The Shame of Being an American

M.A. Hussain
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(Collection of articles written by Right thinking Americans)

Compiled By:

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Dedicated to

The right thinking Americans under siege of Christian fascism
And
The victims of American terrorism
The World over
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Preface

The forces of darkness, Islamic or Christian, tell us how their black and white Theo-centric world is dominated and controlled by two factors and actors, Allah and God (Satan playing the role of a villain), which guide and control the march of humanity on earth. These forces divide humanity into hostile camps: followers of this religion and followers of that religion, members of this sect and members of that sect, waging permanent and perpetual war against each other. Each side accusing the other to side with Satan. There is no social space for non-believers in this Theo-centric world, only believers have a right to live.

Believers of all religions hold that man is a puppet of God, incapable of self-determination and self control. Man has lost dignity and should live under self-contempt and guilt. In order to be saved man, according to them, has to live under divine guidance. They claim to be self-appointed emissaries of God/Allah. Either a human being has to obey Allah or God otherwise he has no right to live. The religious fanatics of all hues unite to slaughter such a person.

According to this view a few who are Muslims or Christians will be saved and the rest of the people, a vast majority, who are not Christians or Muslims will burn in hell for ever irrespective of their moral conduct.

Both sides impede every attempt of reconciliation and mutual understanding between them and refuse to dismantle the walls of hatred they have erected. This conflict between believers and infidels, between followers of different religions, has turned to be nonnegotiable and protracted one. As sociologists tell us that such an intractable conflict involves an element of “collusion” by the parties to preserve the conflict. This is true of conflict between Islamists and America. For both it is a matter of life and death. American Christian fascists cannot live without crude oil and without subjugating rest of the humanity. Islamists will
not allow America limitless exploitation, unhindered degradation and loot of their national resources. There is a tendency that both parties cooperate to preserve and maintain the conflict.

There is a lot of evidence how Christian right aided, abetted and armed political Islam and how Jihadi’s are helping Christian right politically and practically at world level and how they have waged a hidden war against liberal Muslims and secular Christians the world over.

Like any intractable conflict the social separation between the parties widens and becomes severe with the passage of time. The process of dehumanization ensues and results in acts of violence. Both parties dehumanize each other. They view members of the other side as less than human and evil deserving destruction. Both sides ritualize and celebrate violence. Everyone knows how Americans ritualized lynching of Saddam Hussein and C.I.A operatives showed the video clips of this to the whole world to prove who the boss in Iraq is.

At global level these two forces are shepherded by two world leaders. One Mullah Bush of America and the other Mullah Omer of Afghanistan. Both play “jugal bandi (duet) with each other. Mullah Omer and his associate Osama issues video messages from Tora Bora caves in Afghanistan and the leader of the only super power, Mullah Bush, issues statements from “White” House against him immediately. Both of them have created fear psychosis in the minds of Americans who fail to think rationally, fear of Osama bin Laden and fear of Bush administration has crippled their thinking. This has brought America close to fascism.

However, in spite of dominance of Allah/God centric forces, some elements of man-centric third force have emerged here and there. CNN, BBC and Fox never tell you about this third force. For them they simply do not exist. But this book and the writers of the articles in this book point to the third emerging force, that stands opposed to the Christian well as Islamic Mullahs, They say no to genocide and torture of Muslims, no to terrorism and state terrorism in the name of Jesus or Allah. They are
Americans. They are Christians. They are Muslims. They are atheists.

Here I give you collection of articles by right thinking Americans who are ashamed of being American, for what American imperialism has done to Iraq. They are still holding their ground when vast majority of Americans have become morally bankrupt. In spite intimidation and fear looming large over them, they refuse to be either with “U.S” or with them.

According to Bush administration if you fail to prove that you are not a terrorist, you are a terrorist. The burden of proof lies with the accused. This is an essential legal position of fascism. According to Islamists if you are a Muslim you must subscribe Wahabi version of Islam, otherwise you are like any other infidel.

Not all the contributors of the articles in this book are liberal leftists or commies and pro-Democrats. The writers of the articles in this book include noble Christians like Doug Soderstrom who is against genocide and torture in the name of Jesus and is ashamed of Christian fascism raising its head in America. There are writers like Paul Craig Roberts, Michael C.Morris and others who are not Democrats and have republican background.

Americans need to know that where Jesus lovers in Bush administration will leave them. If they think that the loot of Iraqi wealth will be shared with common Americans, they are living in fool’s paradise. Contrary to this, if U.S imperialism succeeds in establishing empire and taking more than half of the world under its booty. The poorer Americans will become poorer and the richer more rich.

Look what is happening in my country, India. I am ashamed of my country as it gives me no pride even if we Indian are hardworking and our country is rich in material resources. Even if we are become a nuclear country and our rich are become more richer. Richer than an ordinary American. We are
enhancing our international profile. Still I feel ashamed of my country as millions of my fellow country men live life in subhuman conditions.

According a report on conditions of work and promotion of livelihood in the unorganized sector compiled by the National Commission for enterprises in the Unorganized Sector(NCEUS) a government affiliate body, 77 percent of my fellow country men are earning Rupees 12 per day. They comprise of S.Ts, SCs, OBCs and religious minorities. According to the report, the 86 percent of working population work in unorganized sector. They are the most discriminated disadvantaged and downtrodden people. Americans should open their eye what is in store for them.

I hope this book will help Americans in opening their eyes and to liberate themselves from the clutches of their mainstream media. Lastly I thank my younger brother Adam Kunzun aka Manzoor Ali for his valued comments on the manuscript.

New Delhi
September, 11, 2007

M.A.Hussain
Be Ashamed
Bombs Bursting in Air

By Cindy Sheehan

(Published on Monday, July 3, 2006 by Commondreams.org)

The rockets red glare,
Bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night
That our flag was still there.

Oh, say does that
Star spangled banner yet wave,
O'er the land of the free,
And the home of the brave.

The star spangled banner has been in the news quite a lot lately. Some "courageous" Senators, including one of my own, Dianne Feinstein and everyone's favorite left-wing liberal, Hillary Clinton, bravely stuck their necks out to support an amendment that would make it illegal to burn the flag of the USA under certain circumstances.

Heaven forbid one of these pussillanimous public servants introduce, or even support a bill, that would call for an immediate end to the occupation of Iraq...or to even require that the President set a timeline for the withdrawal of our troops from a deadly quagmire of an occupation while they are handing him more money to wage the war crime in Iraq. As our nation's children are trying to only survive in the worst of circumstances, and by surviving are committing reprehensible atrocities on an innocent population which (especially in Ramadi right now) is having bombs burst in air all around them, that our Senate would even consider taking away first amendment rights from Americans is wretchedly ironic. Call me naïve, but I always
thought that we elected our representatives to protect our rights, not take them away from us.

When I look at the star spangled banner I think of my son who began wearing a uniform with the flag on it from the time he went into scouting at the age of 6. I also think of one of the last pictures taken of Casey when he was awaiting deployment to Iraq from Kuwait. He was standing in a tent holding a bottle of water, wearing his desert cammies with an American flag patch on the chest. When we buried him a few weeks after that picture was taken, I was handed a folded flag which reminded me of the swaddling blanket that I wrapped him in to bring him home from the hospital almost 25 years before.

The star-spangled banner, which I can now see whipping in the wind outside of an airport terminal where I am writing this from does not fill me with pride: it fills me with shame and that flag symbolizes sorrow and corruption to me right now. The flag represents so much lying, fixed elections, profiting by the war machine, high gas prices, spying on Americans, rapid erosion of our freedoms while BushCo literally gets away with murder, torture and extreme rendition, contaminating the world with depleted uranium, and illegal and immoral wars that are responsible for killing so many. A symbol which used to represent hope to so many around the world now fills so many with disgust.

When I look at that rectangular piece of cloth that has red and white stripes and white stars on a blue field, I wonder what the Iraqi people think when they see American tanks and other vehicles rumbling through their streets carrying doom with that symbol emblazoned upon them. Or, what could our flag possibly represent to them when their women are being raped and burned to conceal crimes and entire families are being killed by soldiers whose uniforms carry that symbol? I am sure that the flag symbolizes death and destruction to them which I hope they are not confusing with freedom and democracy.

I often get told that I should "love America, or leave it." This is ridiculous logic and empty rhetoric. I love the country that I was
born in and I love Americans…I am an American and so are my children. Casey was born and died a fine American who was abused by the same leaders that are abusing the world as I type. I could leave if I wanted to and, in fact, have received many offers to be an ex-patriate in many friendly countries. However, I want to stay and fight for my country. I want my country and the flag that symbolizes it around the globe to stand for something that we can all be proud of again.

BushCo and the neocon regime embarked on this disastrous misadventure in Iraq to prove to the world how strong and virile Pax Americana is. Their abjectly failed mission, which was evil and corrupt from the beginning, has not proven how strong our nation is, but, on the contrary, how weak. However, the neocons have managed to prove, that how, with the "mightiest" war machine in the world an insurgency in a country smaller than the state of California can hold their false freedom and deadly democracy at bay. One other thing that the neocons have proven is that America is no longer the moral touchstone of the world but is a nation that commits torture and crimes against humanity with the presidential seal of approval. BushCo has destroyed any credibility our nation ever had in the world and all of us need to fight to regain it and thereby redeem our own souls.

I implore you, while you are enjoying your potato salad and fireworks on the 4th to reflect on what the star-spangled banner means to you. If our flag symbolizes the same thing to you as it does to the neocons, then by all means, enlist and go to Iraq to let some of our soldiers come home that are tired of suffering and committing war crimes for Halliburton, Dick and Donny.

If, however, you realize that the flag no longer waves "o'er the land of the free" and you would like it to again, we invite you to come out to Camp Casey this summer and help us fight for the heart and soul of our nation. If you realize that while you are "oohing and aching" over the pretty fireworks in your home town that there are real bombs bursting on the people of Iraq, killing them and destroying their nation for no reason other than Dick Cheney wanted to, then you need to digest your 4th of July BBQ and get out and show Dicky and the world that we mean business
when we say we want our troops to come home to save them and our brothers and sisters in Iraq.

Thousands of peace loving and war hating members of the human race from all over the world are planning on coming to Crawford, Tx to Camp Casey again this summer to stand, sit, or camp in the face of the neocon war machine and prove to the world that there are Americans who will courageously speak for the people of Iraq and our soldiers who have no voices but who just want to be left in peace.

Come to Camp Casey.

We have room for everyone and everyone is welcome.

Cindy Sheehan is the mother of Spc. Casey Sheehan who was KIA in Iraq on 04/04/04. She is also co-founder and President of Gold Star Families for Peace and author of Not One More Mother's Child and Dear President Bush.

Link: http://www.commondreams.org/views06/0703-22.htm
Who are we?
By Charles Bear

“There is no escaping the fact that the U.S. is an imperialist nation conceived in genocide and racism that has continued through the ages, and worsened with the rise of modern technology and weaponry. With the advent of smart bombs came stupid and immoral leaders. Our litany of crimes against earth and humanity are concealed under layers of moral language, but the actual deeds belie the intent behind what is being done in our name. Ignorance, however, does not absolve anyone from culpability.” Charles Sullivan

“The Chinese leaders and intellectuals with whom I was meeting were incredulous. How could a majority of the population in an allegedly free country with an allegedly free press be so totally misinformed? The only answer I could give the Chinese is that Americans would have been the perfect population for Mao and the Gang of Four, because Americans believe anything their government tells them.” Paul Craig Roberts

The United States is the land of insidious intent and self induced amnesia. I am no longer a young man full of hope for himself and his fellow kind. Being born in 1943 brings with it a special responsibility. I have a letter my Father wrote from the war—"the horror, the horror of it all." It went way beyond his ability to give words to it, but I was with him when he died, the horror, the horror of it all still plagued him to his death. With his dieing breath he referred to himself as a murderer—the results of mayhem in Europe and Africa while I lay in my crib or at my mother’s breast. But this is 2006, my father now two years gone. But now my own horrors plague me, I live in the greatest Empire of all time—the elite of this country controls or tries to control the world. Neither the war to end all wars or the continuation called WW II has stopped the horror. Americans of the twentieth century have much blood on their hands—my hands and your hands—our hands. Way too much blood. And it continues to be
let—in your name, in my name it continues: torture, destructions and death on a global scale.

At this time of another great war, it must be asked, again and again until we can become the question and live the answer: how do we find our way of being human. If any kind of redemption is possible, if any kind of forgiveness comes to us it will only be when we—you and I stand up together and say to men like Bush and Cheney and their cohorts that this must stop and stop now. Because if it does not we will bring redemption with their blood and our own blood if necessary.

We have failed, we have not only not found the answer, but we do not even dare ask the question. Who are we? We make great machines but I submit that we know very little about being human.

We are the people who have lost their grip on life; we live in a world modeled after Disneyland. Safe for all ages; and all, an illusion. We feel our being most as we shop the malls and Wal-Marts of America, as we seek those bargains with dollars that have no home. Homeless dollars for homeless minds and homeless bodies, for we have never truly made the Earth our home. We’re the people always going somewhere, never anywhere and always on the move.

We have lost all sense of morality, the value of life for us is in the Super Bowl, played without too many commercials and having our team prevail. Who are we; we are the empty men and women of a society trying to remake the world in our own image. Who are we; we’re US Citizens without any sense of citizenship.

If only “they” would behave and listen to “us”. They should, we say, because our TV commercials are the best in the world, we know how to package so that no matter what the product, it is wrapped in sex. We act as if the world belongs to us, we are the Gods of war, and know we have the right to demand and command. Just take a gander at the man we call President, a war
mongering sociopath. He is a true demander and commander, but with no experience of the horror of war.

But if we had any sense of life and freedom we would have rebelled in 2000 as the freedom loving people of Oaxaca, Mexico are doing. Is it not strange that after 500 years of oppression Native people still know how to stand and fight for life, while we and our 200 years of democracy have no idea of what life or freedom is? We think we’re free because we can’t see the bars of containment—the incarceration society we’ve become, because the bars live inside of us.

For us life is just what we have as long as we do not exercise it, being human and free is just what we are as long as no crisis confronts us. Who are we, the empty men and women of America, the cowards who deny we are imperialist and deny we’re trying to remake the world in our image. We have become the New Fascists, the Americans who demand security as we gut the world and take it as we can and are willing to exterminate to get it.

In a society where being has lost all meaning we have replaced it by a mythology of life. I ask you: where do you live? Where are you free? To be human and live you must first be able to think, and thinking was ruled out by the third grade. We were taught the importance of the fuehrer, pardon me, the teacher. We created a school run for and by the bosses—based upon cue-response training. Yes, it is not the place to learn to be human—just to pee, one must first gain permission. To speak one must say the right words in the right order and to the right person. Is this the way of being human or the way of a robot?

Corporations run on fascist rules. Spend some time looking into what happens to whistle blowers: seekers of truth coupled with freedom of speech. We make freedom an after work activity, something we participate in when we go shopping or at home in the privacy of our own television. Work is submission—them that got, rules them that don’t.
Our police, including agencies like the FBI, functions as an enforcer for them that got and protects the booty and the institutions of power. Open your eyes if you can—fifty shots fired into whom. Yes, yes I know they were wealthy white men just out for a good time before the shackles of marriage—sounds absurd. When did a white man with money ever get shot by the cops? Ask Leonard Peltier or Mumia Abu-Jamal about justice and life in America. Justice is something expected except by those who need it most.

