Islam As A Party in the Clash of Civilizations

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ÖZET

Özellikle 11 Eylül sonrasında, Batı'da, İslam dininin siyasallaşması konusunda yapılan analizlerde büyük bir artış gözlemlenmektedir. Bunlar çoğunlukla tek yanlı ve nesnellikten uzak değerlendirmeleri yansıtmaktadırlar. İslam dini ve Müslümanlar artan terör eylemleriyle bağlantılı olarak suçlanırken, İslamın siyasallaşmasının yalnızca dinin niteliğinden kaynaklanmadığı, çevresel-siyasal-ekonomik koşulların zorladığı sosyolojik bir olgu olduğu, hatta onun da ötesinde, Batı'nın İslam dünyasını denetim altında tutmak için özellikle geliştirdiği bir strateji olduğu gerçeği -çoğu kez bilinçli olarak- göz ardı edilmektedir. Aşağıdaki makalede konunun bu boyutu irdelenmeye çalışılmıştır. Önce, İslam dininin dünya çapında artan ağırlığı vurgulanmış, ardından, İslam toplumlarında dinin siyasallaşması sürecinin tarihsel arka planı Mısır, İran, Pakistan ve Türkiye örnekleriyle desteklenerek özetlenmiştir. Siyasallaşmanın iç ve dış nedenleriyle, önde gelen Amerikalı uzmanların "sorun"un niteliği ve çözüm yollarına ilişkin değerlendirme ve önerileri özet olarak ele alınmıştır. Sonuç bölümünde ise, yapılan saptamalar ışığında A.B.D. ve Batı'nın izlediği politikaların eleştirisine yer verilmiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: İslam, siyasal İslam, köktendincilik, ılımlı İslam, A.B.D.

ABSTRACT

In the following article, politization and fundamentalization of Islam as a Western strategy has been examined. First, it is explained why and how Islam is an important consideration for the future of mankind. Second, the historical background of the politization process in the Islamic world is summarized. Third, some illustrations are made in order to clarify the process. Fourth, domestic and external reasons of the politization of Islam are listed. Fifth, U.S. approach to the

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"problem" is inspected. Finally, policies and strategies pursued by the U.S. -and the West- regarding Islamic world are criticized.

Key Words: Islam, political Islam, Islamic fundamentalism, moderate Islam, U.S.

INTRODUCTION

"Political Islam" and "Islamic fundamentalism" are two of the expressions which have been frequently used in political terminology during the last couple of decades. Since September 11 there has been more talk in the West than ever before about Islam. But unfortunately hardly any of the analyses on Islam are based on objective grounds.

Islam is not simply a religion of faith. Koran deals not only with the spirtual lives of persons but with their private and public lives as well. Since it pretends to rule the material world it is true that Islam has a political aspect. It is also true that political Islam can be characterized by its peculiar antipathy against Western values and institutions. Colonization of the Moslem countries by the Western powers in the last two centuries is the main reason for this antipathy. However it will not be satisfactory to bring up the problem of politization or fundamentalization of religion in Moslem countries as if it were a natural outcome of Koran or just a simple reaction to the West. Furthermore, it is a strategy which has been consciously developed by the West to keep Moslem countries under control.

Western analysts, basing their assertations merely on internal factors of the countries with Moslem majorities, are used to blame Islam and it followers, the Moslems. "Burying their heads in the sand, as if Enlightenment were an exclusively Western luxury, the various analysts or other 'orientalists' describe Islam as a form of religious fundamentalism and Moslems as potential terrorists."[1]

I. ISLAM: A WORD THAT SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

Islam is the fastest growing monotheistic religion especially in the Third World. Number of the Mohammedans amounted to about one-seventh of the whole world at the beginning of the 20th century.[2] In 1960's their share was one-sixth. Today it is one-fifth. 40 years later it will be one-fourth. By the end of the 21st century their number will exceed even one-third.

Today there are 1,4 billion Moslems living on earth. In 48 countries, covering one-fifth of the total land on earth, followers of Islam constitute

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[1] Alexandre Del-valle, "Islamist Totalitarianism, Democracies Under Attack," http://alexandredelvalle.com. 6.9.2002.

[2] "Mohammed and Mohammedanism," http:www.newadvent.org/cathen/10424.a.htm.

more than 50 per-cent of the population. In another 16 countries they have a share of 10 to 50 per-cent. (See Tables 1 and 2) According to the U.N. estimates in 2050, 2,5 billions of the total 9 billion people on earth will be of Mohammedan religion. Moslems rank second after the Christians at present, but in 2050 Islam will become the world's largest religion.[3]

Above mentioned figures are impressive enough to give an idea as to why Islam is a very important consideration for the future of mankind. In addition to its extraordinary growing rate, Islam has to be taken into account due to the fact that religion in Moslem communities is getting more and more politicized since 1950's. This politicization has a profound socio-economical ground engendered by the unjust distribution of the global wealth.

Total G.N.P.'s of the Moslem countries make up less than one-twentieth of the entire wealth on earth. This is an extremely grave situation which will become even worse in the forthcoming years. That means great majority of Moslems do not have and are not able to get the basic necessaries of life. They are already suffering many privations and their situation will even worsen in the near future. So it is very likely that in the following decades immense quantities of people –men, women and children- will flow into Western countries as lawless immigrants and Islam will be the main ideology for the oppressed masses of the South.

TABLE-1: Countries with Moslem majorities (over 50 % of the total population)

Country	Population (millions) 2004	Total Projected Population (millions) 2050	Avarage Moslem Population (%)	Population Growth Rate (%)	GNI Per Capita (ppp $) 2002
WORLD	**6.377,6**	**8.918,7**		**1,2**	
Afghanistan	24,9	69,5	100	3,9	n.a.
Albania	3,2	3,7	70	0,7	4.040
Algeria	32,3	48,7	99	1,7	5.330
Azerbaijan	8,4	10,9	87	0,9	2.920
Bahrain	0,7	1,3	86	n.a.	n.a.
Bangladesh	149,7	254,6	88	2,0	1.720
Brunei	0,4	0,7	100	n.a.	n.a.
Chad	8,9	25,4	50	3,0	1.000
Comoros	0,8	1,8	99	n.a.	1.640
Djibouti	0,7	1,4	100	n.a.	2.070
Egypt	73,4	127,4	90	2,0	3.710

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[3] The Europe World Yearbook, 2003. 2 Volumes. 44th Ed., London/New York, Taylor and Frankis Group, 2003; United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), State of World Population, 2004. New York, 2004. pp. 102-111.

