of dangerous dissent to modernity, discrediting the authority of the Qur'an

50. Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone*, op. cit., pp. 268-269.

51. Ibid., p. 310.

52. Benard Cheryl, *Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources, and Strategies*, The RAND Corp., pp. 49-55, <http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1716/>

and *hadith*, dividing Muslims into groups based on their workability with the US and so on.⁵³ Therefore, the influential group sees it as necessary for the US to intervene in the interpretation of Islam as to conform to modernity so that a clash of civilizations can be circumvented. The need for intervention again reflects the disability of Muslims to govern themselves and the inherent dangers of practicing Islam according to its fundamentals.⁵⁴ In sum, whether or not this article has directly influenced policymakers is less relevant. The fact that such a distinguished and influential body has assembled a supposedly objective analysis is a cause for concern.

Results & Recommendations

With these, the international community is at a crucial juncture in the so-called age of terror. At a time where states are scrambling for swift solutions, they have neglected the responsibility of looking at the origins of other states' methods in dealing with terrorism. Although terrorism is not merely tactical, some states fail or seem to undermine the political dynamics when choosing to adopt the counter terrorism policies of others. It may be that the horrors of terrorist attacks have consumed them, unaware that it is actually part of a broader conflict between two or few opposing sides.

As stated above, the roots of counter terrorism policies have a lot to do with the historical baggage they experience as states. Taking a terrorist attack out of its context will inevitably lead to misconstruing the problem and therefore produce flawed solutions in the end. We have seen that some states have adopted ideologies that are harsher than others. Despite having faith as a sufficient guideline, many people succumb to perverted beliefs which obscure original righteous teachings. It also does not help that some individuals try to impose their flawed beliefs on others and reject dissidents as being in error.

53. Ibid., pp. 47-48.

54. Ibid., pp. 61-64.

For policymakers, ideology itself does not determine the course of action they are likely to take. Other considerations which embody the political side of governance and administration are equally important. In politics, because the main driving force is power and survival, most individuals who have attained power would want to retain it as long as possible. In other words, to secure the status quo from outside interference is the ultimate goal, be it in democratic states or authoritarian ones. Moreover, they do this by any means necessary; making use of everything that is at the government's disposal including convenient theses.

In the war on terrorism, states are seemingly good intended in preventing terrorist attacks. They claim to be doing everything they can to protect the public from the threat which terrorists pose. They seem to imply the wish to gain powers allowing certain measures which may be unheard of during times of peace. Hence, they need to convince the public of an existing state of emergency which can justify such changes. This is accomplished largely by portraying the enemy as being an imminent threat. In sum, they would have to draw a picture which differentiates their state of goodness and the external evil that is coming to alter that situation.

Unfortunately, states often mislead themselves when they create a false sense of emergency. They tend to go overboard in terms of developing the course of action they see as appropriate solutions. That is why we have seen reports of countless human rights violations in the name of security.⁵⁵ Among others, people of specific ethnicity or background are bound to be the subject of discrimination.⁵⁶ Usually, states will take away their rights which results in negative treatment during investigations and interrogations. The majority of people who are citizens of that country will not bear much of the brunt, thus they feel less obligated to protect those peoples rights. They are more concerned with their own state of security than the question of liberty.

55. UN News Service, 13 July 2004, "Fight Against Terrorism Must Not Exclude Respect for Rights", UN Official Says. [Online] (<http://www.un.org/news/>)

56. UN News Service, 14 April 2004, "UN Rights Commission Concerned by Negative Stereotyping of Religions". [Online] (<http://www.un.org/news/>)

In the long term however, the gap between peoples of different backgrounds will widen. The mistrust such policies create will arguably prolong, giving way to more disparagement and feelings of oppression. As for security, law enforcement and intelligence agencies will be so used to the treatment they give suspects during emergencies, that they become too desensitized to change in future.⁵⁷ In fact, human rights bodies have documented how opportunistic governments have used the terrorism issue for own benefit.⁵⁸ This situation is unlikely to reverse until and unless the other two components, ideology and policy, are subjected to relevant amendments.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the relationship between ideology, policymaking and security is a real one. Given that terrorism is a highly politicized and emotionally driven phenomenon, objectivity and public feelings are easily distorted and tampered with to create a sense of fear for the enemy. It does not help that scholars, who appear to be credible, cannot be relied upon for their objective assessment of the situation. With these, it is crucial for other states which truly want workable solutions, to be aware of the origins of the counter terrorism policy they choose to adopt from others. They are encouraged to go beyond what politicians claim in public by looking at the results of their policies. However, this is also where the challenge lies. In a highly politicized situation, facts are obscured, results are exaggerated, numbers are tainted and so on. There really is no simple method to avoid from falling for manufactured results when governments want the public to perceive them as doing something positive to curtail terrorism.

Still, states can do a lot to achieve a clearer view. Among others, states must be willing to carry out elaborate studies of the efficacy of mainstream

57. Katherine S. Williams, *Textbook on Criminology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 515-518

58. UN News Service, 23 March 2004, "'Aghast' at Assassination of Hamas Leader, UN expert urges Israel to halt targeted killings." [Online] (<http://www.un.org/News/>); 4 June 2004. "UN Human Rights Report Urges Steps to End Abuses in Iraq". [Online] (www.un.org/news)

counter terrorism policies. Analysts can assess a lot of information which are available to the public. In addition, with the current intelligence-sharing environment among states today, sometimes credible data is not hard to find. Moreover, it is important to refer to disinterested scholars and experts who lean on objectivity and professional honesty rather than politics and emotions alone.