Yes, we are the hollow men and women, we demand our rights as Gods. So why are we thought evil—because we are evil. We are the pretend people. We pretend freedom and we pretend justice. We just will not allow it to be practiced—here or any where else.

What are the essential elements of freedom and life? Right of self-defense, right of speech, right to land and justice. In this country we have none of these, we have empty words expressing our rights but the words are like vapor in a strong wind. And for me the most amazing realization is that as a culture and as a society we simply do not care. We simply accept our own lack of freedom by proclaiming ourselves free and then we go shopping. Who are we? We are the people of great self-deception. We are the people who prefer the lie to the truth. If you doubt any of what I say here, think back to the war against Vietnam, those of you who are old enough remember—"never again", and here we are back killing colonial peoples of color over resources again.

Not only are we not free here but we do not want people anywhere to be free, especially if it interferes with our entertainment, our shopping or our car.

So who are we, we’re the people that put freedom down in …. Name your place. So who are we? We are the New Fascists. Don’t you dare to use the word freedom again with out the word hypocrite conjoined.

http://www.ichblog.eu/component/option,com_alphaccontent/sect ion,1/cat,1/task,view/id,306/Itemid,34/
Racist Imagery and Humiliation
The Color of Abu Ghraib

BOB WING, CounterPunch

Friend of mine was discussing Abu Ghraib with his Egyptian father, who had originally supported the war. Referring to the photo of the female U.S. soldier with a leash around a prostrate Iraqi, he asked his Dad, "What is the message of that photo? It's that the Iraqi is a dog."

His father replied, "No. The message is that he's MY dog."

The tortures at Abu Ghraib have exposed to the world the utter moral bankruptcy of Bush's war. Far from being fought on behalf of Iraqi democracy, it is a war for U.S. supremacy in which racist dehumanization and brutalization of Arabs and Muslims play an absolutely central role.

Since September 11 the White House has framed its "war on terrorism" in thinly veiled racial and religious terms: as a crusade of the "civilized" against the "uncivilized." This unsavory propaganda campaign has built upon a more than decade-long effort by the government and the media to demonize Arabs and Muslims as "bloodthirsty terrorists."

This depiction harkens back to the portrayal of Native Americans as savages out to scalp the good white settlers who only wanted to bring light to their dark existence--and, incidentally, to destroy their way of life and occupy their land. The sexual humiliation of Iraqis recalls the daily rape of black slaves. And the smiling faces of the Abu Ghraib perpetrators and the trophy photos they took remind us of the images of white people who gathered to enjoy the lynching of black people in the South.

To justify its war of choice, the White House added to this racist imagery the myth that the chief Arab terrorist was Saddam
Hussein and that he was bent on attacking us with Weapons of Mass Destruction. To this day the racial ignorance so common in our country has enabled many Americans to hang on to the Bush fable that Iraq was involved in the September 11 attacks. The twisted logic is that an Arab is a Palestinian is a Muslim is a Terrorist is an Iraqi. What's the difference? They all must be destroyed before they destroy us first!

SANITIZING WAR

At the same time Washington made extraordinary efforts to conceal the horrors of war. Fearing that its racialized propaganda might not be enough to convince the gentle public to send its sons and daughters off to kill or be killed for the greater glory of the military and Big Oil, it sought to conceal all deaths and present the Iraq war as a sort of Boy Scout outing for the good of civilization. The "war on terrorism" in Iraq became the 21st century version of the White Man's Burden.

Washington bought up all rights to satellite photographs and otherwise ensured that no horrific battlefield scenes would ever disturb the public's less than watchful eyes. Similarly it ended the practice of counting the dead. Instead, the president continually assured us that his "high tech weaponry" only struck "the really bad guys."

The White House campaign to sanitize the war was so successful that the fact that more than 10,000 Iraqi civilians have been killed in this "noble mission" is virtually a state secret. It even banned the photographing of the caskets of dead U.S. soldiers. The president has avoided attending their funerals lest the public be reminded that war actually involves the horrible death of human beings.

However, it is not enough to lay responsibility for the tortures at Abu Ghraib and the murderous Iraq war at the doorstep of the White House, its rightwing ideologues or its corporate cronies. We must also address the self-interested racist gullibility that makes the U.S. public susceptible to war mongering. Much of that public has shown that it will let its attachment to an SUV
lifestyle and false patriotism lead it to support leaders who destroy the lives and steal the resources of people who can be dismissed as racial inferiors--at home as well as abroad.

**MORAL AWAKENING NEEDED**
Indeed, the random jailing of more than 15,000 Iraqis reminds us that more black men in the U.S. are incarcerated than have graduated from college. Torture was practiced in U.S. prisons long before Abu Ghraib.

The mass round up of Arabs and Muslims in the U.S. since September 11 resurrects the internment of Japanese Americans as "enemy aliens" during WWII. And the self-serving U.S. denunciation of "foreign terrorists" in Iraq mirrors the arrogance of Anglos calling for "English Only" and a crackdown on "illegal immigrants" while occupying land stolen from Mexico in an earlier U.S. "war of liberation.

Abu Ghraib has exploded the myth that Bush's war was a moral, high tech war in which only terrorists suffered. It has finally brought the brutal treatment of Arabs and Muslims out into such harsh light that even the sleepy U.S. public snapped to attention.

But condemnation of Abu Ghraib cannot be the end. It must instead be the beginning of a profound moral awakening in this land that will lead us not only to end this war, but to open our minds and hearts to correct the manifold racist lies and injustices that continue to deform the daily fabric of U.S. life--from its foreign policy to its elections to its classrooms to its prison cells.

As the great African American poet Langston Hughes once declared, "America never was America to me. But it must be!"

Bob Wing is editor of War Times newspaper. He can be reached at: info@war-times.org
http://www.counterpunch.org/wing05182004.html
Why I am Ashamed to be an American

By Doug Soderstrom

06/01/07

Having grown up in a small town in Central Kansas I was taught to believe that my country, the United States of America, was a land committed to justice and peace, a nation that one could count on to do the right thing, a country of civilized folks who had but one thing in mind…….. that of doing the will of God. I also began to realize that there is nothing wrong with feeling ashamed for having done something wrong, that such a response is a rather natural consequence of having violated one’s conscience, a voice from deep within that is no doubt a reliable guide for how a man (or woman) of true integrity ought to live his (or her) life. However, for those who seem to lack the capacity to feel ashamed, one can only wonder what must be wrong with them.

As I began to emerge into manhood there was an ever, ongoing flow of hints, subtle suggestions that things were not as I had been told. However, it wasn’t until our country vented its awful wrath upon a post 9-11 world that I began to realize that I had been misled. At that point I had no choice but to take a long, hard look at the history of our country, a thorough examination of what turned out to be a past drenched in the blood of our foes, foreign lands raped of their natural resources, democratically elected governments overthrown, an outrageous succession of egregious arrangements with tyrants and dictators from around the world, along with the fact that our nation is the only developed country in the world that utilizes the death penalty to kill its own people, and that we imprison more of our own people than any other nation in the world……. all of such having enabled me to gain a better understanding of why there are so many folks around the world who have become upset by our nation’s apparent willingness to abuse and exploit our fellow
man. As a result of what I found, I have come to the conclusion that the vast majority of the American public is out of touch with reality, that such folks have unwittingly allowed themselves to have become mercilessly entangled in a world of fabrication and make-believe, a nation dominated by sheepish yes-men unwilling to face the fact that we, as a nation, are, and for some time have been, caught in a downward spiral of moral decline.

I have found it rather common for folks to become a bit upset with people like myself who occasionally pass judgment upon our country. In fact some have even told me that if I don’t like my country then perhaps I ought to consider leaving it. Such folks seem to believe that criticizing one’s country (one that has attained such a high standard of living..... as if such a thing should make a difference) is somehow unpatriotic. However, the last time I checked there seemed to be no relationship whatsoever between a nation’s quality of life and that of its moral standards. I have also found that individuals that tend to equate criticism of one’s country with that of being unpatriotic either do not understand the postulates upon which democracy is based or that their identity is so terribly intertwined with that of their nation that they have seemingly lost the capacity to reason in an objective manner. Finally, based upon my experience of having debated with such folks, it has become rather clear to me that most of these quislings have little or no education as well as being relatively uninformed as to what is going on in the world.

Now, if you don’t mind, allow me to take a look at a few things that tend to bother me regarding the country in which I just happen to have been born…… the United States of America.

I never cease to be amazed at how terribly ethnocentric the typical American tends to be. It is almost as if having been born in the United States confers upon one the right to think of himself as a privileged person, a contrived sense of status that no doubt lies at the very heart of everything that I will discuss in this paper. For example, consider religion…… the fact that the majority of Americans look upon Christianity as the one and only road that leads to salvation, every other faith a blind alley leading to the unending fires of Hell. Next is that of capitalism, a system having apparently received the blessing of God as the universally correct way of doing business. And then democracy, a political system that apparently no one in their right mind has a
right to question. Of course there can be no doubt that democracy is certainly a stellar way of running a country, but must everyone in the world agree? Besides if the religious right (just as Moslems in Iraq) were to seize control, don’t you think that they (as fundamentalists) might be tempted to set up Christianity as the official religion in our country rather than that of running a democracy based upon the separation of church and state? Think about it…… fundamentalists are no doubt fundamentalists regardless of the color of “their stripes!” On the other hand, one must ask what right we (as citizens of a nation that is a mere 231 years from its own inception) have to tell folks living in countries not more than a hop, skip, and a jump from the “Garden of Eden” how they ought to live their lives. Ethnocentrism yes, but perhaps even worse than this is that which such narrow-mindedness almost always brings to pass; an unreasoning sense of arrogance generally referred to as that of the arrogance of ignorance!

Due to what appears to have been a rather serious lapse of judgment on the part of tens of millions of Americans, the voters, for whatever reason (perhaps it was a matter of fear), chose to place into power a President (a presidential administration) that: may well have laid the groundwork for 9-11 (the “new Pearl Harbor”) that, according to PNAC (Project for the New American Century) was needed in order to pave the way for our country’s military/economic takeover of the world; is in the preparatory stages of going to war with Iran (a conflict that will no doubt reign havoc upon our nation as well as that of the world); lied to the American people in regards to why we went to war with Iraq; lied to citizens in that our government has no intention of leaving Iraq given the fact that it is in the process of building as many as fourteen “Enduring Military Bases” (enough to house at least 100,000 soldiers) along with that of having built the world’s largest Foreign Embassy located in Baghdad (a 592 million dollar, 104-acre, 21-building complex); committed war crimes, crimes against humanity, as well as high crimes and misdemeanors for which several of our leaders should be impeached; condoned the systematic use of torture against prisoners; violated the first amendment of the U.S. Constitution by intentionally choosing to interfere with the free flow of information to the American people; enacted laws (such as that
of the Patriot Act) that are seriously eroding our freedoms; through the use of the Military Commissions Act, granted the President the right to arbitrarily detain, imprison, and torture U.S. citizens at that of his own discretion (and without the right of Habeas Corpus!); allowed the President to disobey more than 750 U.S. laws through the use of so-called “signing statements”; through the passage of the Defense Authorization Act of 2007 set the stage for, essentially creating the likelihood that, our country might one day become a military dictatorship; allowed the United State’s military to develop an extremely sophisticated, website-based video game (America’s Army) to be used as a recruitment device that is teaching millions (perhaps as many as nine million) of our children to kill human beings with an increased degree of efficiency, all of such having desensitized our teenagers to kill others with little, or no, psychological pain; has enabled politicians to profit immensely from funds awarded to corporate enterprises associated with the military-industrial complex; bankrupted the nation by allowing the national debt to rise to nine trillion dollars in spite of the fact that the nation’s actual debt is a little over 59 trillion dollars due to the government’s use of unorthodox (essentially unethical if not illegal) accounting practices that intentionally disregard (essentially misinforming the American people with respect to) unfunded promises to reimburse (that is to repay) Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and an assortment of federal retirement programs; and has been absolutely unwilling to take responsibility for the fact that we, as a nation, have done more to destroy the ecosystem of our planet than anyone else on Earth.

For anyone who has taken the time to study the history of the human race, there can be no doubt that one of the primary, if not the primary, cause of harm is that of people taking up arms in the name of God. No one in their right mind can deny that Jesus, the Buddha, Mohammad, Confucius, or Lao Tse were men of good will. However, over the centuries the simple yet profound truths taught by these wonderfully wise men have been perverted beyond recognition. And, as far as the West is concerned, the greatest perversion has been that of the religious right’s willingness to accommodate the needs of neoconservatives in Washington D.C., a well-thought-out, although no doubt surreptitious, plan to allow the Bush-Cheney presidential
administration to utilize their faith (a plan of salvation that rather conveniently ignores the teachings of Jesus, the fact that we should love rather than kill others) as a theologically-based (no doubt divinely inspired) justification for a cadre of militants all to ready to go to war in order that they might one day rule the world…… and all of such in exchange for political presence, an increased opportunity for the religious right to publicize a gospel of family values (a rather fabricated attempt to “sugarcoatedly-disguise” an undoubtedly well-documented ideology of out-and-out social-political conservatism). Looking back at history, there can be little doubt that much the same occurred in the 1980’s when Jerry Falwell’s Moral Majority decided to align itself with Ronald Reagan’s tenure as President, and, before that, when Germanically-oriented Christians decided to go along with, and therefore to support, Adolph Hitler’s Nazi inspired efforts to rule the world.

Concerning the education (or shall I say the mis-education) of our children it is high time that we do the right thing, that we stop lying to our kids and begin telling them the truth. The school’s job is not to make “good citizens” of our children, for in doing such a thing our children end up being duped, conditioned, slowly but surely brainwashed, into becoming truckling sycophants, bootlicking followers of the status quo. As one who has taught college students for the past 41 years, the only task worthy of a teacher is that of teaching our kids how to think for themselves, critical thinking skills that might perhaps enable them to counter the outrageous mendacity of those in power, chauvinistic jingoes who would, through the use of propaganda, have our children believe a lie rather than that which is true.

Regarding our economy, a capitalistic enterprise focused upon one, and only one, thing (the enrichment of the rich euphemistically referred to as that of “the American Dream”), we, as Americans (those of us who are rather well-to-do), should be ashamed of ourselves, ashamed of having become an island of enormous wealth stationed in the midst of a poverty-ridden world (not to mention an ever-expanding proportion of our own people who are poor) in that we go to bed every night with a willingness to anesthetize ourselves to the needs of billions of folks whose lives are inextricably mired in an absolutely desperate attempt to simply survive. And then due to what
appears to be a rather natural correlate of capitalism (activities that no doubt follow capitalism wherever it goes), the American people (folks so terribly possessed by that which they possess) have developed an apparently insatiable appetite to be rich (the capacity to consume anything and everything they want), the need to be constantly entertained, a near addictive fascination with sex, drugs, gambling, pleasure, power, and violence, and all of such no doubt nullifying any legitimate interest in the “finer things of life” such as that of developing a meaningful philosophy of life, a desire to understand what it means to be a human being, and that which might perhaps be worthy of our time here on Earth.