Eritrea	4,3	10,5	51	3,7	950
Gambia	1,5	2,9	85	2,7	1.680
Guinea	8,6	19,6	95	1,6	1.990
Indonesia	222,6	293,8	89	1,3	2.990
Iran	69,8	105,5	99	1,2	6.340
Iraq	25,9	57,9	98	2,7	n.a.
Jordan	5,6	10,2	95	2,7	4.070
Kazakhstan	15,4	13,9	55	- 0,4	5.480
Kuwait	2,6	4,9	100	3,5	n.a.
Kyrgyzstan	5,2	7,2	65	1,4	1.520
Lebanon	3,7	4,9	72	1,6	4.470
Libya	5,7	9,2	99	1,9	n.a.
Malaysia	24,9	39,6	67	1,9	8.280
Maldives	0,3	0,8	100	n.a.	n.a.
Mali	13,4	46,0	81	3,0	840
Mauritania	3,0	7,5	100	3,0	1.740
Morocco	31,1	47,1	99	1,6	3.690
Niger	12,4	53,0	85	3,6	770
Nigeria	127,1	258,5	55	2,5	780
Oman	2,9	6,8	90	2,9	12.910
Pakistan	157,3	348,7	99	2,4	1.940
Qatar	0,6	0,9	100	n.a.	n.a.
Saudi Arabia	24,9	54,7	100	2,9	n.a.
Senegal	10,3	21,6	90	2,4	1.510
Somalia	10,3	39,7	100	4,2	n.a.
Sudan	34,3	60,1	81	2,2	1.690
Syria	18,2	34,2	91	2,4	3.250
Tajikistan	6,3	9,6	92	0,9	900
Tanzania	37,7	69,1	98	1,9	550
Tunisia	9,9	12,9	99	1,1	6.280
Turkey	72,3	97,8	99	1,4	6.120
T.R.Northern Cyprus	0,2	?	100	n.a.	n.a.
Turkmenistan	4,9	7,5	90	1,5	4.570
UnitedArab Emirates	3,1	4,1	100	1,9	n.a.
Uzbekistan	26,5	37,8	92	1,5	1.590
Yemen	20,7	84,4	100	3,5	750
Occup. Palestine Terr.	3,7	11,1	100	3,6	n.a.

Source: *The Europe World Yearbook, 2003;* United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), *State of World Population, 2004.*

TABLE 2: Countries having considerable Moslem minorities (between 10 to 50 %)

Country	Total Population (millions) 2004	Projected Population (millions) 2050	Moslem Population (%)	Average Population Growing Rate (%) 2002	GNI Per Capita (ppp $)
Bosnia-Herzegovina	4,2	3,6	40	- 1,1	5.800
Burkina Faso	13,4	42,4	30	3,0	1.010
Cameroon	16,3	24,9	22	1,8	1.640
Cote D'Ivorie	16,9	27,6	20	1,6	1.430
Ethiopia	72,4	171,0	43	2,5	720
Ghana	21,4	39,5	15	2,2	2.000
Guinea-Bissau	1,5	4,7	40	2,9	750
India	1.081,2	1.531,4	12	1,5	2.570
Macedonia	2,1	2,2	30	0,5	6.210
Mauritius	1,2	1,5	17	1,0	10.530
Mongolia	2,6	3,8	11	1,3	1.650
Mozambique	19,2	31,3	26	1,8	n.a.
Russia	142,4	101,5	13	- 0,6	7.820
Sierra Leone	5,2	10,3	30	2,3	490
Singapore	4,3	4,5	16	1,7	23.090
Togo	5.0	10,0	15	2,3	1.430

When and how did the politicization of religion in Moslem communities begin is a matter of question.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Islamic world was once in advance of the Christian world nearly in all the fields. That was in the Middle Ages of Europe. But in the late 10th and early 11th centuries, as a result of the collusion between the political and religious hierarchy of Islam, authorities put an end to the ***dar al hikma* (house of wisdom)** institution and other forums where free thinkers had been able to exchange and spread their ideas. Their aim was to create and enforce norms of orthodoxy to stop the proliferation of sects and movements that threatened the stability of the Islamic dominion. The consequence of that deliberate proscription of innovative and speculative thought has been the gradual stagnation of Islamic society.[4] Main sources of philosophy and science which had fallen out of favor in the Islamic world were conveyed to Europe by the Crusaders.

Between 14th and 16th centuries Europe experienced a period of cultural rebirth known as the **Renaissance**. "The irony is that the intellectual impetus for the Renaissance came from within the Islamic world. The orthodox crackdown on the free-thinkers resulted in migration of their ideas and books through Italy and Spain into Europe."[5] After that a movement for church reform known as **Protestant Reformation** took place. European exploration and increased trade stimulated a global exchange. Islamic world, the bulk of its territory being under the rule of Ottoman Dynasty then, could not keep pace with the West and gradually lost ground against it. The Christian countries of Europe progressively gained technical and military advantage over the Ottomans.

Thousand year-long rivalry between the Christian world and *Dar al Islam* had reached a new stage when Ottomans were defeated in a decisive war by the end of 17th century. This evoked a high degree of alarm in the Islamic world. In various circles reasons of the defeat had been questioned as a result of which two different opinions -religious and secular- came into being. According to the religious point of view, represented by Mohammed ibn Abd-al Vahhab –a noble bedouin from Central Arabia- Moslem world was led astray by the wicked rulers who did not obey the holy orders of Koran. His followers -called *Vahhabis* or *Muvahhids* (adherents of unity)- claimed that the religious faith among Moslems should be strengthened and Islamic rules be strictly carried out. "They sought to cleanse Islam...of 'pagan vestiges' such as magic and sorcery, and also so-called 'novelties' cults associated with reversed tombs. Vahhab censured luxury and demanded total observance of Islamic commandments including five-fold

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[4] John Jandora, "Frontier and Community: The Destruction of Jihad," American Diplomacy Publishers. http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/item/2005/1013/jand/jandora/jihad.htm, 26.6.2005.

[5] Idem.

daily prayer, pilgrimages to Mecca, and the prohibition of usury, prostitution and sodomy."[6]

As for those who had a secular approach main reason of the defeat was that the Moslems had fallen behind the Christians in technical and military fields. This view gained weight in İstanbul, the then capital city of the Ottomans and metropolis of the Islamic world. Supporters of this view dwelt on the necessity that some Western values and institutions should be adopted in order to compete against the European powers. However only some moderate alterations, restricted in military field, could be made since the religious opposition hindered further changes.

