

War On Terror: Clash Of Civilizations Or Civilization Versus Chaos?

*Written for Workshop on
“The Nexus of Terrorism & WMDs: Developing a Consensus- How Could a Leaders’ Level
G20 Make a Difference?”
Princeton University, 12-14 December 2004*

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è **Clash of Civilizations: Really?**

○ ***Islamic countries are part of the War on Terror***

- § “Coalition of the Willing” led by the United States included many Muslim-majority countries, viz. Azerbaijan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kuwait, Turkey, Uzbekistan; but France and Germany, successor states of the Holy Roman Empire and Reformation, opposed it.
- § There are tangible examples of how cooperation between the Islamic world and the West has in fact increased post 9/11. Key Muslim states such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan supported the US-led coalition in its efforts to topple Afghanistan’s Taliban rulers and uproot al-Qaeda. In June 2002, Turkey took command of the International Security Assistance Force, the multinational peacekeeping unit in Afghanistan. Pakistan is a big part of the war on terror support network. The world’s largest Muslim country, Indonesia, wanted to be part of the coalition but the US decided against it. Other Muslim countries such as Morocco and Malaysia have cooperated with US efforts to combat al-Qaeda elsewhere.

○ ***Democracy and Islam are not incompatible***

- § All religions need reform at different phases in their evolution. Christianity experienced this dilemma through the debate on Trinity in the 4th century and through wars in the 16th and 17th centuries. Hinduism faced this dilemma between the 12th to 14th century and again from the 17th to 19th century.
- § Democracy, the sovereignty of states and the separation of state from religion are universal values shared by more than half of the population belonging to different religions and cultures.
- § The majority of the world’s 1.4 billion Muslims live in democratically elected

Total World Population	6313.78 million
Total Muslim Population	1484.71 million (23.52% of the total world population)
Muslim Population living in Democracies (Countries with Muslims constituting 50% or more of the population or with 10 million or more Muslims)	682.56 million (46% of the total Muslim population)
Expatriates in North America	6.60 million
Expatriates in Europe	23.54 million
Muslim Diaspora in many other Smaller Democratic Countries	Not known
Total Muslim Population living in Democracies	712.70 million (48% of the total Muslim population)
Total Muslim Population in Restricted Democracies	285.70 million (19.2% of the total Muslim population)
Total Muslim Population in Liberal Monarchies	45.00 million appr
<i>Total Muslim Population in Liberal Environment</i>	> 1043.40 million (>70.3% of the total Muslim population)
Muslim Authoritarian Countries + Authoritarian Countries with High Muslim Population	372.61 million (25% of the total Muslim population)

Population figures are as of 2003

Š Thus, nearly 48% of the world's Muslim popul

○ ***Terrorism cannot be linked to any religion***

- § There is no denying the fact that some of the most dreaded terrorist groups have a stated objective of establishing an Islamic *Ummah* (Arabic for the “Muslim community”). Groups that want to promote rule of Islam are Al Qaeda, Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).
- § Other Islamic groups include:
 - Nationalist groups – Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Abu Sayyaf Group, Free Aceh Movement, Movsar Barayev Gang, Riyadh- us-Saliheym Martyrs Brigade, Dagestan Liberation Army, Islamic Shashantantra Andolon etc; or
 - Palestinian groups – HAMAS, Al Fatah, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and Palestine Islamic Jihad.
- § All this, however, should not suggest some

Financial regulators around the world have established cooperation.	The rate of success in freezing terrorist finance has come down from \$100 million in 2001 to \$25 million in 2002 to \$11 million in 2003, and the tracking of havala, the main channel for terrorist financing, has been more or less given up in 2004.
The freezing of \$136 million in terrorist funds is a significant achievement.	The global GTP (Gross Terror-economy Product) exceeds \$10,000 million.
About 75% of Al Qaeda's original membership has been destroyed.	Al Qaeda is now a venture capital agency of terrorism and hence what happens to it is of little relevance, as operational responsibilities are carried by 20 to 30 different organisations
The second rung of Al Qaeda's leadership is in jail.	The top layer of Al Qaeda's leadership is out.

After 9/11, prospects of another, similar attack are dim. (After 07S hoal m)8.nal7herlris

○ *One-dimensional and selective approach: Guarantee of chaos*

- § A selective approach, that narrowly concentrates on Al Qaeda, and ignores other terrorist groups around the world, has led to the strengthening of other terrorist organisations, the formation of new groups, and deployment of new tactics by the international terrorist network. Islamic groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad and HUJI in Pakistan have flourished post 9/11, even though their stated objective is to create a global Islamic state based on Shariah, in place of the present system of states based on sovereign constitutions. These organisations, though formally banned, have their assets and workforce intact. Their recruitment and fund-raising drives are in full swing despite of the war on terror.
- § Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and HUJI have emerged as the likely successors of Al Qaeda as the most dreaded terrorist groups. The growth of these groups post 9/11 provides a perfect example of the superficiality of the War on Terror. Despite being banned by the government, LeT still has more than 500 offices, nearly 100,000 workers, and a large number of recruitment centres across the country. It has 2200 camps to provide armed training and continues to hold public rallies, conferences and recruitment drives. Similarly, HUJI's network is spread through 24 countries including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Chechnya, Xinjiang in China, Uzbekistan, Burma, Tajikistan, Iran, Fiji,