And then based upon the laws of our nation, lobbyists (highly paid representatives of the corporate world) have been granted the right to converge upon our elected officials for no other reason than to coerce them into conducting business in a manner that more often than not benefits the rich at the expense of the poor. We, as a people, have been led to believe that our votes count when in fact our ballots far too often elect congressmen, the majority of which, wait in hiding for a handout (a bribe) that will serve to fill their “electoral coffers,” and all of such in exchange for a simple promise to use their congressional powers to expedite the needs of their benefactors who in turn are far too likely to reward their compatriots with a well-paid, “post-retirement” position the purpose of which is to use their “congressional knowledge” to bribe those who have now taken their place; a revolving door of immense corruption that is no doubt destroying the foundations of a once democratic republic!

The final, and perhaps most important, reason why I am ashamed to be an American is due to the fact that we, more than any other people, have used our accumulated wealth (part of which comes from money earned from having sold more weapons of war to the rest of the world than the rest of the world combined) along with having developed the largest, most destructive military force (larger than the accumulated defense budgets of the rest of the world combined) since the beginning of time (next year’s defense budget will be nearly 700 billion dollars!), all the while realizing that if we had proven our love for God by using such funds to feed the hungry, medicate the sick, clothe the poor, house the homeless, and liberate the oppressed, we would have
become a nation loved and revered by all…… rather than, as things have turned out, having become a land hated by nearly everyone in the world.

In conclusion, in order that you might understand where I am coming from, you need to realize that I do in fact have a bit of respect for my country, or at least for that which was envisioned by our forefathers, the founders of, what has turned out to be, a once great nation. However, just as we would with someone we love, we have no choice but to call attention to weakness, since in doing such a thing we give our loved ones an opportunity to address the problem. It is, and must be, the same with that of the land in which we have been born. If we truly care about our country, if we really do want our nation to flourish, then we should realize that we have not only the right, but, much more importantly, the responsibility, perhaps even, one might say, a moral responsibility to point out its deficiencies in order that it might once again be revived. For we must remember, as our nation goes, so do we…… in its flourishing we, as a people, will no doubt thrive, but in passing away, we, as a collective society, might well cease to exist.

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link : http://www.countercurrents.org/soderstrom300507.htm
I’m American….Shhh!! Don’t tell!

Analyzing the pandemic of global American Hatred

By Jessica Long

02/27/07 "ICH" -- -- Alright, alright!! The secret is out..... I am, regrettably, not Canadian. In fact, I am an American from a small city called Olympia, WA about three hours south of the Canadian border. But shhh.... Don’t tell! Perhaps if you knew the grief these three hours distance have caused me the last six years you wouldn’t judge me so harshly for this little white lie.

I represent the 7% of Americans that travel abroad each year. Ordinarily, I would be proud to belong to this statistic. Yet having done the majority of my globetrotting during the Bush Administration years, I find my nationality to be the biggest cause of stress in my travels. I have learned that being an American is something you can no longer be proud of- well, at least if you have any knowledge of global affairs. In fact I am ashamed of my nationality. But wait a second here…. before I am accosted by the headstrong patriot with ten “United we stand” bumper stickers adorning his SUV, let me say this: I understand the value of pride in opportunity, equality and justice- but NOT in nationalism for the sake of nationalism! And that is what is at stake here: American insular ideology. Traveling abroad has allowed me a new perspective on this skewed American self-image. I am grateful for my opportunities, my freedom, and my standard of living- but I am ashamed of my government’s corruption, my people’s ignorance and my nation’s neo-colonial egotism. But you needn’t be a hardcore lefty to agree with me. All you need is to go abroad to be reminded of the global hatred toward our nation.

Not only is it not safe to be an American abroad, it is not tolerated! The majority of Americans I meet while traveling admit to the same lie as I do: “I am, uh... Canadian.” We deny our nationality to avoid the scowls, jeers, lectures, and sometimes violence from other foreigners. In the last six years, I
have traveled to Africa twice, backpacked Southeast Asia and Central America and lived a brief time in Europe for a total of 12 different countries. Above all, one thing has been made very clear to me: The world hates us. And if the whole world hates our country, don’t you suppose we ought to figure out why? According to radio talk show host and best-selling author Michael Medved, global American hatred stems from “their” jealousy, “their” anti-capitalist agendas and “their” contempt for our “toxic pop culture.” Okay, that explains the sentiments of Islamic extremists, French idealists and Latin American Marxists- but what of the rest of the world? Medved admits that “American hatred has reached pandemic proportions” extending to the “corners of the globe.” Can jealousy and communism really be that contagious? Not when you look at western Europe, whose standards of living are fueled by their capitalist endeavors…..so why?

A survey performed by the Pew Research Center and cited in The Economist challenges Medved’s perceived reasons for American hatred. The study found that The Netherlands, Spain, China and Germany were the top four nations who viewed America unfavorably. With the exception of China, these anti-American countries are NOT economically struggling, culturally conservative or lenient toward Communism. So can we truly blame envy, Marxism and pop culture? The standard of living in The Netherlands, Spain and Germany are of the highest in Europe. They are also considered culturally liberal in their perception of foreign “pop culture” and are not known for their anti-capitalist motives. In Britain and Canada, a little under half of the population views American unfavorably. This is alarmingly high given these are two of our largest allies. The study did find that India and Poland liked us though! Oh… but wait! This can be explained. From 1947-91, India went through a period of Socialism and Economic isolation fueled by anti-capitalist and anti-American thinking. An article in The Futurist suggests that it was the failures of the Indian economy, coupled with the fact that Indian-Americans are the wealthiest ethnic demographic in the U.S., that lead them to turn against socialist endeavors and embrace American ideals. Similarly, Poland and Russia, who also favor America, do so because of their lack of
faith in the communist system which fell in 1991. Given the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, we know why some like us. But not why the rest hate us. Why the hate? Believe it or not, we can’t entirely blame the Bush administration for this one either. Rather, we must blame the insular ideology that isolates the American citizen from the rest of the world: Americans don’t travel. American’s don’t know. And still worse, Americans don’t care. We claim to run the world, while statistics show that we know very little, if anything, about it.

According to the European Travel Commission, only 18% of Americans own passports. This does not take into account the number of newly naturalized citizens either. When we compare this statistic to 41% of Canadian citizens who own passports, the U.S. appears much more culturally secluded than our northern brothers. Furthermore, three times the number of Australians own passports than Americans. Thus we cannot blame our lack of travel and global interest on our geographic size or location. We do not travel because our insular ideology implies there is no need. It is a deeply rooted American creed that “we are the best country in the world” and “innately right,” if not “saviors,” in all global action. Based on this mentality, there is little need or interest to learn about other countries. In 2006, a survey commissioned by National Geographic found that 85% of young Americans (ages 18-24) could not locate Iraq or Israel on a map. 90% could not locate Afghanistan. 75% of Americans cannot locate Thailand on a map, even after the highly publicized tsunami of 2004.

In 2002, a different geographic survey was given out to the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Sweden, and Great Britain. American citizens performed the worst with the exception of Mexico who scored only slightly lower. This is not just a reflection of our education system- it is a reflection of our ideology. How so? Because only 30% of Americans think it is important to know the location of countries in the news. What do these statistics say to the rest of the world? Simply, that while Americans have no problem in attempting to run the world, we have little experience in how it works. It is on this ignorance that we justify our wars, trade relations and
political action in a rapidly globalizing world. Aside from being fat and loud, the dangers of the American stereotype lie in the fact we are viewed as being simultaneously globally ignorant and culturally egocentric. This is our downfall.

Douglas Richardson, executive director of the Association of American Geographers in Washington, D.C. agrees that geographic knowledge is crucial for functioning in a rapidly globalizing world.

Remember the fall of Rome? I am not suggesting a similar fate but merely suggesting that Americans should be aware of their insular ideology as we stand pitted against the peoples of the world in a global showdown. We must partake in the global arena as knowledgeable, cultured and open-minded individuals if we are to preserve any form of international decency we may have left. If not, be prepared to raise an apologetic, timid generation who looks down in same every time they say, “I am an American.”

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link: http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article17198.htm
In the Wake of Plunder and Flames  
Do You Regret Being an American?  
by ANNIE C. HIGGINS  
Cairo, Egypt  
“Do you regret being American?” I was asked. I cannot remember who asked me, or even if it was in Palestine or here in Egypt. It could have been anyone, anywhere, anytime. There has been a continuing stream of reasons for regret, from my country’s support of assassination in Palestine to—come to think of it, to my country’s support of assassination in Iraq, and these are just the obvious ones. But my country doesn’t really support such evil deeds. My constitution, my neighborly culture, my conviction in the rightness of freedom of speech—these things define my country. These are not pushing invasion and occupation of another nation. Those making the decisions and taking the actions that shame us all are not of the American people, nor for us. A local commentator feels that a coup has changed the American government, although it has not been publicly announced or acknowledged. He does not specify whether this has taken place in the White House or the Pentagon.  
What this alleged American government, which is the military, is doing to prisoners in Guantanamo Bay is no different than what they are doing to themselves, padding their ears so they do not hear, blindfolding their eyes so they do not see, tying their own arms so they cannot feel, and binding their legs so they cannot take steps toward any kind of progress. Americans may not have seen the images of the Guantanamo prisoners lately but the rest of the world has. Spanish television showed them on the heels of a clip where the Bush administration complains of violations of the Geneva Convention in al-Jazeera’s broadcasts of pictures.  
“Do you regret being American?”  
Bush is appointing a Minister of Information in Iraq from among the seemingly omniscient JINSA group [Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs] who think they are remote-controlling the world. One more little surprise from Iraq that the coup-makers haven’t taken into consideration is that Iraqis are sophisticated at sorting through the news that is handed out to
them. They don’t automatically accept what the little screen tells them. They have developed a healthy habit of questioning authority and media pronouncements. They are also aware of America’s legal violations.

“Do you regret being American?”

A special note to my countrymen and women who have silenced voices that tell of meeting military violence with non-violence: I don’t want to prove you wrong in your silencing effective voices that bring a small measure of justice to the world through constructive engagement. I don’t want you to apologize openly or feel ashamed inside. I just want you to learn to love even one glimmer of caring for your neighbor, so that you will seek that thread of light, pursue it, delight in it, let it reflect off of you as you stand in its path, and see that you can neither stop it from shining nor collect it in a box and shut it away. Who is your neighbor? I hope mine will include Samaritans, though I am not the expert on the issue. But what if you have a dangerous neighbor? What then? That is just what millions of people on the planet are saying now. And they are talking about you.

“Do you regret being American?”

After reading of the sacking of Baghdad’s museums, I dreamed for two nights of pounding steady destruction. I awoke hoping the news was a part of my dream. The unspeakable loss made me so sick that I dreamed of vomiting the warm water of my empty stomach. Is it repellent to read that? The ash and desolation of historical and literary expressions are magnitudes more nauseating.

In the wake of loss to plunder and flame, Donny George at the Iraqi Ministry of Antiquities said, “This is what the Americans wanted. They wanted Iraq to lose its history.” [R Fisk, Independent, 16 April 2003] No, we didn’t. I didn’t, and I am one of the Americans.

“Do you regret being American?”

A Syrian friend is not surprised that they targeted cultural places: “A nation’s culture is what holds its people together.” What is holding my nation’s people together? The mutual desire to ransack history? No, we are not together in this. At the end of the two-hour “Third View” talk show with A-Sharq al-Awsat’s
Cairo bureau chief, the Egyptian Ambassador cites Gore Vidal’s vision of an America which has split into disunited states. Off-camera, he asks me if I felt this were possible. I have no talent for predictions, nonetheless it is clear that there are serious splits in perceptions of the invasion. But that is democracy, after all, a pluralistic approach to visions and analyses!

At the height of the US/UK decapitation mission, I turn into a small but densely-populated side street. A woman recognizes me and engages me in conversation. Another woman says, “American?” When I respond affirmatively, she slides her index finger across her neck, signaling decapitation, and utters a single word, “Bush” as she sits regally on a gold sofa in the alley amidst nodding goats. The first woman distances me from the decapitable American, saying, “But she is a good one! She was at the demonstration with a big sign against the war, and she spoke against it on television.” The sofa lady smiles and welcomes me, but the image of her sentence on the Commander in Chief remains in my mind.

“Do you regret being American?”

Another night, a frantic email message from America implores me to be careful in the streets of Cairo rife with anti-American sentiment. So say the alarmist media reports across the ocean. Reality is just the opposite. I am unfazed by my friend’s concern, responding that I feel safe walking home at 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning, and I have befriended all the nighttime street sweepers. I recall the statistic that when homicides decreased by twenty percent in America, news of them increased by six hundred percent. When I take a late dinner break at my favorite spaghetti establishment, my local hero surprisingly brings up the same topic as he dishes my portion of steaming noodles into a plastic bowl: “You speak Arabic and you are friendly with us, but if another American came through here, people would kill him.” I am surprised because I have not encountered such emotions. He assures me that this is the case.

“Do you regret being American?”

Heading to a vigil at the Journalists’ Union, a lavish and imposing palace provided by the Ministry of Defense, a phone text message comes in to the mobile of a reporter for a major Arab newspaper: “Mubarak wants this war. He wants to send
your sons to fight. Tell others.” At the demonstration, a television announcer takes my statement, and insists on my answering the question, “Do you feel that Bush and Blair are committing war crimes?”

“Do you regret being American?”

Many people have told me that I was brave to carry a large sign declaring my nationality and my position, American Against the War, in the one and almost only demonstration in Cairo [20 March 03]. “It takes courage to speak up like that outside your own country.” I receive news that organizers of Chicago’s 63rd Street demonstration have cancelled the action due to “a pervasive atmosphere of fear and anxiety within the Arab community.” People are also worried about joining the ranks of the disappeared who were taken in sweeps after 11th September, and have not been charged or heard from since.

“Do you regret being American?”

In a humble but lively neighborhood where a home consists of a room just big enough for a small aisle between two beds, we exchange contact information. Conversation turns to money, and a man in the family indicates the desirability of the dollar over the Egyptian pound and other currencies. “No,” says the young mother of my new four-year old sweetheart, Fuad. “The dollar...!” she exclaims, completing her sentence with a downward sweep of the hand. She predicts the effects of war budgets more clearly than many Americans with larger rooms in grander houses.

“Do you regret being American?”

Another family scene I have only read of has a van full of people trying to follow the Army’s orders to “Be safe” printed on leaflets dropped in Baghdad streets. They thought that these soldiers, like the first group they met, would wave them through the checkpoint in their hurried quest to reach safety. Instead, a hail of heavy gunfire left them beholding their two little daughters in their seats, decapitated. “Please be careful when you are shooting,” pleads Captain Chris Carter of the US Seventh Regiment, Third Infantry.

“Do you regret being American?”
Saddam’s metal head is dragged in the street and beamed around the world after the US Marines topple his statue. Echoes of Constantine—when told that the people had chopped off his statue’s head, he touched his own, remarking that he didn’t feel a thing. I think of the lady on the gold sofa in the alley, one finger across her throat and one word on her lips, “Bush.”