In the 18th century the philosophers of **Enlightenment** firmly critisized the traditional religious thoughts and the socio-political structures built upon them. By the end of the century, while the ancient regimes had begun to fall down one after another, a major turning point in history called the **Industrial Revolution** took place overthrowing the system of government, society and the daily lives of people throughout Europe. Islamic world, once again, stayed outside those tremendous developments.

In the 19th century Western powers partitioned the world. Despite fierce resistance those powers dominated other peoples and brought distant lands under their control. Human and natural resources of the colonialized countries -Moslem territories being among them- were selfishly exploited by the colonial powers. As a result "the images of foreign (infidel) protectorate, invasion and occupation of historically Islamic territory evoked a resentment."[7] Being degraded by their –so-called- "masters" Moslems became more and more reactionary. This, of course, strengthened the natural desire of people to assert their own claim to national and cultural identity.

Nationalist forces, whose main aim was to maintain the independence and sovereignty of their countries and freedom of their pupils, activated the rising social reaction. They took the field against colonialist-imperialist powers and drove them away from their homelands after a series of long and violent struggles. Then they seized the power and put their social, political and economical programmes into effect.

Religious forces on the other hand, though they took part in the nationalist-led struggles for independence, did not approve the programmes targeting secularization and modernization of the society. Their opposition was against the adoption of Western values and institutions rather than the economic penetration of the West. So, after the colonial powers had been

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[6] Hasan Dzutsev, Abraham Pershita and Ken Roberts, "Ethnic Divisions, Politics and Vahhabism in the Post-Soviet North Caucasus," http://www.hsd.hr/revija/pdf/1-2-2002-Dzutsev.pdf, 2.7.2005

[7] Jandora, loc.cit.

driven away, nationalists found themselves in collision with the religious opposition.

It did not took long for the Western powers to realize that it is to their own benefit to support Islamists against the nationalist-secularist forces. Because the former was obviously less dangerous than the latter which seemed to jeopardize directly the *Western business interests*. Besides, in order to prevent the progress of national aspirations Islam was –and it still is– considered as a deadening instrument. With such considerations the West did not only connived at but also gave support to the politization of Islam. In other words, *politization* and *fundamentalization* of religion in the Islamic communities has come out as a natural product of the *allience* between imperialistic powers of the West, their local accomplices and Islamist groups against the national forces.

Nationalist governments, not being able to overcome the heavy economic and political pressure brought on them were overthrown one after another. They were substituted by Islamist/liberal governments which did not share their anti-imperialistic schemes. New rulers of the Moslem countries pursued reconciling policies in their relations with the West; they exhibited no resistance against Western business companies. As a result of this submissive policy Western colonialism revived in a different form but with the same content.

Events have not undergone simultaneously everywhere in the Islamic world. Some countries, like the ones in the Arabian Peninsula, have always been under the reigns of puppet monarcs with religious ideologies. They have acted in full cooperation with the Western powers to save their positions. Yet in most of the Moslem countries nationalistic thoughts and movements were in power at the commencement. But due to the political and military defeats, foreign interventions and misrules Islamists and/or Western backed liberal-opportunists gradually assumed the reins of government. Liberals, who regarded religion as an antidot of nationalism, did not hesitate to cooperate with Islamists in strengthening the religious influence over the society. As a result, "political events in the Moslem world since the 1970's have dramatically drawn attention to the political and social potential of Islam...Islamic revivalism...includes an increase in religious observances (mosque attendance, ramadan fast, wearing traditional Islamic dress); proliferation of religious publications and media programming; calls for the implementation of the Islamic law; creation of Islamic banks; and the growth of Islamic organizations and activist movements."[8]

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[8] John L. Esposito, "Islamic Fundamentalism and Islamic Radicalism," Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninety-Ninth Congress, First Session, Washington D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985, p.8.

To follow this historical process closely we need to examine the developments in some individual Moslem countries.

III. SOME ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE ISLAMIC WORLD AND THE TURKISH EXPERIENCE

A. Egypt, Iran and Pakistan

1. Egypt

After a 70 years-long British domination nationalists led by Cemal Abdul Nasser took the power in Egypt in 1952. Arab nationalism represented by Nasser and fed by the ever-lasting war with Israel, constituted the ideological base of the regime for more than 15 years. During that time some dynamic initiatives such as the nationalization of Suez Canal and the building of Aswan Dam were taken. Nasser's personal prestige in the Arab world reached to its peak as he undertook the Palestinian case on behalf of the Arabs and fought in the cause of justice for Palestinians.

1967 War (6 Days War) between Israel and Arabs was a historical turning point for the Arabs. Gaza Strip, Golan Hights, West Bank, and above all Jarusalem, third holliest city of Islam, were lost. That caused great disappointment and depression. Various circles in the Arab world put the blame on nationalist leaders and their ideologies. In that psycologial atmosphere Enver Sedat succeeded Nasser, who died in 1970. Sedat considered it necessary to make an appeal to Islam in order to gain popular support. Islamic programming in the media and Islamic courses in schools were increased, new mosques were built and Islamic rhetoric in the public statements were exceedingly used. The Moslem Brotherhood, suppressed by Nasser, was permitted to function freely. Islamic student organizations were supported to remove the influence of Nasserists. Besides, Sedat tried to improve his country's relations with the West.

By mid 1970's he began to loose control over Islam. The Moslem Brotherhood and student organizations were increasingly critical to his pro-Western policies. Especially his cooperation with the Shah of Iran and Camp David process, which considered as a betrayal to the cause of Palestine, brought forth the hatred of Islamic groups. Beginning with the provincial towns and cities, such groups were organized among university students and at mosques. They condemned contemporary Egyptian society as anti-Islamic, demanded the Islamic law to come into force and believed that armed struggle was the only solution. In 1981 Enver Sedat was assasinated by Islamists.

Egyptian politics during the 1970's provides an example of the way in which a politicized Islam has been used by both government and opposition forces. "It...demonstrates how a regime's appeal to Islam can prove to be a

two-edged sword; how a useful source of legitimacy can become a yardstick for judgement and condemnation."[9]

Sedat's murder did not change the pro-Islamist direction of Egypt, rather, Islam became even more influential in the society. Hüsnü Mübarek, his successor, followed in Sedat's foot-steps as regards pro-Wastern, pro-Islamist and anti-Nasserist performances.