- *Changing nature of terrorism*

- Š The war on Afghanistan has led to the transformation of a single dominant actor (Al Qaeda) to a widespread network, whereby Al Qaeda undertakes strategic planning and fund raising functions and contracts operational tasks to 50 odd disparate affiliates. Thus, after losing their safe haven in Afghanistan, Al Qaeda's force has decreased to about 1000 members, but its network has grown exponentially. For example, Al Zarqawi is not a member of Al Qaeda but is affiliated with it; similarly many other terrorist organisations like Egyptian Islamic Jihad or HUJI are Al Qaeda affiliates. These affiliates are autonomous bodies and may not subscribe to Al Qaeda's larger ideology of creating *Ummah*. However, they work together whenever their interests and targets overlap.
- Š The emergence of mass organizations of terror with deep social roots in business and social welfare activities, have ensured unlimited supply of funds and manpower, and a potential to take over the societies and states in which they operate. LeT serves as a good example. LeT conducts social welfare activities for the general public in Pakistan and runs 3 hospitals, 34 dispensaries, fixed medical camps, mobile medical camps, 11 ambulance services, 150 model schools and a University. It also runs a large publishing empire to spread its ideology to the vast population. These social activities serve as a vast catchment area for consistent recruitment. Similarly,

- *New fault lines*

- § The willingness of the United States, and potentially other states, to use force at their will, without reference to multilateral institutions and agreements, risking the life of millions of citizens in the targeted countries. Thus, the extremist strategic thinkers from the dominant states, as well as from terrorist groups claim the right to use illegitimate force in the name of their respective values, but in reality create conditions whereby force triumphs over justice and freedom.
- § US war on Iraq led to the loss of two major Islamic countries – Iraq and Iran alienating a combined Muslim population of 66 million. Iraq is a cause of worry now more than it was under the Saddam regime because of the proliferation of extremism in the country. Iran, which was on side of moderates till December 2002, is also a potential cause of worry. Because of the US war on Iraq, Iranians have started feeling

- *Motives*

1. *Groups striving to dismantle the State system* – Groups which intend to dismantle

- solutions like dialogue. New ways should be explored for promoting political and peaceful resolution of conflicts leading to the end of military occupations. Terrorist groups in the sub list 7 and 8 have socio-economic root causes and calls for transformation and structural solutions.
- § New ways of promoting political and peaceful resolution of conflicts leading to the end of military occupations should be explored.
 - § A Global Transformation Initiative should be launched to reform education and promote tolerance and respect for all religions and ethnic groups among young people worldwide. Such an initiative should include large-scale capacity building, on the basis of equal opportunities for men and women, through exchanges and other means, to empower them to deal with the demands of the modern society.
 - § The Organisation of Islamic Conference should be encouraged to establish an International Shura of Islamic Scholars to determine the issue of religious sanction, or lack of it, for violent acts. Such a body should be created at the initiative of the leaders of the Islamic countries and be comprised of independent scholars, representing different streams of Islam, and not government officials. Al-Azhar, the prestigious Islamic University, has undertaken a project to put 1400 years old Islamic manuscripts online to highlight and promote toleration and moderate interpretation of religious edicts. Such projects can form the backbone of the International Shura.
 - § An international expert group, representing various stakeholders including the Islamic scholars, should be created for –
 - Preparing and maintaining a composite list of terror groups categorised as per their motives, on a regular basis.
 - Preparing a simultaneous listing of states that allow their intelligence agencies and other structures to provide inputs to terrorist groups in the form of bases, training, funds, arms, transit rights, advice, and organisational vehicles.

Ideally, the United Nations Security Council should constitute such an expert group. However, since the UN places onus on the member states, the experience of committees dealing UNSC Resolutions 1267 and 1373 shows that states are not willing to submit the names of terrorist groups operating from their own territories. A proposal to maintain a list of terrorist groups under UNSC Resolution 1566 was dropped in order to seek unanimous adoption. Therefore, until the Security Council reaches a level of political agreement, such an expert group could be established on an independent basis. Such independent group and its findings may not have the legal value. But this list can influence the public opinion. For instance, Transparency International Corruption Perception Index supported by the World Bank does not have any legal value, but it influences public perception on corruption. The public opinion may then force the international community to consider such a listing for collective action against such terrorist groups, leaders and their affiliates.

References

This paper is based on the analysis of several official documents. The important references are:

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