“Do you regret being American?”

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http://www.counterpunch.org/higgins04242003.html
The Shame of Being an American

by Paul Craig Roberts

(I sent an e-mail to the writer of this article for permitting me to include his article in this book. I got this response:
Paul Craig Roberts <paulcraigroberts@yahoo.com>
to me

Aug 16 2007
I would appreciate more information before giving my consent. The Bush government has created new offenses that permit it to give medieval dungeon treatment to anyone declared to be aiding terrorism in any way. It has reached the point where people's writings qualify as "supporting terrorism." If you are a Muslim, or you could be said to be in any way connected to a "terrorist" organization, or your publisher could be said to be so connected, or your book were to contain any contribution from anyone who could, even without cause, be said to have such association, I could be arrested and held without charges.
I would need to know about you, about your publisher, and about the content in your book. Americans are no longer free to express themselves. Indeed, it is even possible for the CIA to organize a "terrorist book" and solicit our writings for it.
If you have a reputable Indian publisher who can write to me asking permission, or preferably to Creator's Syndicate in Los Angeles who has the copyright, it would provide me with some protection against false charges.
PCR
Note how Americans live under fear, not only of Osama’s bomb but that of Bush administration which is more concerned with “terrorist books”, suppression of political communication and denying media access to the other side. M.A.Hussain)

Gentle reader, do you know that Israel is engaged in ethnic cleansing in southern Lebanon? Israel has ordered all the villagers to clear out. Israel then destroys their homes and
murders the fleeing villagers. That way there is no one to come back and nothing to which to return, making it easier for Israel to grab the territory, just as Israel has been stealing Palestine from the Palestinians.

Do you know that one-third of the Lebanese civilians murdered by Israel's attacks on civilian residential districts are children? That is the report from Jan Egeland, the emergency relief coordinator for the UN. He says it is impossible for help to reach the wounded and those buried in rubble, because Israeli air strikes have blown up all the bridges and roads. Considering how often (almost always) Israel misses Hezbollah targets and hits civilian ones, one might think that Israeli fire is being guided by US satellites and US military GPS. Don't be surprised at US complicity. Why would the puppet be any less evil than the puppet master?

Of course, you don't know these things, because the US print and TV media do not report them.

Because Bush is so proud of himself, you do know that he has blocked every effort to stop the Israeli slaughter of Lebanese civilians. Bush has told the UN "NO." Bush has told the European Union "NO." Bush has told the pro-American Lebanese prime minister "NO." Twice. Bush is very proud of his firmness. He is enjoying Israel's rampage and wishes he could do the same thing in Iraq.

Does it make you a Proud American that "your" president gave Israel the green light to drop bombs on convoys of villagers fleeing from Israeli shelling, on residential neighborhoods in the capital of Beirut and throughout Lebanon, on hospitals, on power plants, on food production and storage, on ports, on civilian airports, on bridges, on roads, on every piece of infrastructure on which civilized life depends? Are you a Proud American? Or are you an Israeli puppet?

On July 20, "your" House of Representatives voted 410-8 in favor of Israel's massive war crimes in Lebanon. Not content
with making every American complicit in war crimes, "your" House of Representatives, according to the Associated Press, also "condemns enemies of the Jewish state."

Who are the "enemies of the Jewish state"?

They are the Palestinians whose land has been stolen by the Jewish state, whose homes and olive groves have been destroyed by the Jewish state, whose children have been shot down in the streets by the Jewish state, whose women have been abused by the Jewish state. They are Palestinians who have been walled off into ghettos, who cannot reach their farm lands or medical care or schools, who cannot drive on roads through Palestine that have been constructed for Israelis only. They are Palestinians whose ancient towns have been invaded by militant Zionist "settlers" under the protection of the Israeli army who beat and persecute the Palestinians and drive them out of their towns. They are Palestinians who cannot allow their children outside their homes because they will be murdered by Israeli "settlers."

The Palestinians who confront Israeli evil are called "terrorists." When Bush forced free elections on Palestine, the people voted for Hamas. Hamas is the organization that has stood up to Israel. This means, of course, that Hamas is evil, anti-Semitic, un-American and terrorist. The US and Israel responded by cutting off all funds to the new government. Democracy is permitted only if it produces the results Bush and Israel want.

Israelis never practice terror. Only those who are in Israel's way are terrorists.

Another enemy of the Jewish state is Hezbollah. Hezbollah is a militia of Shi'ite Muslims created in 1982 when Israel first invaded Lebanon. During this invasion the great moral Jewish state arranged for the murder of refugees in refugee camps. The result of Israel's atrocities was Hezbollah, which fought the Israeli Army, defeated it, and drove it out of Lebanon. Today Hezbollah not only defends southern Lebanon but also provides social services such as orphanages and medical care.
To cut to the chase, the enemies of the Jewish state are any Muslim country not ruled by an American puppet friendly to Israel. Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the oil emirates have sided with Israel against their own kind, because they are dependent either on American money or on American protection from their own people. Sooner or later these totally corrupt governments that do not represent the people they rule will be overthrown. It is only a matter of time.

Indeed Bush and Israel may be hastening the process in their frantic effort to overthrow the governments of Syria and Iran. Both governments have more popular support than Bush has, but the White House Moron doesn't know this. The Moron thinks Syria and Iran will be "cakewalks" like Iraq, where ten proud divisions of the US military are tied down by a few lightly armed insurgents.

If you are still a Proud American, consider that your pride is doing nothing good for Israel or for America.

On July 20 when "your" House of Representatives, following "your" US Senate, passed the resolution in support of Israel's war crimes, the most powerful lobby in Washington, the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), quickly got out a press release proclaiming "The American people overwhelming support Israel's war on terrorism and understand that we must stand by our closest ally in this time of crisis."

The truth is that Israel created the crisis by invading a country with a pro-American government. The truth is that the American people do not support Israel's war crimes, as the CNN quick poll results make clear and as was made clear by callers into C-Span.

Despite the Israeli spin on news provided by US "reporting," a majority of Americans do not approve of Israeli atrocities against Lebanese civilians. Hezbollah is located in southern Lebanon. If Israel is targeting Hezbollah, why are Israeli bombs falling on
northern Lebanon? Why are they falling on Beirut? Why are they falling on civilian airports? On schools and hospitals?

Now we arrive at the main point. When the US Senate and House of Representatives pass resolutions in support of Israeli war crimes and condemn those who resist Israeli aggression, the Senate and House confirm Osama bin Laden's propaganda that America stands with Israel against the Arab and Muslim world.

Indeed, Israel, which has one of the world's largest per capita incomes, is the largest recipient of US foreign aid. Many believe that much of this "aid" comes back to AIPAC, which uses it to elect "our" representatives in Congress.

This perception is no favor to Israel, whose population is declining, as the smart ones have seen the writing on the wall and have been leaving. Israel is surrounded by hundreds of millions of Muslims who are being turned into enemies of Israel by Israel's actions and inhumane policies.

The hope in the Muslim world has always been that the United States would intervene in behalf of compromise and make Israel realize that Israel cannot steal Palestine and turn every Palestinian into a refugee.

This has been the hope of the Arab world. This is the reason our puppets have not been overthrown. This hope is the reason America still had some prestige in the Arab world.

The House of Representatives resolution, bought and paid for by AIPAC money, is the final nail in the coffin of American prestige in the Middle East. It shows that America is, indeed, Israel's puppet, just as Osama bin Laden says, and as a majority of Muslims believe.

With hope and diplomacy dead, henceforth America and Israel have only tooth and claw. The vaunted Israeli army could not defeat a rag tag militia in southern Lebanon. The vaunted US military cannot defeat a rag tag, lightly armed insurgency drawn
from a minority of the population in Iraq, insurgents, moreover, who are mainly engaged in civil war against the Shi’ite majority.

What will the US and its puppet master do? Both are too full of hubris and paranoia to admit their terrible mistakes. Israel and the US will either destroy from the air the civilian infrastructure of Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, and Iran so that civilized life becomes impossible for Muslims, or the US and Israel will use nuclear weapons to intimidate Muslims into acquiescence to Israel's desires.

Muslim genocide in one form or another is the professed goal of the neoconservatives who have total control over the Bush administration. Neocon godfather Norman Podhoretz has called for World War IV (in neocon thinking WW III was the Cold War) to overthrow Islam in the Middle East, deracinate the Islamic religion and turn it into a formalized, secular ritual.

Rumsfeld's neocon Pentagon has drafted new US war doctrine that permits pre-emptive nuclear attack on non-nuclear states.

Neocon David Horowitz says that by slaughtering Palestinian and Lebanese civilians, "Israel is doing the work of the rest of the civilized world," thus equating war criminals with civilized men.

Neocon Larry Kudlow says that "Israel is doing the Lord's work" by murdering Lebanese, a claim that should give pause to Israel's Christian evangelical supporters. Where does the Lord Jesus say, "go forth and murder your neighbors so that you may steal their lands"?

The complicity of the American public in these heinous crimes will damn America for all time in history.

Dr. Roberts is Chairman of the Institute for Political Economy and Research Fellow at the Independent Institute. He is a former associate editor of the Wall Street Journal, former contributing
editor for National Review, and was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in the Reagan administration.

http://informationclearinghouse.info/article14128.htm
I am ashamed to call myself Republican!

Michael C. Morris
October 2, 2006
I have been a Republican since I was 18, I am now 48, and in that time I have moved more towards the middle because of issues like the environment, but now I may change my party to None of the Above!

In case anyone has not noticed, this Government is in shambles and the election this November will not change that. It will, in my opinion, only swing the pendulum in the same screwed up direction just with different people doing the swinging. What this country needs is our elected official to actually represent the American People, like it says in the Constitution, We the People.

Republican Rep. Mark Foley is just the latest example of a Government and maybe a country gone crazy. Foley was the co-chair of the missing and exploited children’s caucus yet he is exploiting the same children he is there to protect! This is not news to me as I have been divorced with a kid and I know all about a system and individuals that exploits children not for sex but for money.

Next example, Global Warming. The Bush administration would like us all to believe that it is a myth and that we are in a cycle that happens every twelve thousand years. I can say as a fact that the greenhouse gases we release are affecting the earth. Anyone with common sense and no political agenda can see that truth. If it is all BS as the Bush administration would like you to believe, then why did they try to shut down NASA’s report on global warming?

Iraq, Vietnam the sequel. Like a bad horror movie America is once again in a situation where the American People’s Children
will be slaughtered by the Jason’s and Freddy’s of the world in a no win situation. Just as not everyone in the movie theater screams, “Don’t open that Door” we opened the door that lets loose the horrors of the world, and according to NIS, has increased the number of horrors we now face. It is time to tell the Iraq People good luck and if terrorists camps start forming we will be there to shove a missile down its throat no questions asked and by the way you owe the US $500 Billion (USD) in war reparations that we will TAKE in oil.

The Republicans “Contract” with America was a joke. As part of that the Republicans contracted with America to reform the IRS and the tax system. Well they sure did reform the tax system, and if you own million dollars homes and have millions in the bank you benefited. If you are like me, a working stiff, you paid the difference. This country needs a flat tax system that pays across the board into one pool. No more Federal, State and Local taxes, No more real estate taxes, no more occupational taxes, and by the way how is working a luxury? This pool would insure that that is ALL the money the Government has to work with. No more PORK $300 million dollar bridges, no more highways to nowhere, and anyone who misuses these taxes should due life in jail with no parole. Better yet is what they are doing with our money, a war nobody wants, paying for abortions, using your money to spy on you, need I go on? On this issue alone, the thirteen colonies went to war to free us from British rule. Remember “NO TAXATION WITHOUT REPRENTATION!”

Do you feel represented? I know illegal immigrants are represented, but are you? The Jack Abramoff scandal proved who controls Washington. Maybe it is time once again for all Americans to all meet at Concord and reinstate the documents that started this country by force.

Administration is fighting them as well as trying to backdoor the sale of our ports to a foreign government or company. Now there is a Government that hears its people, NOT! President Bush’s base only cares that they have someone to cut their grass and work in their sweat shops. Cut your own dam grass and make your own cloths!
Almost forgot Katrina. Did you know that the Canadian Mounted Police, the Mounties’, horses and all made it to New Orleans before our Government did? If I were the people of the Gulf, I would succeed from the Union. You would be better off and safer. You could keep your tax dollars local and not have to support nonsense that will leave you high and dry, pardon the pun, the next time as FEMA is now and will forever be a joke. Proof of that pudding is that Homeland Security, who is the head of the FEMA snake, approved the sale of ports to foreign Governments and STILL does not check more than 10% of what goes through the port.

Another point, where the hell did all of the money go? Did I see anyone explain or go to jail for what happened? Did I even see one person, except Mike Brown, held accountable? I have only touched on the highlights of the past few years so far, but I think you get the point I hope.

What truly gets me is that all of this occurs because 300 million, excuse me 289 million as 11 million are illegal, dummies trade trinkets for freedom. We allow this nonsense because we are afraid that we will loose our homes and cars and job. Well stupid, it Americans band together NO ONE can take anything from us and your jobs are being shipped overseas everyday. Take time from you reality TV shows and fight for what is right, what America stands for because if you don’t, they will get your house, your car and all of your wealth, maybe not from you, maybe not from your children, but from your grandchildren. They have time on their side, we don’t.

This November not only vote in incumbents out, both democrat and republican, but go down and in no uncertain terms let you elected officials know that if this nonsense does not stop, not only will you vote them out next election, you will drag them into an alley and beat the living crap out of them. Maybe then, things will change, as every American should be an alibi for court to every other American until this Government once again represents the People of the United States of America.
I have fired the first shot across the Government bow with my weapon of choice, the pen. Every American needs to do the same by writing, phoning, and going in person to our representatives. If we grow a set of balls as Americans we can not only change the course we are on, but restore this country to it former glory, make it 100% safe and once again have the greatest nation on earth.

http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/viewArticle.asp?articleID=14209
Ashamed to be an American

April 23, 2002

OSAMA SHABANEH
SOFTWARE MANAGER

Two years ago, I became an American citizen. Prior to that, I wasn’t a citizen of any country, at least on paper. “Where are you from?” was a question I found hard to answer. It still is.

I come from the town of Hebron on the West Bank. I lived most of my life under the Israeli military occupation until I moved to America a few years ago. Hebron is part of the historical Palestine, a country that once existed but currently is not on the list of nations.

Leaving my family behind was the most difficult experience of my life. Here I was, in the “land of the free,” and there they were, still under occupation. I never expected that I would regret leaving my occupied homeland to live in freedom. Now, with passion, I do regret it.

For the past 18 months, millions of Palestinians have been living in a state of suffocating siege by the Israeli military. In the name of security for its citizens, Israel has been brutalizing a whole nation. To that end, American-made weaponry has been used against the Palestinian population. Billions of dollars in American tax money is directly supporting the continued aggression and the dismantling of the infrastructure of the Palestinian society.