2. Iran

In the Second World War British and Soviet armies occupied Iran under the pretext of preventing German domination. Foreign occupation lasted for four years untill 1946. A few years later –in 1951- a nationalist government under Muhammed Musaddiq came to power. Representing Iranian people's desire for independence he was elected prime-minister by a large majority. Musaddiq nationalized Iran's rich petroleum wells and so became the main target of American and British intelligence services. They lay in wait for an appropriate opportunity to knock him down. After a series of premediated economic and social disorders, Musaddiq was overthrown and executed. This was a clear CIA operation as a result of which Shah Muhammed Rıza Pehlevi gained full control of Iran. He reversed Musaddiq's nationalistic policies, gave new petroleum cocessions to Western companies, and acted in full cooperation with his American patrons.

For more than 20 years, in order not to relinquish the crown, Shah carried out a systematic terror over Iranian people by means of his notorious secret service, the SAVAK. In the eyes of the people Shah was nothing more than an evil-doer. Hatred against his American backed autocratic regime created a revolutionary opposition.

Not only the religious classes, but also many non-clerical Iranian intellectuals including some who had benefited Western-style educations, had become gravely concerned about the influence of the West, especially the United States, upon Iranian politics and society. American advisers had played a major role in the training and development of Iran's military and secret police as well as its economy. "By 1978 there were more than 40.000 American officers in Iran. The groving American diplomatic, military and corporate presence, and the very nature of Iran's Western-oriented development programmes, fueled fears of a loss of national autonomy and identity.[10]

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[9] John L. Esposito, "Islamic Revivalism," Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninety-Ninth Congress, First Session, Washington D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985, pp. 300-301.

[10] Esposito, ibid, pp. 288, 302-303.

Islamic clergy in Iran, known as the *mullahs* led by Ayetullah Humeyni stirred up existing social opposition against the Shah regime. In 1979, after furious mass protests, Shah was forced to left Iran. A nationwide referandum resulted in a massive vote in favor of the establishment of an Islamic Republic. Ayetullah Humeyni obtained the title of "İmam" (highest religious rank in Shia).

Islamic regime in Iran has an anti-imperialistic character. As a reaction to the submissive policies of Shah a substantial anti-American, anti-Western inclination prevails. Country's national riches, such as petroleum and natural gas, are jelaously protected from Western exploitation. Since the establishment of Islamic Republic Iran has never been on good terms with the U. S.

3. Pakistan

Pakistan was established as a two-sectioned national home (East and West Pakistan) for Moslems in 1947 with the seperation of British India into Moslem and Hindu states. Although the new state was based on the principles of Islam, religious influence was not considerably strong in practice. As the seperation problem was never satisfactorily resolved, Pakistan fought three wars with India over the disputed Kashmir territory. 1947-48 and 1965 wars strengthened the national feelings. However 1971 war, by which the country was devided into two parts, with East Pakistan becoming a new independent state under the name of Bangladesh, produced a shocking effect. That caused Pakistan's national identity being seriously questioned.

Prime-minister Zülfikar Ali Butto, for economical, political and strategical reasons, turned Pakistan away from India and strengthened its ties with the oil-rich Gulf countries. To support this effort he consciously laid stress on Islam. Thus, he expected to gain promotion within Pakistan as well. By 1977 the religious opposition in the country taking the advantages of Butto's pro-Islamic policies formed a political entity named Pakistan National Alliance (PNA). The PNA used Islamic ideology, symbols and political rhetoric to condemn Butto's semi-secular policies and he reacted to them by introducing more Islamic measures and promising more Islamic law. Thus the appeal to Islamic legitimacy by both the Butto government and the opposition had led to the reemergence of Islam as a major force.

When General Ziya ül Hak seized power in 1977 he moved quickly to legitimize his coup and martial law regime in the name of Islam. He Islamicized the system of government and law.[11] Butto was judged by the military court and executed in 1979.

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[11] Esposito, ibid, pp. 301-302.

Although the ever-lasting dispute over Kashmir adds a nationalistic colour to it, the pro-Islamic character of the regime in Pakistan goes on for more than 30 years.

B. TURKEY: FROM KEMALIST SECULARISM TO MODERATE ISLAM

Turkey, though it differs widely from other Moslem countries because of its Kemalist experience, has undergone a somewhat similar process of Islamic politization in the same period of time.

Republic of Turkey was established after a successfull war of independence against Western imperialism. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, leader of the Turkish War of Independence, built the new state upon the solid grounds of nationalism and lacism. He adopted the thoughts and the methods of Enlightenment and tried to reduce the influence of religion on the society as far as possible. He did not tolerate any sort of political Islam. For the religious classes Kemalist rule had come to mean the erosion of their status and sources of revenue, the undermining of their ideology and values.

But this did not last long. Immedeately after Atatürk's death Islamists began to gain ground. Liberal democratic principles' being put into practice in the mid 1940's accelerated this process. In order to secure their votes political leaders and the parties, whether they be –in name- right or left wing, gave concessions to various Islamist groups. Besides, the misrule of pro-Western liberal governments drove the country in a political and economical dead-end. Prolonged political instability, repeated government crises, and a severe economic bottle-neck –i.e. high rates of inflation and unemployment, unjust distribution of national income ever-rising gap between the rich and the poor- deepened the distrust and anxiety among people.

As a result, Turkey, although it had not been defeated in a decisive battle like the Arabs or encountered a territorial loss like Pakistan or experienced a direct foreign intervention like Iran, faced an identity crisis out of which the politization of Islam has come into being. So in Turkey, which has since Atatürk's day proclaimed itself to be laic and has in the past disestablished Islam, the last three decades have witnessed a steady re-emergence of popular support for Islam. "Successive Turkish governments quietly reinstituted Islam in the school curriculum, re-established Islamic primary schools and 'ulama' training colleges, rehabilitated old and built new mosques, etc. Political groupings...based on Islamic values have in recent years re-appeared."[12]

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[12] Herman F. Eilts, "Islamic Fundamentalism and Islamic Radicalism," Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninety-Ninth Congress, First Session, Washington D.C., U.S.Government Printing Office, 1985, p. 61.

Islamization of education has constituted the main object in the substitution project of a moderate Islamic regime for Atatürk's secularism. Ulama training **İmam-Hatip Schools** have been developed with this consideration. Islamization of education via İmam-Hatips started in 1950's. Number of those religious schools and their graduates increased enermously from 1970's to 1990's. (See Tables 3 and 4)[13] The graduates of İmam-Hatips have rarely been taken in service in religious fields. Instead, most of them have been given positions in the government offices. Generally they have been employed in the Ministeries of Interior, Justice and Education. In this way the basis of a moderate Islamic regime has been being prepared systematically in the course of time.

TABLE-3 : Development of İmam-Hatips Since 1924

Year	Number of the İmam-Hatip Schools Lycee	Number of Secondary	Students
1924	29	-	-
1925	26	-	-
1928	2	-	-
1929	-	-	-
1951	7	7	1.126
1960	19	19	4.545
1972	72	70	36.378
1975	130	171	77.638
1980	372	374	201.004
1982	398	374	219.931
1993	417	391	448.992
1994	454	?	476.175
1997	607	?	512.000
2003	536	?	105.000

Source: Eğitimsen

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[13] Eğitim ve Bilim Emekçileri Sendikası (Eğitimsen), "Siyasal İslam, Din Eğitimi ve İmam Hatipler Gerçeği," http://www.egitimsen.org.tr, 22.12.2004; Özlem Soğukdere, " İmam Hatip Liseleri," http://www.cnnturk.com/ ozeldosyalar, 28.5.2004; Atilla Öztürk, "Ödün Ekilince Şeriat Biçildi," Cumhuriyet, 27.12.1995, p.4.

TABLE-4: İmam-Hatip Performances of the Governments

Prime-Minister	Government	Period	Number of İmam-Hatip Schools Opened
Adnan Menderes	Democrat Party (DP)	1950-1960	19
İsmet İnönü	Coalition (CHP-AP)	1962-1963	7
Süleyman Demirel	Justice Party (AP)	1965-1971	46
Bülent Ecevit	Coalition (CHP-MSP)	1974	29
Süleyman Demirel	Nationalist Front Coalition (AP-MSP-MHP)	1975-1978	233
Bülent Ecevit	Rep.Peoples Party (CHP)	1978-1979	4
Süleyman Demirel	Justice Party (AP)	1979-1980	36
Bülent Ulusu	Military Regime	1980-1983	35
Turgut Özal	Motherland Party (ANAP)	1983-1989	90
Yıldırım Akbulut	" " "	1989-1991	23
Süleyman Demirel	Coalition (DYP-SHP)	1991-1993	12
Tansu Çiller	Coalition (DYP-SHP)	1993-1995	13
Necmettin Erbakan	Coalition (RP-DYP)	1996-1997	62

Source: Eğitimsen

In the aftermath of the 1971 coup "the State Planning Organization (DPT) prepared a report for the leaders of the 1980 coup suggesting the re-integration of Islamic ethics into public education as a means of consolidating national unity."[14] In 1982, generals of the 1980 coup put a new constitution into force by which religious education was made compulsary at the public schools. It was the state elite itself –including the military- that politicized and instrumentalized religion under the official banner of a **'Turkish-Islamic Synthesis.'**[15] This official banner has been replaced for the principles of Kemal Atatürk, and ironically the ones who are responsible of that replacement, claimed that they acted in the name of Kemal Atatürk (!)

Turgut Özal further strengthened this new discourse and thus both the generals and leading politicians of the 1980's paved the way for the relative success of the religious political wing in Turkey.[16] In 1996 Islamist RP (Welfare Party) came to power in coalition with the liberals. Its leader Necmettin Erbakan took the office as prime-minister. But one year later he was forced to resign as a result of a nationwide campaign in which the

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[14] Hakan M. Yavuz, "Turkish Identity and Foreign Policy in Flux: The Rise of Neo-Ottomanism," Critique, No 12 (1998), p. 29.

[15] Dietrich Jung, "The Sevres Syndrome: Turkish Foreign Policy and the Historical Legacies," American Diplomacy Publishers, http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/archives_roll/2003_07-09/jung.sevres/jung.sevres. html, 28.72005.

[16] Idem.

military were also involved. In doing so, "military tried to get rid of a *'monster'* they themselves helped creating."[17]

Shortly after the resignation of Erbakan, the duration of compulsary education has been extended from 5 to 8 years. This resulted a dramatic decrease in the number of applications towards the İmam-Hatips. Nevertheless in 2003 there were still 105.000 students being "educated" in 536 İmam-Hatips. (Table 3)

"The...success of the AKP (Justice and Development Party) in the national elections of 3 November 2002, however, indicated that the Islamic political identitiy is more solidly rooted in a new urban and modern context."[18] This, in fact, is not new for the cooperation between Islamists and liberals goes back to 1940's and 1950's when the multy-party system and liberal democracy was first put into practice. They began to cooperate against the nationalists then. Nearly all the Islamist forces were giving active support to Menderes' liberal DP in those days. In 1960's it was Demirel's AP under which they cooperated. In 1970's Islamists established their own parties but again cooperated with the liberals, under a coalition government, the National Front, this time. In 1980's the cooperation continued under Özal's ANAP. Beginning from the 1990's it was Islamists, not the liberals, who dominate the cooperation. Today the roles seem to be changed. Since 2002, Islamists and liberals cooperate under AKP, a party representing moderate -liberalized in other words- Islam. This is the preferance of the West and the U.S. to which both the liberals and the moderate Islamists depend upon.

After taking the government in hand, AKP has undertaken a new initiative in order to re-open the way for İmam-Hatips.

Islamic primary schools, known as **Koran Courses** have also been active in Turkey since 1950's. Their number reached to its peak in 1997. In that year 1.390.929 students were being "educated" in 6.044 Koran Courses. Though a relative decrease in their number has been observed after 1997, AKP government is trying to reverse this trend.[19]

Most effective Islamic communities in Turkey are the **tarikats** (=religious orders) of **Nakşibendi, Nur** and **Süleymancı**. Each of them has its own schools, courses, pensions and trading companies. The estimated number of the members and the supporters of those tarikats are about 5 to 10 millions. It is known that they have influencial connections both in the

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[17] Idem.

[18] Idem.

[19] Eğitimsen, loc.cit.; Soğukdere, loc.cit.; Yalçın Doğan, "Kuran Kursları," Milliyet, 10.8.1997.

West and in the Islamic world. It is also known that they control enermous sums of money.[20]

IV. REASONS OF POLITIZATION OF THE RELIGION IN MOSLEM COUNTRIES

The rise of political Islam has several reasons depending upon the internal dynamics of the societies concerned, and the foreign interventions affecting them. Domestic and external factors, most of which have already been touched in the previous pages, are listed below.

Domestic Factors

1) Problems related to the socio-economical developments of the contemporary third world society, such as population explosion, urbanization and immigration have caused a cultural alienation and a search for identity.

2) Endeavours made by the nationalist-secularist leaders to modernize their societies have ended up in failure.