Whenever I call my family in Hebron, I’m full of shame. The F-16s, the Apaches, the bullets, the gunships and the tanks that surround them are either manufactured in the United States or are paid for by the American taxayer, myself included. I feel directly responsible for the killing of my own people.
To add insult to injury, the White House has been giving tacit approval to the Israeli government in its latest bloody incursion into the Palestinian-controlled areas. The tough talk that President Bush has directed at Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is petty at best and is, by all account, meaningless. The Israelis have already done a good job obliterating the Jenin refugee camp and massacring hundreds of Palestinians inside. Death is also rampant all over the West Bank and Gaza, where the Israeli military is wantonly destroying Palestinian lives and livelihoods.

I become very fascinated when Bush and his Cabinet members, or members of the U.S. Senate or House, repeatedly brand the Palestinian struggle as terrorism, and allude to the Israeli actions as self-defense. Only one day after Israel took over the Jenin refugee camp and killed hundreds of Palestinians inside and expelled or arrested the rest, the White House called Ariel Sharon a “man of peace.”

Palestinian deaths are considered collateral damage by the Israelis and receive no condemnation from the White House, except in passing, even when the victims are children or defenseless civilians. Israeli deaths, on the other hand, bring about a wave of Israeli retribution against a whole population and draw swift denunciation from the White House as an example of Palestinian terrorism and superfluous violence.

I don’t expect ordinary Americans who were born and raised in this country to understand my viewpoint. They have no memories of a childhood marred by oppression and scenes of occupation. Their families live in relative peace and tranquility. If they call other family members, the conversation probably doesn’t revolve around who was shot today, or arrested today, or maimed today, or displaced today. The media footage Americans receive from the Middle East hardly portrays the Israeli brutality, but does accentuate the suicide bombings committed by Palestinians against Israeli civilians.

Israel cannot buy its security with Palestinian blood. Subsequent American administrations have either failed to realize that fact, or have been pressured to ignore it. The United States has the
moral responsibility to put an end to the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, not because the United States is the only remaining superpower, but because this occupation is being funded and aided by American money.

Israelis have the right to lead peaceful and secure lives without fear of suicide bombings in their buses and open markets. Palestinians also have the right to draw their own destiny free from an oppressive occupation that has devastated their existence for 35 years. We have to realize that neither of these objectives can be achieved without the other.

Unfortunately, the White House seems flagrantly indifferent to the plight of the Palestinians. As we watch yet another massacre unfolding in yet another Palestinian refugee camp, we hear no condemnation and no criticism, but statements of guarded understanding from the Bush administration toward the Israeli actions.

I am ashamed to be an American, and I can’t help it.

Osama Shabaneh of Redmond is a software program manager.

http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/opinion/67507_palestineop.shtml
Ashamed To Be American

A Letter from Michael Moore to George W. Bush on the Eve of War

by Michael Moore

March 18th, 2003

George W. Bush

1600 Pennsylvania Ave.

Washington, DC

Dear Governor Bush:

So today is what you call “the moment of truth,” the day that “France and the rest of world have to show their cards on the table.” I’m glad to hear that this day has finally arrived. Because, I gotta tell ya, having survived 440 days of your lying and conniving, I wasn’t sure if I could take much more. So I’m glad to hear that today is Truth Day, ‘cause I got a few truths I would like to share with you:

1. There is virtually NO ONE in America (talk radio nutters and Fox News aside) who is gung-ho to go to war. Trust me on this one. Walk out of the White House and on to any street in America and try to find five people who are PASSIONATE about wanting to kill Iraqis. YOU WON’T FIND THEM! Why? ‘Cause NO Iraqis have ever come here and killed any of us! No Iraqi has even threatened to do that. You see, this is how we average Americans think: If a certain so-and-so is not perceived as a threat to our lives, then, believe it or not, we don’t want to kill him! Funny how that works!

2. The majority of Americans — the ones who never elected you — are not fooled by your weapons of mass distraction. We know what the real issues are that affect our daily lives — and none of them begin with I or end in Q. Here’s what threatens us: two and a half million jobs lost since you took office, the stock market having become a cruel joke, no one knowing if their retirement funds are going to be there, gas now costs almost two dollars —
the list goes on and on. Bombing Iraq will not make any of this go away. Only you need to go away for things to improve.

3. As Bill Maher said last week, how bad do you have to suck to lose a popularity contest with Saddam Hussein? The whole world is against you, Mr. Bush. Count your fellow Americans among them.

4. The Pope has said this war is wrong, that it is a SIN. The Pope! But even worse, the Dixie Chicks have now come out against you! How bad does it have to get before you realize that you are an army of one on this war? Of course, this is a war you personally won’t have to fight. Just like when you went AWOL while the poor were shipped to Vietnam in your place.

5. Of the 535 members of Congress, only ONE (Sen. Johnson of South Dakota) has an enlisted son or daughter in the armed forces! If you really want to stand up for America, please send your twin daughters over to Kuwait right now and let them don their chemical warfare suits. And let’s see every member of Congress with a child of military age also sacrifice their kids for this war effort. What’s that you say? You don’t THINK so? Well, hey, guess what — we don’t think so either!

6. Finally, we love France. Yes, they have pulled some royal screw-ups. Yes, some of them can pretty damn annoying. But have you forgotten we wouldn’t even have this country known as America if it weren’t for the French? That it was their help in the Revolutionary War that won it for us? That our greatest thinkers and founding fathers — Thomas Jefferson, Ben Franklin, etc. — spent many years in Paris where they refined the concepts that lead to our Declaration of Independence and our Constitution? That it was France who gave us our Statue of Liberty, a Frenchman who built the Chevrolet, and a pair of French brothers who invented the movies? And now they are doing what only a good friend can do — tell you the truth about yourself, straight, no b.s. Quit pissing on the French and thank them for getting it right for once. You know, you really should have traveled more (like once) before you took over. Your ignorance of the world has not only made you look stupid, it has painted you into a corner you can’t get out of.

Well, cheer up — there IS good news. If you do go through with this war, more than likely it will be over soon because I’m
guessing there aren’t a lot of Iraqis willing to lay down their lives to protect Saddam Hussein. After you “win” the war, you will enjoy a huge bump in the popularity polls as everyone loves a winner — and who doesn’t like to see a good ass-whoopin’ every now and then (especially when it’s some third world ass!). So try your best to ride this victory all the way to next year’s election. Of course, that’s still a long ways away, so we’ll all get to have a good hardy-har-har while we watch the economy sink even further down the toilet!

But, hey, who knows — maybe you’ll find Osama a few days before the election! See, start thinking like THAT! Keep hope alive! Kill Iraqis — they got our oil!!

Yours,

Michael Moore

www.michaelmoore.com
We Americans really ought to be ashamed

By ROBYN E. BLUMNER
October 8, 2006

Did you hear that click, like the turning of a dial, auguring a new America?

It happened on Sept. 29 at 2:47 p.m. That was the seismic minute that Congress passed the Military Commissions Act and formally granted President Bush royal powers he had been unilaterally arrogating. The historic action may one day be remembered as the moment the great American experiment in liberty ended. It was a good run.

You see, it is one thing for a renegade executive to crown himself like Charlemagne and declare that his (cough) wisdom is exceptional enough to designate Americans and foreigners as enemies to be detained indefinitely. It is quite another for 315 members of Congress to go along. When the people's representatives collude to collapse the separation of powers into one omnipotent executive, our nation becomes defined by that act. We are a nation of laws, even when it's a really bad one.

Republican leaders in Congress were in a quandary because Bush had proven that he could not be trusted to respect the boundaries of law, and the Supreme Court called him on it. In striking down Bush's kangaroo military tribunals and resurrecting the Geneva Conventions, the court said that the president couldn't ignore U.S. law and international commitments without Congress' explicit assent. So Congress assented. Problem solved.
America's bedrock principles may be a pile of rubble, but the Republican president won a political victory. Proving once again that there is no national conscience anymore. Holding power is all that matters.

So now, under the newly enacted military commissions, as long as a military judge rules the evidence reliable and it was obtained before 2006, it can be admitted even if the evidence was drawn out of someone by freezing him or almost drowning him or keeping him awake and on his feet for days. Hey, it's the new American way, which sounds an awful lot like the old European way.

Besides, we had to change the rules otherwise we could never have gotten a conviction against those 14 men that we had secreted away and done things to. The rules had to be adjusted, or more accurately, broken and reset.

Bush, with his reverse Midas touch, has led this nation into a muck-pile of intractable problems. But even had Bush been the most talented chief executive in history, Congress should not have handed him the powers it did under the Military Commissions Act.

The right to habeas corpus, which is the ability to get before a judge to challenge the legitimacy of your imprisonment, is nonnegotiable. Congress may suspend habeas corpus only in cases of invasion or rebellion, according to the express terms of the Constitution.

But Congress has now eliminated habeas rights for non-citizens not in response to a massive invasion, but an amorphous "global war on terror" where the enemy is anyone seeking to do us or our friends harm.

The law's most immediate consequence will be extinguishing the pending habeas corpus claims of hundreds of detainees in Guantanamo and other detention sites. Many of these prisoners have been in our custody for years, and the bulk of them are not
even members of al-Qaida, according to the Pentagon. Now they have no hope of getting their day in court under a fair process.

The Military Commissions Act also contains a fatal thrust against the Geneva Conventions, making them unenforceable. The president is given explicit authority to interpret violations of Common Article 3 of the Conventions beyond "grave breaches." Bush will be free to determine what abuses by interrogators do not rise to the level of "humiliating and degrading treatment." Then detainees will be barred from court to challenge that treatment.

The law is a true abomination. It is our fault. We let this happen. We allowed them to draw the false dichotomy between security and freedom. We accepted Bush's Torture Nation and his untouchable island prison.

Judge Learned Hand said "Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women; if it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it." Americans no longer understand what liberty means. They think it has something to do with tax-free shopping and their right never to be offended by others' opinions.

E Pluribus Unum be damned. Here's America's new motto: If we can't pronounce your name, we don't care what happens to you. Now let us get back to our Happy Meals.

http://www.sptimes.com/2006/10/08/Columns/We_Americans_really_o.shtml
I’m ashamed of America.

That doesn’t mean that I don’t love my country. It’s because I love my country that I’m ashamed of her.

The thing that I was always the most proud of about America was the freedom she allowed her citizens to complain.

That particular freedom to complain has probably been the single most important freedom of all and our greatest strength as a nation.

America was born complaining. Her main complaint was that she wasn’t being treated right by her mother country.

Our ancestors didn’t like the idea that England paid no attention to their complaints; complaints such as being denied certain inalienable rights, the chief being life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Our ancestors didn’t go for the idea that England could tax them without their consent. They felt they had the right, as Englishmen, to have a say-so in such matters and to have representation in Parliament.

The King of England didn’t consider that to be in the best interests of England. To the King, it was a rebellious attitude from a bunch of ingrates who needed a swift kick in the pants.
So England gave the American colonists a swift kick in the pants. It was that swift kick in the pants that triggered the American Revolution that led to the birth of America as a free and independent nation.

Too many people have died for that greatest freedom of all, the freedom to complain, and when I see my country losing sight of that birthright and start making laws to limit and bind that freedom - which is the very heart of Democracy - I am ashamed.

The idea that the American people are prepared to make it a crime to burn the American flag is like a swift kick in the pants to anyone who truly loves the principle of liberty and that greatest of all freedoms, on which the principle of liberty rests, the freedom to complain.

If burning the American flag doesn’t signal a serious complaint, then the American flag doesn’t stand for anything. But the American flag does stand for something. It stands for the freedom to make serious complaints.

The American flag is just a piece of cloth. That piece of cloth is not an idol to be worshiped. One should not be forced to bow down to it or salute it. It has to be up to the people to bow down or salute as they choose.

If a person chooses not to bow down or salute, that is his right under the ideas of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and Bill of Rights - including the right to burn it in public as a sign of his discontent.

America was born out of discontent. That’s why she chose as her first right, in the Bill of Rights, the freedom of speech.

That’s because without the freedom of speech there can be no freedom of thought and no freedom to complain.
If doesn’t make any difference that you don’t like that particular method of drawing attention to a complaint. It is your duty as an American to fight for that right to complain, even if the complainer chooses to burn the American flag as a part of his opening remarks.

I’ve heard this particular time in American history referred to as the “Dumbing Down of America,” and I can certainly understand where the writer was coming from that said that.

But it is a lot more complicated than just that and is much more serious and dangerous than our most enlightened commentators have been able to communicate to the great, grazing masses and their leaders.

What we’re talking about here is a present and imminent danger to the continued existence of American freedom as we’ve known it.

The American people are set to give “thumbs up” to a Constitutional Amendment that will limit our freedom to complain under the 1st Amendment.

Let me say that again, we’re fixing to cut ourselves off at the roots.

We’re fixing to separate ourselves from the very principle by which we were born as the most free nation ever devised by the mind of man.

We’re fixing to cut away the greatest principle that allowed our very birth - the freedom to complain and the right to try and make a better world.

Check this out, we’re not just talking about the Cable Guy and the NASCAR Rednecks that think he’s funny, we’re talking about the prime intellectuals of America, both Democrats and Republicans.
All these stupid idiots from all walks of life and with all kinds of educational training and ability, didn’t turn out to be what they are today overnight.

I think it is a little misleading to call this the “Dumbing Down of America.” To say that may not be the most helpful way to explain it to the children that will be reading this years from now.

I would like for the children to realize that this is real life we’re talking about and it didn’t just begin overnight. It has taken thousands of years for us to get to this place.

Dumbing Down of America, my foot. We’ve been in the Dumbing Down Age for centuries. It’s lucky we’re still living. And there is a lot more to this Dumbing Down Age than people living in it right now realize.

It’s too late to philosophize or wonder back through the beautiful gardens of our memories and our great hopes of even brighter days, the barbarian is at the gate and it’s show time!

And, of course, like the cartoon said, the barbarian is us.

So here I am again. The trouble maker. The rebel rouser. Still the same after all these years, saying to America that I have these complaints against you and will continue to be ashamed of you until you submit to my right of complaint under the Constitution and offer me answers to my questions.

If you make a law denying my right to complain and insist that I go to jail if my method of complaining includes the burning of the American flag, I make a pledge here and now to fight you and your like until I die.

And of course I will, I’ve been doing it all my life. But that’s not the point. The point is what in the hell does America mean in the
world today and here at home? Where is the America of our birth? What is the truth that the American flag represents?

Forget about how much you hate Naman Crowe and his like, ask not what he can do for America but what you can do for it. Can you help shore up the belief of our forefathers, that all men are equal and have the right to complain?

Can you stand up in the face of the great, grazing masses and their leaders and declare that all free people have the right, and should have the right, to complain, even if that complaint includes disrespect for the literal cloth we call the American flag?

If you believe that the complaint cannot go that far without becoming illegal and therefore unworthy of being listened to, you must agree with the King of England, and insist that I be treated to a swift kick in the pants.

Just try it. Just because I’m a good-natured, easy-going guy doesn’t necessarily mean that I will throw up my hands and roll over. That was the mistake that England made with our forefathers.

Let that be a lesson to you and something to think very seriously about. My patience for moral idiots and fake patriots is right on the verge of running out.

If you don’t think I will fight for my country, just keep pushing. And I’m not talking about just myself, there are untold millions out there that feel the same way.