3) Political and military defeats experienced by the individual Moslem countries have caused a kind of social trauma.

4) People in the Moslem countries, who suffered badly from destructive economic effects of the misrules of nationalist and liberal governments, turned their faces to the Islamists.

5) Growth in literacy and global communications have made Moslems more conscious of being part of a broader Islamic community.

External Factors

1) Unpleasant experience of the colonial past.

2) Political, economical and military interferences from outside. Especially those of the super powers' who compete with each other for the control of oil reserves.

3) Western support given to the Islamic thoughts and movements in order to get rid of the nationalist governments who put obstacles before their business interests.

4) American support obtained for the Islamist groups, especially those who act in the neighbouring countries of the Soviet Union in order to destablize Moscow regime by means of its Moslem subjets. A Cold War plan known as the "Green Belt."

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[20] Eğitimsen, loc.cit., "İslamcı Cemaatler Üzerine," Yeni Yüzyıl, 21.11.1995.

5) Support given by the U.S. to corrupt regimes by which much of the Moslem World is afflicted.

6) Creation of Israel on Arab territory, and the agressive policies of that state against its neighbours with the help of the U.S.

7) Political trend since the 1970's which has been inclined towards the Right. Conservative set of values being shared by increasing number of people throughout the world.

8) Iran's efforts to spread the values and institutions of Islamic Revolution everywhere in the Moslem World.

V. UNITED STATES AND THE "PROBLEM"

Beginning from 1980's American governmets have perceived that the dimensions of the problem might expand beyond their control. Hence, they tried to examine the matter in detail. Below approaches of some prominent American intellectual figures, when they first *realized the problem,* are mentioned. The source is their speeches before a Foreign Affairs Committee meeting in the House of Representatives in 1985. It will be noticed that they generally hold an objective ground in their determinations about the characteristics of religious fundamentalism in Islam. But as for the reasons and the solutions of the problem, they exhibit one-sidedness of an official spokesman.

Views About the Distinctive Characteristics of the Islamic Fundamentalism

Their determinations are as follows:

Islamist revivalists are fundamentalist in their insistence on return to the fundamentals of Islam. Islamic fundamentalists believe that dependence on the West has been responsible for the failure of the political systems. They see the Moslem rulers as autocratic heads of corrupt, propped up by support from Western governments and multinational corporations. To them, Western development models are responsible for moral and cultural decline and the breakdown of the Moslem family. Therefore, Western political and cultural domination which fosters secularism and materialism must be thrown off.

In short, ideological framework of the Islamic fundamentalism depends on three points. *First,* Islam is a total way of life. Religion, therefore, is integral to politics, state and society. The resurgence of Islam is a reassertion of cultural identity. The establishment of an Islamic society requires a personal and social transformation which is a prerequisite for true Islamic government. To return to Islam in order to restore a lost identity, moral purpose and character is a necessity. *Second,* the political, economic and military weakness of Moslems is due to having strayed from Islam and

followed Western, secular, materialist ideologies. *Third,* the renewal of Moslem society must be held within the Islamic system of government and law. The reintroduction of Islamic law -**Shari'a-** is a *sine qua non* for the establishment of an Islamic state and society. Since the legitimacy of Moslem governments is based on Islamic law, governments which do not follow the Shari'a are illegitimate. Those are guilty of unbelief and, as such, are lawful objects of holy war **–jihad-** and thus they must be overthrown.[21]

> *"Fundamentalism is synonimous with essential and necessary laws and rules. Therefore, to the believer, the law (fundamentalism) is indispensable...Living in the Islamic faith is living in the Shari'a (system of law or legal principles of life) and following the Sunna (words and actions of the Prophet). There is no difference between Islam as a religion and Islam as a political society (not limited to the acquisition of power)."*[22]

Views About the Reasons of the "Problem"

American experts lay special emphasis on the domestic factors while examining the matter. External factors, the ones related with the Western domination in particular, are either belittled or totally denied.

Here are some examples:

> *"City life contrasts sharply with the village values...The contradictions of the modern Moslem societies are vividly experienced: Wealth, Western dress and lifestyle and corruption are contrasted with overcrowded ghettos, poverty and massive unemployment. Western...social...values are contrasted with traditional Islamic values regarding women and the family...Islamically minded youth often experience alienation torn between their religion and modern life styles. Islamic*

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[21] Esposito, "Islamic Fundamentalism...," loc.cit., pp. 2-11; Esposito, "Islamic Revivalism," loc.cit., pp. 300-309; Shahrough Akhavi, "Islamic Fundamentalism and Islamic Radicalism," Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninety-Ninth Congress, First Session, Washington D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985, pp. 121-122; Augustus R. Norton, "Islamic Fundamentalism and Islamic Radicalism," Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninety-Ninth Congress, First Session, Washington D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985, pp. 107-108; Adeed Dawisha, "The Iran-Iraq War," Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninety-Ninth Congress, First Session, Washington D.C.., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985, p. 178.

[22] Raymond H.Hamden, "Islamic Fundamentalism, Terrorism or Psycological Resistance," Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, Committee on Foreign Affairs. House of Representatives, Ninety-Ninth Congress, First Session, Washington D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985, pp. 417-418.

organizations offer a new sense of identity and community based upon an Islamic ideology which provides a critque of modern society and an agenda for change rooted in their religious world-view. Most of them work for Islamic socio-political change within the political system. Others...become radicalized.[23]

"(In the Middle East) because of the long heritage of foreign impact, there is a tendency to search for conspiracies, in other words, to explain events by relationship to the great powers and how the great powers manipulate the developments there...This kind of post hoc ergo propter hoc attitude about the foreign great powers is to some extent an inevitable outcome of the norrow training, the kind of norrow vision of the leadership...Because the structure of the Middle Eastern societies differs from that of Western countries, such models could not succeed and became discredited. Therefore a rejection of models took place, accompanied by fundamentalist reassessments."[24]

"If there is one common dominator shared by many, if not all of the Islamic movements it is a deeply felt sense of disenfranchisement. Few Middle Eastern states have succeeded in providing their citizens an effective voice in government...With few exceptions, political representation is rigged to benefit the representatives rather than the represented...For the past few decades, the Arab republics have dabbled with various secular ideologies, ranging from Nasserism to Arab socialism, but few of these governments have succeeded in outpacing the...demands brought about by widespread social change and disruption. In many cases, the unspoken, if not the expressed goal was to secularize society. What we are now witnessing is a dampening of the penchant for secularization. In the end, the rulers' ideologies of the 1950's and 1960's failed, leaving in their place a vacuum yet to be filled."[25]

"(Besides the Iranian Islamic Revolution) the combination of socio-economic disparities throughout the Moslem world, perceived governmental misrule, the long stagnant Middle Eastern peace process, Israel's actions with respect to its neighbours and real or imagined American support for Israel, are likely to keep Islamic militancy alive for some time."[26]

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[23] Esposito, "Islamic Fundamentalism...," loc.cit., pp. 4-5.