And there will always be a few of us willing to snap the American flag in your face and force you to resent it and reveal yourself for what you are - a person that has never really seen in his mind’s eye the full bloom and beauty of Democracy and has become sick with the belief that the literal cloth is more important than what it represents, which is the right to complain,
even if it means burning the flag, peeing on it or throwing it in the garbage.

That is pretty much what America is doing as it goes about drumming up support for a Constitutional Amendment to amend the 1st Amendment and limit free speech, so as to make it a crime to burn the American flag - which is a right now under our Bill of Rights as an example and expression of free speech.

What next? Will they make it a crime to refuse to recite the Pledge of Allegiance or salute the flag? Is this where American Democracy is heading - under the leadership of both the Republicans and Democrats and with the consent of the governed - after all these hard-fought years attempting to achieve the dream of full-blown freedom?

If you are among those in favor of this proposed cap on freedom of speech by making flag burning a crime, you owe yourself some down time. Pay a visit to Independence Hall or visit your praying ground and have a little talk with the Lord about the meaning of freedom and the right to speak one’s mind in whatever way he chooses.

I may be ashamed of her, but that doesn’t mean that I don’t love her. I will continue to fight for her survival until I’ve gone through the last breath in my body.

And I’ll haunt the flag wavers and fake patriots from my grave, if possible, if I die before finishing my task of speaking my complaints and urging my countrymen to pass it on - the baton of freedom - the right to freedom of speech and all the other inalienable rights protected beneath the swirls and folds of the American flag and all that it represents, which no match can ever burn and no law can prevent.

http://www.canadiancontent.net/commtr/article_817.html
Are Americans idiots?

Now Is Our Time!
Jim Hightower, August 21, 2003

Keeping in the spirit of this week’s heroes of democracy, we offer another southerner with a progressive vision for America: Jim Hightower, the straight-shooting populist radio talk show host from the great state of Texas. The following is an excerpt from his forthcoming book, “Thieves In High Places” (on Amazon!), originally published on Tompaine.com. Hightower is currently on a barnstorming tour of America, check his web site to see if he’s coming to your town:

The greatest offense against our society these days is not any one law or a particular assault on our freedoms. Rather, it is the persistent, insidious effort by those who shape our culture to reduce the American citizenry to idiots. From corporate advertisers to political sermonizers, from boards of education to the entertainment programmers, their goal is idiocy.

By “idiots,” I’m referring to more than the constant charge that we’re all a bunch of idiots. That’s just manufactured media fluff. Far from being a nation of numbskulls, people (and especially young folks) are smarter than ever. But to what end?

The original Greek word “idiotes” referred to people who might have had a high IQ, but were so self-involved that they focused exclusively on their own life and were both ignorant of and uncaring about public concerns and the common good. Such people were the exact opposite of the Athenian democratic ideal of an active citizenry fully involved in the civic process, with everyone accepting their responsibilities to each other and all of humankind. This is the ideal that Jefferson and Madison built into our own nation’s founding documents; the ideal that Lincoln embraced when he spoke of striving for a “government of the people, by the people, for the people;” the ideal that Justice Louis Brandeis was expressing when he wrote that “The most important office” in our land is “that of a private citizen.”
Far from calling on you to measure up to this high democratic ideal, however, the Powers That Be quite prefer that you be an idiot:

Children are acculturated from the earliest age by commercial television and electronic “talking” toys not to stretch their own imagination or rely on their innate creativity, but to give the proper, pre-programmed responses to animated characters and the “voices” of the toys.

Students are not encouraged to be questioning citizens, but to learn the “correct” answers to uniform academic skills tests that determine whether they get promoted and are considered “smart.”

The fact that a majority of Americans are so turned off by the money-corrupted political process that they don’t turn out for elections is twisted into a “good” by political elites, who choose to interpret the public’s non-participation as approval of the status quo.

Media owners and programmers, corporate think tanks and right-wing politicos constantly and aggressively push to keep the mass media (including “The News”), textbooks and classrooms (K through college), the pulpits, and other sources of public information and discourse free of any serious presentation of “unapproved” civic action — ignoring, marginalizing, or outright attacking the remarkable groups battling today for worker rights, unions, environmental justice, fair trade, civil rights and so much more.

Be an involved citizen? Forget about it, Jake. Don’t waste your time. Get a job, keep your head down, play the lottery, don’t be different, take a pill, watch “reality TV,” buy things, play it safe, live vicariously, don’t make waves, pre-pay your funeral. Oh, and on those big questions — such as economic fairness, going to war, “rebalancing” that liberty/security equation, and the shrinking of democracy itself — don’t hurt your little gray cells by focusing on them, for there’s not a lot you can do about them, we know more than you do, and don’t worry... we’ll take care of you. Go about your business — be a good idiot. The Opposite Of Courage Is Not Cowardice, It’s Conformity.

Come on, America, that’s not us! Don’t let BushCo, the Wobblycrats and the Kleptocrats steal our country and trivialize We The People as being nothing more substantial than passive
consumers who can even be made to cower in duct-taped “safe rooms” whenever the governing authorities shout “Code Orange!” out their windows (how pathetic is that?).

America wasn’t built by conformists, but by mutineers — we’re a big, brawling, boisterous, bucking people, and now is our time! Our democracy is being dismantled right in front of our eyes — not by crazed foreign terrorists, but by our own ruling elites. This is a crucial moment when America desperately needs you and me to stand as full citizens, asserting the bold and proud radicalism of America’s democratic ideals.

“It is not that we see democracy through the haze of optimism. We know that democracy is a jewel that must be polished constantly to maintain its luster. To prevent it from being damaged or stolen, democracy must be guarded with unremitting vigilance.”

Who said this? That’s not Patrick Henry or Abe Lincoln, but Aung San Suu Kyi, the inspirational and courageous democracy fighter of Burma. Her life literally is on the line every day, for she’s the leader of the popular opposition to the ruthless military dictatorship that usurped her beautiful country’s democracy in a bloody coup. In 1990, her National League for Democracy won 82 percent of the vote in a democratic election, but the military and the economic elites stepped in and invalidated the people’s choice, and they have ruled through iron-fisted repression, murder and armed force ever since.

You think democracy asks a lot of us — too many meetings, too much risk of getting your name on Ashcroft’s database, too much confrontation with authority? Try walking a few miles in the shoes of Suu Kyi. Burma’s military thugs would love to kill her, and the threat of this is a constant reality in her life, but for now they know that they could not withstand the popular explosion that would follow such a murder, for she’s the symbol of the people’s suppressed democratic yearnings. Instead, they held her under house arrest for seven-and-a-half years, and, though she was officially released last year, she is hounded, harassed, monitored and followed everywhere she goes in an effort to intimidate her and Burma’s other democracy activists. They wish she would leave, but she wouldn’t even go to Stockholm to accept the Nobel Peace Prize she won in 1991,
because she feared she would not be allowed to re-enter her country.

“Is this a private fight, or can anyone join in?” — Old Irish saying

Be my guest. Unfortunately, there is no shortage of fights to join these days. Fortunately, however, we’re a country of democracy fighters, and you can join one or more wherever you are... or start your own! I don’t mean to fight for fighting’s sake, but fight to take our country back.

Join Global Trade Watch to stop the latest sovereignty-choking glob of global greed called Free Trade Area of the Americas, which “frees” corporations to privatize everything from schools to postal services in your city or anywhere else in the Western Hemisphere, whether we want it or not.

Join the millions of people working in cities all across our country to stop Ashcroft and Ridge from getting local police to assist in federal surveillances, interrogations and other autocratic actions that violate our civil liberties and constitutional rights.

Join a growing number of grassroots organizations daring to confront the very heart of corporate power by challenging the absurd notion that a corporation is a “person” — a fiction that, ironically, gives these paper structures more power than a real person has, or, as we’ve seen, more power than an entire nation of actual living, breathing persons.

Join the fight for living wages in your city, the fight to reclaim our public airwaves, the fight to make public schools work again, the fight to stop redlining and predatory lending, the fight to let patients and doctors decide about medical marijuana without the police intruding, the fight for public funding of your local and state elections, the fight to [FILL IN YOUR FAVORITE HERE].

Don’t wait on “heroes” or national leaders. Be your own hero — everyone can do something, everyone makes a contribution. Everyone who does any heavy lifting in the democratic cause is a hero.

As writer Elbert Hubbard noted a century ago, “God will not look you over for medals, degrees or diplomas, but for scars.”
The important thing to know is that you are wanted. You are needed. You are important. You are not only what democracy counts on, you are what democracy is.

Thomas Paine saw in America something breathtaking, which he expressed as the opportunity to “start the world over again.” Paine and others got America off on the right foot, but our leaders have stumbled badly of late. That’s why we have to step in now. You and I have the chance to bring our great country back to the ideals that launched it, ideals that remain gently nestled in our hearts. Live your ideals.

Jim Hightower is a former Texas Agriculture Commissioner and author of “If the Gods Had Meant Us to Vote They Would Have Given Us Candidates.”

Achtung! Are We the New Nazis?

Soldiers, God and Empire
by Douglas Herman

Gott Mit Uns.

I felt a little shock and awe, actually disbelief, seeing the antique belt buckle for the first time. Worn by a Nazi German soldier, the aluminum, World War II era buckle carried the imperial eagle of the Third Reich above the familiar Swastika. Surrounding the eagle and Swastika was the motto, “Gott Mit Uns,” or “God With Us.”

Certainly the Nazi Germans, villains in history and Hollywood movies, couldn’t really have believed in God, could they? Certainly the common German soldier fought with great courage, discipline and fervor, following orders given by the High Command. Yet the Nazis fought a ruthless war against smaller countries, attacking them after planting false evidence,
overpowering them with a combination of vicious air strikes and crushing armored superiority and then installed corrupt or cruel puppet leaders.

The Nazis demonized and then destroyed their enemies, after first intimidating and then liquidating their domestic opponents. The German propaganda machine cranked out misinformation and outright lies in the state-supported media, suppressing the truth and threatening anyone who dared to speak or print opposition to the war regime.

Lutheran minister and German war veteran Martin Niemoller mirrored middle-class German society of that time:
First they came for the Communists, and I didn’t speak up, because I wasn’t a Communist.
Then they came for the Jews, and I didn’t speak up, because I wasn’t a Jew.
Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn’t speak up, because I was a Protestant.
Then they came for me, and by then there was no one left to speak up for me.

Presently, American military veterans rank and file former soldiers mostly—are speaking out against American Imperialism, as well as ministers, artists, reporters, scientists and educators. But the powerful alliance of media monopolies and corporate-financed political leaders sway public opinion to war. In America, as was the case in Nazi Germany, the imperceptible slide to tyranny increases in direct proportion to the number of voices of conscience that are ignored.

Is it curious or ironic how Blitzkrieg resembles Shock and Awe? Is it curious or ironic how Wolf Blitzer and Charles Krauthammer provide the running commentary for the war? Is it curious or ironic how Rumsfeld and Rommel are so similar, how each needed a desert for a dramatic stage? Yes, I know, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld stated to the ‘free’ media our ‘humanitarian’ method of war, but then German
general Erwin Rommel or Joseph Goebbels could have said the very same thing to the German press.


The last time I checked, the Pope was vehemently against the unprovoked war with Iraq, as were most ministers and priests. The National Council of Churches, with 50 million members in 36 denominations, opposed the war. The Catholic Church, with nearly 64 million Americans, did not support the war. Many American Jews did not support the war. Yet according to all reports, we’ve won a war and the rumors are we may have another couple of other wars very soon.

God is on our side, but which one? The vengeful God, the one guiding our radioactive armor-sheathed battle tanks as they slice through families of frightened civilians? Or the merciful one, providing protection to those same civilians? Is ours the God of the Gospels and Torah—or the horrible, hydra-like god of cluster bombs? Do our coins—comparable to the Nazi belt buckles—really carry the motto, In God We Trust”?

Assuming the support for this war was a mile wide and an inch deep—generally the case in polls and wars—how many Christian soldiers will continue to take up arms against the infidel simply on the summons of Militant Christian Bush and Uber-Zionist Paul Wolfowitz? An instructive book, A Quick And Dirty Guide To War, gives an overview of the entanglement awaiting our armies of occupation. Although the authors fail to mention the term Islamic Jihad, they clearly describe the Middle East morass and the fact that Afghanistan has NEVER been conquered by an outside foreign power. America, by the way, is superpower number four to try, and our influence extends only as far as the outskirts of Kabul.
In a prolonged, stepping-stone war of conquest and vendetta, thinly disguised as liberation, how many American soldiers will suffice? If the Russians in Afghanistan could not pacify a region at their doorstep with over 150,000 troops, using Gestapo tactics, what makes American leaders think they can do better, using twice the troops over twice the area? Yes, we have the invincible Abrams M1A2 main Battle Tank (MBT), just as the Germans had the invincible Panzer Mark VI Tiger MBT in 1943. But like the Germans, we eventually have to emerge from our tanks, and what then? How many patriotic sons and daughters, heroically fighting for so many American lost causes, will emerge from the backwoods, single-stoplight towns, kids like Jessica Lynch, to serve as very vulnerable yet heavily-armed overseers in impoverished Mesopotamia?

“Do we have ten million men willing to fight and save petroleum resources?” asks Anthony Gancarski in a recent Counterpunch column. “How many millions would it take to provide an occupation force sufficient to pacify the region? Is there any hope of attaining such a fighting force without conscription?”

The answer is NO.

The draft is a done deal if the war spreads. The New York Times recently reported that America’s military power, measured in military spending, exceeded that of all NATO countries combined—plus China, Russia, Japan, Iraq and North Korea—but the need for military men will surpass the capacity of the all-volunteer army if liberation spreads to Syria and Iran, as our chief Chickenhawks intend. Former CIA director James Woolsey, handpicked by the Pentagon for the role of Pasha in post-war Iraq, publicly stated to a group of avid young Republicans at UCLA, “This Fourth World War [starting with Iraq and leading God knows where], I think, will last considerably longer than either World Wars I or II did for us.” Hopefully the students who weren’t scared shitless listening to Woolsey—a name apropos to the imperial designs of this obscene military machine—already have their student deferments ready to file, following the example of our current leaders, many of whom happily avoided the Vietnam War.
Behind this Middle East escapade lurks a cadre of militant Christians, Zionist Jews, and brazen corporate opportunists, all equally embedded in the idea of an Imperialist Grand Design. Yet such Imperial hubris wrecked Napoleon’s France, destroyed Hitler’s Germany and recently ruined the Soviet Union—bled white in Afghanistan a dissection ably assisted by our recent Mujahadeen ally, Osama bin Laden.

This recent preemptive strike precedent for America is a page taken from the Third Reich playbook. In 1939, the Germans attacked Poland, a fourth-rate military power, having used a phony excursion by Polish soldiers as a ploy for invasion. Our excuse for attacking another fourth-rate power—the search for weapons of mass destruction—worked wonderfully well in Iraq, yet not even Hitler was so draconian as to expose his own troops to the risk of chemical attack or the exposure of depleted uranium. Thus far more than 10,000 American troops who fought in the first Gulf War have died from Gulf War Syndrome, while the House of Representatives voted recently to cut $25 billion from assistance to disabled veterans, according to Veterans For Common Sense. Truly, the pride over our recent victory in Iraq—while cause for celebration in shortening the war and ridding the world of one dictator—does not lessen but increases the possibility of other preemptive attacks against far more dangerous foes. Hitler pulverized Poland and Belgium but wrecked half the world when he continued his mad designs against stronger opponents.