[24] Akhavi, loc.cit., pp. 122-125.

[25] Norton, loc.cit., p. 113.

[26] Eilts, loc.cit., p. 56.

William J. Olson, like Akhavi, accuses the Middle Easterners in producing conspiracy theories. This mentality, according to Olson, is the product of years of foreign domination of the region and reflects a willful ignorance.[27]

Proposals for the Solution of the "Problem"

American authorities put forward some proposals to show the ways of dealing with the problem. However, their approachements reveal that the main anxiety in their minds is the continuation of American **business interests** or, in a more general sense, global interests of the West. Their suggestions are all aimed at the achievement of that goal.

Discussions before the committee brought out three points which appear to be greater in importance for the U.S. as regards its national interests in the Middle East: containment of the Soviet Union (now Russia), security of Israel and the security of the supplies of oil. Those items have not changed since then, nevertheless September 11 attacks raised a forth issue: abolition of Islamic terrorism.

When the running commentary kept up by the American authorities for some decades on Islamic fundamentalism is examined closely, it will soon come into sight that their attention has been cought by three questions:

1) Should U.S. change its policy towards Israel?

2) Should U.S. go into closer relations with the Islamists?

3) Should U.S. use force in the region in order to follow up its interests?

The answers to those questions are, in short, 1) No, 2) Yes, 3) Yes.

Though it is generally accepted that the U.S. support for Israel produces reaction from the fundamentalists, hardly any of the authorities offer a change in American policy towards Israel. For some, "Islamic fundamentalism has no relationship with Arab-Israeli conflict" and "Palestine question is an internal problem of Israel."[28] For others, "even if we (the U.S.) were to modify our policy towards Israel...that alone would not come near toward satisfying the kind of anger which Islamic fundamentalists

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[27] William J. Olson, "The Iran-Iraq War," Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninety-Ninth Congress, First Session, Washington D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985, pp. 209-229.

[28] Fouad Ajami, "Islamic Fundamentalism and Islamic Radicalism," Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninety-Ninth Congress, First Session, Washington D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985, pp. 143-144.

have towards the U.S. as the embodiment and expression of the values of materialism and modernization which the West has thrust in the Islamic world...Since we can not transform the nature of our society and the nature of our values we will continue to be an anathema to these people"[29] Only a few, in a weak tone, criticise the U.S. policy ("U.S. need to take account of Arab interests as well as Israeli interests"[30]). Fewer go even further ("U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East has been a disaster since 1967. An even-handed policy with respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would do more to reduce the threat of anti-American terrorism than any other step we could take."[31]). But these are only exceptions. Great majority ratifies Washington's policy.

As for the second question all the American experts, without exception, propose to maintain closer and constant liaison with Islamist leaders, either fundamentalist or non-fundamentalist. The U.S., they say, has no drawback of going into dialogue with the fundamentalists. But they underline the necessity to distinguish the radicals from the moderates.

> *"U.S. should differentiate between Islamic movements and should not equate Islamic fundamentalism with radicalism and violence...U.S. wrongly assumes that the mixing of religion and politics necessarily and inevitably leads to tyrannical governments...American interests will best be served by policies that walk a fine line between selective, discreet and low visibility cooperation with friendly Muslim governments... Recognizing the special relationships with some Muslim rulers can be critical to our strategic objectives we should also be careful not to antagonize, in the process, popular and authentically representative forces in Muslim societies...In particular, The U.S. should ordinarily to avoid being seen as intervening in state initiated Islamization programs, or as opposing the activities of Islamic organizations where such programs and activities do not directly threaten U.S. interests."[32]*

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[29] Stephen Solarz, "His Speech Before the Congress, July 15, 1985," Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninety-Ninth Congress, First Session, Washington D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985, pp. 149-150.

[30] Augustus R. Norton, "Coping with Islamic Fundamentalism," New York Times, 6.8.1985.

[31] Louis Janowski, "Neo-Imperialism and U.S. Foreign Policy," Foreign Service Journal, May 2004 adopted by American Diplomacy Publishers, http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/archives_roll/2004_07-09/janowski-bush/ janowski-bush.htm, 7.7.2005.

[32] Esposito, "Islamic Fundamentalism....," loc.cit., pp. 18-23.

There is one thing regarded totally unacceptable by those experts. Coming into power of nationalistic governments which by any possibility "threaten U.S. interests" with their anti-imperialistic agendas.

> *"Some observers argue that authoritative regimes, being a big part of the problem, deserve to be ousted. However such advice lacks forsight. There are few native general-welfare oriented constitutionalists to replace the autocrats; the successors would likely be another set of autocrats, or worse, still radicals."[33]*

The main aim in maintaining closer relations with Islamists is to ensure the formation of moderate Islamic governments having somewhat of a popular support and no intention to resist the Western domination.

> *"If militant Islam is the problem than one can formulate, as I do, that moderate Islam is the solution."[34] "Although Muslims alone will make (their) decisions, Westeners can influence their direction. Repressive elements (such as Saudi regime) can be set back by reduced dependence on oil. More liberal Muslims (such as the Atatürkists) can be marginalized by letting an Islamist-led Turkey enter the European Union."[35]*

Third and the most crucial question is about the use of force. It is generally accepted that the U.S. must continue to pursue an active policy of energy conservation and secure stable sources of energy supply. But the *use of force* for this purpose is rarely worded.

Olson, for instance, thinks that the U.S. should use force in the Middle East to defend its regional interests. But he uses a hybrid language to express his aim. He claims that they in the West are against "any use of force for any reason, especially to defend something so mundane and vaguely immoral as national interest." Then he goes on saying that the "much of the world does not share this view" and they are "willing to maintain the idea as a double-standard in order to incapatitate the West."[36] What he wants to say is that the U.S., though unwillingly, should use force to protect the West from being *incapatitated* by the *much of the world* which have an evil intention against the West.

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[33] Jandora, loc.cit. It should be noted that they use the word "radical" to describe the ones who resist Western dominance, while they use the word "moderate" to describe the ones who are willing to cooperate with the West. According to this specially produced Western terminology nationalists are the most radical ones.