The barbarism of conquered Baghdad mirrors the Nazi blueprint for dealing with foreign art and culture: Loot the art and burn the culture. Yet even The German High command never allowed or conspired in the wholesale eradication of French culture to the degree the American Army appeared to do in Baghdad. Reporter Robert Fisk stated in an interview, We claim that we want to preserve the national heritage of the Iraqi people, and yet my own count of government buildings burning in Baghdad before I left was 158, of which the only building protected by the United States Army and the Marines were the Ministry of Interior . . . and the Ministry of Oil.
Fisk also noted, The looting was on a most detailed, precise and coordinated scale . . . and within a few days those priceless heritage items of Iraq’s history (those not destroyed by systematic arson) were on sale in Europe and in America. I don’t believe that happened by chance.

The Nazis, great plunderers of European art, would have been envious of the speed and cohesion of the entire operation. Understandably, they would have been aghast at the waste, however.

Will our soldiers soon be sporting God With Us belt buckles over protective, Darth Vader body armor, wielding depleted uranium weapons in the Cradle of Civilization? How many My Lai-style atrocities already occurring as I write this—or Beirut-type barracks bombings will we accept before we realize our occupation in Iraq is West Bank supersized? Before we commit too many more American troops to the Middle East—future victims of suicide shock and awe bombings or civilian slaughters like the one that happened in al-Fallujah—God-fearing American citizens should ask whether this Bush administration plans to continue expanding this empire at the point of a gun.

Truthfully, to the rest of the world, we already are the New Nazis.

Douglas Herman, a USAF veteran, served in the Vietnam era. Captain James Herman, the author's father, fought the Nazis during World War II.

God is with U.S
Muhammad’s sword

Analysis Pope Benedict XVI in the service of George W. Bush

By Uri Avner from Israel

Since the days when Roman emperors threw Christians to the lions, the relations between the emperors and the heads of the church have undergone many changes.

Constantine the Great, who became emperor in the year 306 - exactly 1700 years ago - encouraged the practice of Christianity in the empire, which included Palestine. Centuries later, the church split into an Eastern (Orthodox) and a Western (Catholic) part. In the West, the Bishop of Rome, who acquired the title of Pope, demanded that the emperor accept his superiority.

The struggle between the emperors and the popes played a central role in European history and divided the peoples. It knew ups and downs. Some emperors dismissed or expelled a pope, some popes dismissed or excommunicated an emperor. One of the emperors, Henry IV, “walked to Canossa”, standing for three days barefoot in the snow in front of the Pope’s castle, until the Pope deigned to annul his excommunication.

But there were times when emperors and popes lived in peace with each other. We are witnessing such a period today. Between the present Pope, Benedict XVI, and the present emperor, George Bush II, there exists a wonderful harmony. Last week’s speech by the Pope, which aroused a worldwide storm, went well with Bush’s crusade against “Islamofascism”, in the context of the “clash of civilizations”.

In his lecture at a German university, the 265th Pope described what he sees as a huge difference between Christianity and Islam: while Christianity is based on reason, Islam denies it.
While Christians see the logic of God’s actions, Muslims deny that there is any such logic in the actions of Allah.

As a Jewish atheist, I do not intend to enter the fray of this debate. It is much beyond my humble abilities to understand the logic of the Pope. But I cannot overlook one passage, which concerns me too, as an Israeli living near the fault-line of this “war of civilizations”.

In order to prove the lack of reason in Islam, the Pope asserts that the Prophet Muhammad ordered his followers to spread their religion by the sword. According to the Pope, that is unreasonable, because faith is born of the soul, not of the body. How can the sword influence the soul?

To support his case, the Pope quoted - of all people - a Byzantine emperor, who belonged, of course, to the competing Eastern Church. At the end of the 14th century, Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus told of a debate he had - or so he said (its occurrence is in doubt) - with an unnamed Persian Muslim scholar. In the heat of the argument, the emperor (according to himself) flung the following words at his adversary:

Show me just what Mohammed brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached.

These words give rise to three questions: (a) Why did the Emperor say them? (b) Are they true? (c) Why did the present Pope quote them?

When Manuel II wrote his treatise, he was the head of a dying empire. He assumed power in 1391, when only a few provinces of the once illustrious empire remained. These, too, were already under Turkish threat.
At that point in time, the Ottoman Turks had reached the banks of the Danube. They had conquered Bulgaria and the north of Greece, and had twice defeated relieving armies sent by Europe to save the Eastern Empire. On 29 May 1453, only a few years after Manuel’s death, his capital, Constantinople (the present Istanbul), fell to the Turks, putting an end to the empire that had lasted for more than a thousand years.

During his reign, Manuel made the rounds of the capitals of Europe in an attempt to drum up support. He promised to reunite the church. There is no doubt that he wrote his religious treatise in order to incite the Christian countries against the Turks and convince them to start a new crusade. The aim was practical, theology was serving politics.

In this sense, the quote serves exactly the requirements of the present Emperor, George Bush II. He, too, wants to unite the Christian world against the mainly Muslim “Axis of Evil”. Moreover, the Turks are again knocking on the doors of Europe, this time peacefully. It is well known that the Pope supports the forces that object to the entry of Turkey into the European Union.

Is there any truth in Manuel’s argument?

The pope himself threw in a word of caution. As a serious and renowned theologian, he could not afford to falsify written texts. Therefore, he admitted that the Qur’an specifically forbade the spreading of the faith by force. He quoted the second Sura, Verse 256 (strangely fallible, for a pope, he meant Verse 257) which says: “There must be no coercion in matters of faith.”

How can one ignore such an unequivocal statement? The Pope simply argues that this commandment was laid down by the Prophet when he was at the beginning of his career, still weak and powerless, but that later on he ordered the use of the sword in the service of the faith. Such an order does not exist in the Qur’an. True, Muhammad called for the use of the sword in his war against opposing tribes - Christian, Jewish and others - in
Arabia, when he was building his state. But that was a political act, not a religious one; basically a fight for territory, not for the spreading of the faith.

Jesus said: “You will recognize them by their fruits.” The treatment of other religions by Islam must be judged by a simple test: how did the Muslim rulers behave for more than a thousand years, when they had the power to “spread the faith by the sword”?

Well, they just did not.

For many centuries, the Muslims ruled Greece. Did the Greeks become Muslims? Did anyone even try to Islamize them? On the contrary, Christian Greeks held the highest positions in the Ottoman administration. The Bulgarians, Serbs, Romanians, Hungarians and other European nations lived at one time or another under Ottoman rule and clung to their Christian faith. Nobody compelled them to become Muslims and all of them remained devoutly Christian.

True, the Albanians did convert to Islam, and so did the Bosniaks. But nobody argues that they did this under duress. They adopted Islam in order to become favourites of the government and enjoy the fruits.

In 1099, the Crusaders conquered Jerusalem and massacred its Muslim and Jewish inhabitants indiscriminately, in the name of the gentle Jesus. At that time, 400 years into the occupation of Palestine by the Muslims, Christians were still the majority in the country. Throughout this long period, no effort was made to impose Islam on them. Only after the expulsion of the Crusaders from the country, did the majority of the inhabitants start to adopt the Arabic language and the Muslim faith - and they were the forefathers of most of today’s Palestinians.

There no evidence whatsoever of any attempt to impose Islam on the Jews. As is well known, under Muslim rule the Jews of Spain enjoyed a bloom the like of which the Jews did not enjoy
Poets like Yehuda Halevy wrote in Arabic, as did the great Maimonides. In Muslim Spain, Jews were ministers, poets, scientists. In Muslim Toledo, Christian, Jewish and Muslim scholars worked together and translated the ancient Greek philosophical and scientific texts. That was, indeed, the Golden Age. How would this have been possible, had the Prophet decreed the “spreading of the faith by the sword”?

What happened afterwards is even more telling. When the Catholics reconquered Spain from the Muslims, they instituted a reign of religious terror. The Jews and the Muslims were presented with a cruel choice: to become Christians, to be massacred or to leave. And where did the hundreds of thousand of Jews, who refused to abandon their faith, escape? Almost all of them were received with open arms in the Muslim countries. The Sephardi (“Spanish”) Jews settled all over the Muslim world, from Morocco in the west to Iraq in the east, from Bulgaria (then part of the Ottoman Empire) in the north to Sudan in the south. Nowhere were they persecuted. They knew nothing like the tortures of the Inquisition, the flames of the auto-da-fe, the pogroms, the terrible mass-expulsions that took place in almost all Christian countries, up to the Holocaust.

Why? Because Islam expressly prohibited any persecution of the “peoples of the book”. In Islamic society, a special place was reserved for Jews and Christians. They did not enjoy completely equal rights, but almost. They had to pay a special poll tax, but were exempted from military service - a trade-off that was quite welcome to many Jews. It has been said that Muslim rulers frowned upon any attempt to convert Jews to Islam even by gentle persuasion - because it entailed the loss of taxes.

Every honest Jew who knows the history of his people cannot but feel a deep sense of gratitude to Islam, which has protected the Jews for fifty generations, while the Christian world persecuted the Jews and tried many times “by the sword” to get them to abandon their faith.
The story about “spreading the faith by the sword” is an evil legend, one of the myths that grew up in Europe during the great wars against the Muslims - the reconquista of Spain by the Christians, the Crusades and the repulsion of the Turks, who almost conquered Vienna. I suspect that the German Pope, too, honestly believes in these fables. That means that the leader of the Catholic world, who is a Christian theologian in his own right, did not make the effort to study the history of other religions.

Why did he utter these words in public? And why now?

There is no escape from viewing them against the background of the new Crusade of Bush and his evangelist supporters, with his slogans of “Islamofascism” and the “global war on terror” - when “terrorism” has become a synonym for Muslims. For Bush’s handlers, this is a cynical attempt to justify the domination of the world’s oil resources. Not for the first time in history, a religious robe is spread to cover the nakedness of economic interests; not for the first time, a robbers’ expedition becomes a Crusade.

The speech of the Pope blends into this effort. Who can foretell the dire consequences?

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Through a glass, darkly:
How the Christian right is
Re-imagining U.S. history

Jeff Sharlet
December 2006

We keep trying to explain away American fundamentalism. Those of us not engaged personally or emotionally in the biggest political and cultural movement of our times—those on the sidelines of history—keep trying to come up with theories with which to discredit the evident allure of this punishing yet oddly comforting idea of a deity, this strange god. His invisible hand is everywhere, say His citizen-theologians, caressing and fixing every outcome: Little League games, job searches, test scores, the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, the success or failure of terrorist attacks (also known as “signs”), victory or defeat in battle, at the ballot box, in bed. Those unable to feel His soothing touch at moments such as these snort at the notion of a god with the patience or the prurience to monitor every tick and twitch of desire, a supreme being able to make a lion and a lamb cuddle but unable to abide two men kissing. A divine love that speaks through hurricanes. Who would worship such a god? His followers must be dupes, or saps, or fools, their faith illiterate, insane, or misinformed, their strength fleeting, hollow, an aberration. A burp in American history. An unpleasant odor that will pass.

We don’t like to consider the possibility that they are not newcomers to power but returnees, that the revivals that have been sweeping America with generational regularity since its inception are not flare-ups but the natural temperature of the nation. We can’t conceive of the possibility that the dupes, the saps, the fools—the believers—have been with us from the very beginning, that their story about what America once was and should be seems to some great portion of the population more compelling, more just, and more beautiful than the perfunctory processes of secular democracy. Thus we are at a loss to account for this recurring American mood.
Is “fundamentalism” too limited a word for a belief system of such scope and intimacy? Lately, some scholars prefer “maximalism,” a term meant to convey the movement’s ambition to conform every aspect of society to God. In contemporary America—from the Cold War to the Iraq War, the period of the current incarnation’s ascendancy—that means a culture born again in the image of a Jesus strong but tender, a warrior who hates the carnage he must cause, a man-god ordinary men will follow. These are days of the sword, literally; affluent members of the movement gift one another with real blades crafted to medieval standards, a fad inspired by a bestselling book called Wild at Heart. As jargon, then, “maximalism” isn’t bad, an unintended tribute to Maximus, the fighting hero of Gladiator, which is a film celebrated in Christian manhood guides as almost supplemental scripture. But I think “fundamentalism”—coined in 1920 as self-designation by those ready to do “battle royal for the fundamentals,” hushed up now as too crude for today’s chevaliers—still strikes closest to the movement’s desire for a story that never changes, a story to redeem all that seems random, a rock upon which history can rise.

If the term “fundamentalism” endures, the classic means of explaining it away—class envy, sexual anxiety—do not. We cannot, like H. L. Mencken, writing from the Scopes “monkey” trial of 1925, dismiss the Christian right as a carnival of backward buffoons jealous of modernity’s privileges. We cannot, like the Washington Post, in 1993, explain away the movement as “largely poor, uneducated and easy to command.” We cannot, like the writer Theodor Adorno, a refugee from Nazi Germany who sat squinting in the white light of L.A., unhappily scribbling notes about angry radio preachers, attribute radical religion—nascent fascism?—to Freudian yearning for a father figure.

The old theories have failed. The new Christ, fifty years ago no more than a corollary to American power, twenty-five years ago at its vanguard, is now at the very center. His followers are not anxiously awaiting his return at the Rapture; he’s here right now. They’re not envious of the middle class; they are the middle class. They’re not looking for a hero to lead them; they’re building biblical households, every man endowed with “headship” over his own family. They don’t silence sex; they promise sacred sex to those who couple properly—orgasms more
intense for young Christians who wait than those experienced by secular lovers.

Intensity! That’s what one finds within the ranks of the American believers. “This thing is real!” declare our nation’s pastors. It’s all coming together: the sacred and the profane, God’s time and straight time, what theologians and graduates of the new fundamentalist prep schools might call “kairos” and “chronos,” the mystical and the mundane. American fundamentalism—not a political party, not a denomination, not a uniform ideology, but a manifold movement—is moving in every direction all at once, claiming the earth for God’s kingdom, “in the world but not of it” and yet just loving it to death anyway.

The Christian nation of which the movement dreams, a government of those chosen by God but democratically elected by a people who freely accept His will as their own, is a far country. The nation they seek does not, at the moment, exist; perhaps it could in the future. More important to fundamentalism is the belief that it did exist in the American past, not in the history we learn in public school and from PBS and in newsmagazine cover stories on the Founders but in another story, one more biblical, one more mythic and more true. Secularism hides this story, killed the Christian nation, and tried to dispose of the body. Fundamentalism wants to resurrect it, and doing so requires revision: fundamentalists, looking backward, see a different history, remade in the image of the seductive but strict logic of a prime mover that sets things in motion. The cause behind every effect, says fundamentalist science, is God. Even the inexorable facts of math are subject to His decree, as explained in home schooling texts such as Mathematics: Is God Silent? Two plus two is four because God says so. If He chose, it could just as easily be five.