[34] Daniel Pipes, "Militant Islam," conversation by Harry Kreisler, 10.2.2004, in the "Conversations with History," Institute of International Studies, U.C. Berkeley, http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people4/pipes/pipes - con0.html, 16.6.2005.

[35] Daniel Pipes, "(The Issue of Compulsion in Religion:) Islam is What Its Followers Make of It," New York Sun, 28.9.2004, http://www.danielpipes.org/article/2110.

[36] Olson, loc.cit., pp. 209-229.

A few years later Samuel P. Huntington put it in plain words:

> *"The West in effect is using international institutions, military power and economic resources to run the world in ways that will maintain Western predominance, protect Western interests and promote Western political and economic values."*[37]

In practice, the Third World, especially the Moslems, whether they be Azeris, Palestinians, Afgans, Iraqis or Bosnian Moslems, suffer harm and loss in all conflicts between themselves and pro-Western forces. After 9/11 attacks sufferings in the Moslem world are multiplied. It became a daily event for the Moslems to encounter open threats or agressions directed from the U.S. or the West. The victims are rarely fundamentalists. They are just ordinary Moslems.

CONCLUSIONS

In recent years a deep sense of unease about the future has been developed in the West. "The confidence that the West would remain a dominant force in the 21st century, as it has for the past four centuries, is giving way to a sense of foreboding that forces like the emergence of fundamentalist Islam (and) the rise of East Asia...could pose real threats to the West."[38] September 11 attacks have even deepened this anxiety, especially in the U.S. Those attacks has changed the "naive assumption that somehow the U.S. –unlike any other nation- could involve itself in ever-expanding external acts without potential negative or retaliatory responses on its territory."[39]

Immedeately after the attacks Bush declared a crusade against Islam. U.S.-led forces invaded Afghanistan in 2001 and in Iraq in 2003. Bush and his neo-conservative administration "tried to win popular support for the war by pandering the worst fears of American public, conjuring up a link of terror between the secular-nationalist Baathist rulers of Iraq and diametrically opposed pan-Islamic religious fundamentalists of al-Qaida...Equally unbelievable was the portrait of an *axis of evil* linking Iran and Iraq (and North Korea). Saddam Hüseyin's invasion of Iran and the ensuing 1980-88 Iran-ıraq War render such a linkage a grotesque distortion of historical reality."[40]

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[37] Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" Foreign Affairs, Summer, 1993, p. 39.

[38] Kishore Mahbubani, "The Danger of Decadence; What the Rest Can Teach the West?" in the Responses to Samuel P. Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations," http://www.coloradocollege.edu, 20.6.2005.

[39] Janowski, loc.cit.

[40] Sam C. Holliday, "A Federation for Iraq," speech delivered in Armigel Cromwell Center,   May   2004,   adopted   by   American   Diplomacy   Publishers,

Baathist government in Iraq, Islamic Republic in Iran, Taliban regime in Afghanistan and the communist regime in North Korea have little in common other than a shared anti-Americanism and anti-capitalism. In the past, U.S. had friendly relations with some of them. In Afghanistan, U.S. covert operations in support of Islamic fundamentalists fighting the Soviets two decades ago, paved the way for the Taliban to fill the vacuum created when Moscow withdrew. In Iraq, severel senior officials from the current Bush administration took part in the Reagan administration's efforts to cultivate Saddam during the Iran-Iraq War. Once they were allies; then they became enemies. Their *human rights violation records* detailed by the American State Department's country reports were not better when they were allies. Likewise, not all the present allies of the U.S. –let alone the U.S. itself- have positive human rights records. It is clear that the U.S. over-looks such records if the necessaries of its *business interests* require so.

19th century colonialists justified their actions in terms of noble and humanitarian goals, "colonialism was often referred to as *the white man's burden.*"[41] Today neo-colonialists use other words: democracy building, human rights, equal justice under law, universal suffrage, a free press, a free market economic system, etc. Under the camuflage of those words, they put their imperialistic plans into practice. In Afghanistan, a moderate Islamic government has been substituted for the fundamentalist Taliban regime. In Iraq, another moderate Islamic government is being sustituted for the nationalist-secularist Baath regime. Both countries are under the military occupation of the U.S.-led forces; and the realities contradict the words in both of them. It is understood that The U.S. has decided to empose moderate Islamic regimes, even by force, to all Moslem countries. Because it is thought that those regimes will serve the American –and Western- interests better than any other system of government.

But there is a problem. In those countries, a nationalist and/or a radical Islamist opposition is mounting against the allience between the moderate Islamists and the liberals.

"How can we continue to fight against terrorism without precipitating a global clash of cultures?"[42] Everyday a lot of analysts in the West ask such questions and reply to them in routine. Neither of them are fair. They do not mention the capitalist system and its deteriorating effects throughout the world; as if hunger, poverty, unemployment, unjust distribution of global wealth, inequality of nations, murder of the social-state, exploitation of the human and natural resources of the globe, ruin of the environment,

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http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/archives_roll/2004_04 06/holliday.ıraq/holliday.ıraq.html, 3.7.2005.

[41] Idem.

[42] John L. Esposito, Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam, London/ New York, Oxford University Press, 2003, passim.

armement race, and so on, were the problems of another planet. They pretend not to see the state-terrorism carried out by the U.S. and Israel or the **"liberal empire"** that is being built by the U.S. For them, Islamic world is the source of terrorism and nearly all the active and potential terrorists are of Mohammedan religion.

"Their double standart hurt" says Mahbubani and continues:

> *"the dramatic passivity of powerful European nations as genocide is committed on their door-step has torn away the thin veil of moral authority that the West has spun around itself as a legacy of its recent benign era. Few can believe that West would have remained equally passive if Muslim artillery shells had been raining down on Christian populations of Sarajevo or Serebrenica...Few in the West are aware that the West is responsible for aggravating turbulance among the more than two billion people living in Islamic and Chinise civilizations."*[43]

The genuine blindness of the West comprises all. Policy-makers, media, ordinary people. The *West* sees the others as the *rest;* and day by day the *rest* gets sharpened against the *West.* "One has to stand outside the West to see...how the West is bringing about its relative decline by its own hand."[44]

Developments since the American invasion in Iraq reveal that things are getting worse for the aggressor. It is very likely that the U.S. will not be able to afford the heavy burden it has undertaken and sooner or later its ambitious **Greater Middle East** plan will turn into a fiasco.

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[43] Mahbubani, loc.cit.
[44] Idem.

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