* * *

It would be cliché to quote Orwell here were it not for the fact that fundamentalist intellectuals do so with even greater frequency than those of the left. At a rally to expose the “myth” of church/state separation I attended this spring, Orwell was quoted at me four times, most emphatically by William J. Federer, an encyclopedic compiler of quotations whose America’s God and Country—a collection of apparently theocentric bons mots distilled from the Founders and other great

Federer, a tall, lean, oaken-voiced man, loved talking about history as revelation, nodding along gently to his own lectures. He wore a gray suit, a red tie marred by a stain, and an American flag pin in his lapel. He looked like a congressman, which was what he’d wanted to be: he was a two-time G.O.P. candidate for former House minority leader Dick Gephardt’s St. Louis seat. He lost both times, but the movement considers him a winner—in 2000, he faced Gephardt in one of the nation’s most expensive congressional races, forcing him to spend down his war chest. Federer considered this a providential outcome.

Federer and I were riding together in a white school bus full of Christians from around the country to pray at the site on which the Danbury, Connecticut, First Baptist Church once stood. It was in an 1802 letter to the Danbury Baptists that Thomas Jefferson first used the phrase “wall of separation,” three words upon which the battle over whether the United States is to be a Christian nation or a cosmopolitan one turns. Federer, leaning over the back of his seat as several pastors bent their ears toward his story, wanted me to understand that what Jefferson—notorious deist and author of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom—had really meant to promote was a “one-way wall,” designed to protect the church from the state, not the other way around. Jefferson, Federer told me, was a believer; like all the Founders, he knew that there could be no government without God. Why hadn’t I been taught this? Because I was a victim of godless public schools.

“‘Those who control the present,’” Federer continued his quotation of 1984, “‘control the past.’” He paused and stared at me to make sure I understood the equation. “Orson Welles wrote that,” he said.

* * *

The first pillar of American fundamentalism is Jesus Christ; the second is history; and in the fundamentalist mind the two are converging. Fundamentalism considers itself a faith of basic truths unaltered (if not always acknowledged) since their transmission from Heaven, first through the Bible and second
through what they see as American scripture, divinely inspired, devoutly intended—the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the often overlooked Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which declared “religion” necessary to “good government” and thus to be encouraged through schools. Well into the nineteenth century, most American schoolchildren learned their ABCs from The New-England Primer, which begins with “In Adam’s Fall/We sinned all”—and continues on to “Spiritual Milk for American Babes, Drawn out of the Breasts of both Testaments.” In 1836, McGuffey’s Eclectic Readers began to displace the Primer, selling some 122 million copies of lessons such as “The Bible the Best of Classics” and “Religion the only Basis of Society” during the following century.

It wasn’t until the 1930s, the most irreligious decade in American history, that public education veered away from biblical indoctrination so thoroughly that within a few decades most Americans wrongly believed that the nationalism of manifest destiny—itself thinly veiled Calvinism—rather than open piety was the American educational tradition. The movement now sees that to reclaim America for God, it must first reclaim that tradition for Him, and so it is producing a flood of educational texts with which to wash away the stains of secular history.

Such chronicles are written primarily for the home schoolers and the fundamentalist academies that together account for at least 2 million of the nation’s children, an expanding population that buys more than half a billion dollars of educational materials annually. “Who, knowing the facts of our history,” asks the epigraph to the 2000 edition of The American Republic for Christian Schools, a junior-high textbook, “can doubt that the United States of America has been a thought in the mind of God from all eternity?” So that I would know the facts, I undertook my own course of home schooling. In addition to The American Republic, I read the two-volume teacher’s edition of United States History for Christian Schools, appropriate for eleventh graders, as well as Economics for Christian Schools, and I walked the streets of Brooklyn listening to an eighteen-tape lecture series on America up to 1865 created for Christian college students by Rousas John Rushdoony, the late theologian
who helped launch Christian home schooling and revived the idea of reading American history through a providential lens.¹

I was down by the waterfront, pausing to scribble a note on Alexis de Tocqueville—Rushdoony argues that de Tocqueville was really a fundamentalist Christian disguised as a Frenchman—when a white-and-blue police van rolled up behind me and squawked its siren. There were four officers inside.

“What are you writing?” the driver asked. The other three leaned toward the window.

“Notes,” I said, tapping my headphones.

“Okay. Whatcha listening to?”

I said I didn’t think I had to tell him.

“This is a high-security area,” he said. On the other side of a barbed-wire fence, he said, was a Coast Guard storage facility for deadly chemicals. “Somebody blow that up and boom, bye-bye Brooklyn.” Note-taking in the vicinity might be a problem. “So, I gotta ask again, whatcha listening to?”

How to explain—to the cop who had just clued me in on the ripest terrorist target in Brooklyn—that I was listening to a Christian jihadi lecture on how democracy as practiced in America was defiance of God’s intentions, how God gave to the United States the “irresistible blessings” of biblical capitalism unknown to Europe, and how we have vandalized this with vulgar regulations, how God loves the righteous who fight in His name?

Like this: “American history.”

“Providence” would have been a better word. I was “unschooling” myself, Bill Apelian, director of Bob Jones University’s BJU Press, explained. What seemed to me a self-directed course of study was, in fact, the replacement of my secular education with a curriculum guided by God. When BJU Press, one of the biggest Christian educational publishers, started out thirty years ago, science was their most popular subject, and it could be summed up in one word: “created.” Now American history is on the rise. “We call it Heritage Studies,” Apelian said, and explained its growing centrality: “History is God’s working in man.”

My unschooling continued. I read the works of Rushdoony’s most influential student, the late Francis Schaeffer, an American
whose Swiss mountain retreat, L’Abri (“The Shelter”), served as a Christian madrasah at which a generation of fundamentalist intellectuals studied an American past “Christian in memory.” And I read Schaeffer’s disciples: Tim LaHaye, who, besides coauthoring the hugely popular Left Behind series of novels, has published an equally fantastical work about history called Mind Siege. And David Barton, the president of a history ministry called WallBuilders (as in, to keep the heathen out). And Charles Colson, who, in titles such as How Now Shall We Live? (a play on Schaeffer’s How Should We Then Live? The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture) and Against the Night: Living in the New Dark Ages, searches from Plato to the American Founders to fellow Watergate felon G. Gordon Liddy for the essence of the Christian “worldview,” a vision of an American future so entirely Christ-filtered that beside it “theocracy”—the clumsy governance of priestly bureaucrats—seems a modest ambition. “Theocentric” is the preferred term, Randall Terry, another Schaeffer disciple who went on to found Operation Rescue, told me. “That means you view the world in His terms. Theocentrics don’t believe man can create law. Man can only embrace or reject law.”

History matters not just for its progression of “fact, fact, fact,” Michael McHugh, a pioneer of fundamentalist education, told me, but for “key personalities.” In Francis Schaeffer’s telling of U.S. history, for instance, John Witherspoon—the only pastor to have signed the Declaration of Independence—looms as large as Thomas Jefferson, because it was Witherspoon who infused the founding with the idea of “Lex Rex,” “law is king” (divine law, that is), derived from the fiercest Protestant reformers of the seventeenth century, men who considered John Calvin’s Geneva too gentle for God. Key personalities are often soldiers, such as General Douglas MacArthur. After the war, McHugh explained, MacArthur ruled Japan “according to Christian principles” for five years. “To what end?” I asked. Japan is hardly any more Christian for this divine intervention. “The Japanese people did capture a vision,” McHugh said. Not the whole Christian deal, but one of its essential foundations. “MacArthur set the stage for free enterprise,” he explained. With Japan committed to capitalism, the United States was free to turn its attention toward the Soviet Union. The general’s providential flanking maneuver, you might say, helped America win the Cold War.
But one needn’t be a flag officer to be used by God. Another favorite of Christian history, said McHugh, was Sergeant Alvin York, a farmer from Pall Mall, Tennessee, who in World War I turned his trigger finger over to God and became perhaps the greatest Christian sniper of the twentieth century.

“God uses ordinary people,” McHugh said. Anyone might be a key personality. The proper study of history, he explained, includes the student as a main character, an approach he described as “relational,” a buzzword in contemporary fundamentalism that denotes a sort of pulsing circuit of energy between, say, pleasant Betty Johnson, your churchy neighbor, and the awesome realm of supernatural events in which her real life occurs. There, Jesus is as real to Betty as she is to you, and so is Sergeant York, General MacArthur, and even George Washington, who, as father of our nation, is almost a fourth member of the Holy Trinity, a mindbender made possible through God’s math.

You may have seen his ghostly form, along with that of Abraham Lincoln, flanking an image of George W. Bush deep in prayer in a lithograph distributed by the Presidential Prayer Team, a five-year-old outfit that claims to have organized nearly 3 million prayer warriors on the president’s behalf. To wit:

In a similar image pasted onto billboards by a group called American Destiny, a rouge-cheeked Washington kneels in prayer with an anonymous soldier in fatigues—just another everyday hero. That could be you, the key-man theory of fundamentalist history proposes. It’s like the Rapture, when the saved shall rise together, but it’s happening right now: George Washington and Betty Johnson and you, floating up toward victory with arms intertwined, key personalities in Christian history.

1- For instance, the “Protestant wind” with which, according to the eleventh-grade text, God helped the British defeat the Spanish Armada so that the New World would not be overly settled by agents of the Vatican.

http://www.harpers.org/archive/2006/12/0081322
Taking Over the Republican Party

"The Grand Old Party is more religious cult than political organization."

President of the Alamo City Republican Women's club, 1993

Spiritual Warfare

"We are not coming up against just human beings to beat them in elections. We're going to be coming up against spiritual warfare."
(Pat Robertson at a 1994 Christian Coalition national strategy conference)

"By mobilizing eager volunteers down to the precinct (and local church) level and handing out 33 million voter guides -- often in church pews -- prior to last November's election, the Coalition is credited with providing the winning margin for perhaps half the Republicans' 52-seat gain in the House of Representatives and a sizable portion of their nine-seat pickup in the Senate." (Time, May 15, 1995)


Journalists attended Christian Coalition and Republican Party events in the early nineties documenting the tactics of the newly formed organization. Reports appeared in newspapers around the country detailing the take over of local Republican Party committees, and efforts by moderate Republicans to form competing entities. Following are some of those articles.

"WITH GOD AS THEIR CO-PILOT" by Joe Conason, Playboy, March, 1993

The rich Republicans of San Antonio's Bexar County consider themselves very conservative. And they are. But the politics of this new crowd gave them a bad scare. Not long after the Christian rightists staged their coup, the president of the Alamo City Republican Women's club just gave up and quit.
"The so-called Christian activists have finally gained control," she explained in her resignation letter, "and the Grand Old Party is more religious cult than political organization.

Next came the Pennsylvania primary ... the shock came the next day, when the votes for obscure Republican state committee positions were tallied. From nowhere, conservative Christians had grabbed dozens of seats. The militant newcomers are now close to controlling the Republican Party in Pennsylvania, too.

In June, in the San Diego County towns of Lemon Grove and El Cajon, a slate of "pro-family" Christian right activists financed by a group of conservative businessmen swept the Republican primary for all of the open council seats, along with a slew of state assembly seats. On the same day, several hundred miles to the north in Santa Clara Country, another slate of "biblically oriented" candidates--committed to the death penalty for such sins as homosexuality and abortion--captured 14 of 20 seats on the Republican county central committee. The GOP apparatus in the nation's most populous state is within a few votes of being absolutely controlled by the Christian right.

Across the nation, in primary after primary, stunned Republican leaders echoed the lament of one longtime party activist in Texas, a personal friend of Barbara Bush, who suddenly found herself ousted by the fundamentalists. "They organized and we didn't," she said. "I didn't think it was going to be this bad.

"The Fifteen Percent Solution: How the Christian Right Is Building From Below To Take Over From Above" by Greg Goldin was originally published in the Nation in 1993. Quoting moderate Republicans from Goldin's article:

What the Christian right spends a lot of time doing," says Marc Wolin, a moderate Republican who ran unsuccessfully for Congress from San Francisco last year, "is going after obscure party posts. They try to control the party apparatus in each county. We have a lot to fear from these people. They want to set up a theocracy in America.

According to Craig Berkman, former chairman of the Republican Party in Oregon:

They have acquired a very detailed and accurate understanding of how political parties are organized. Parties are very susceptible to being taken over by ideologues because lower
party offices have no appeal to the vast majority of our citizenry. Many precincts are represented by no one. If you decide all of a sudden because it's your Christian duty to become a precinct representative, you only need a few votes to get elected.

Increasingly, they have the key say-so on who will be a delegate at the national convention, and who will write the party platform and nominate the presidential candidate. In a state like Oregon, with 600,000 registered Republicans, it is possible for 2000 or 3000 people to control the state party apparatus. If they are outvoted by one or two votes, parliamentary manipulations begin, and after two or three hours of discussion about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin, the more reasonable people with other things to do leave, and in the wee hours of the morning, things are decided. That's how they achieve their objectives.


When I slipped into the national leadership meeting of Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition, I thought I knew what to expect. I'd written many stories about the Religious Right. But I was unprepared for what I saw, heard and felt inside Robertson's Virginia Beach, Va., headquarters for two days in November during the "Road to Victory" Conference and Strategy Briefing.

The GOP's Religious War, Joan Lowy of Scripps-Howard News Service:

Until last spring, Jo Martin was a relatively non-political Houston housewife. Today she's on the front lines of a religious war that has fractured the Republican Party. Martin, a 52-year-old mother of three, and her husband David, a stockbroker, are lifelong Republicans but hadn't been active in party politics for many years until they happened to attend a local GOP meeting last spring.

They were appalled by what they found. The party apparatus had been taken over by religious activists intent on bringing "biblical principles" to government: outlawing abortion, ostracizing homosexuals and teaching creationism in public schools, among other things. "We honest to goodness felt like we
had fallen through a time warp into a Nazi brown-shirt meeting," Martin said.

Inside the Covert Coalition, Church and State, Frederick Clarkson, November, 1992.

The Great Right Hope by Frederick Clarkson documents how Dr. Steven Hotze out-shouted the GOP Chair to take over the leadership of the Harris County (home to Houston) political apparatus:

The wildest dreams of the Far Right in America may actually be within their reach - control of the Republican Party.

The Great Right Hope talks about Dr. Stephen Hotze. In 1990, Dr. Bruce Prescott received a video from Dr. Hotze:

In February 1990 I received an unsolicited video in the mail. The video came from a Dr. Stephen Hotze and was entitled "Restoring America: How You Can Impact Civil Government." Filmed at a church in my neighborhood, I recognized the actors as the pastor and congregants of an Independent Fundamental Baptist church (the Jerry Falwell kind). The video was a guide on how to 1) take over a Republican Party precinct meeting, 2) elect "Christian" delegates to the GOP District meeting, and 3) put planks supporting the theocratic agenda of Christian Reconstructionism into the party platform. more

San Jose Mercury News, 1992, Two articles -- one before the election, one after:

A group dedicated to making the Bible the law of the land has quietly positioned itself to take over the Republican Party's power structure in Santa Clara County.

The 17 Christian right candidates for the Republican Central Committee appear on a mailer put out by a Tehama County group called Citizens for Liberty. The flier says the candidates advocate "traditional family values, more jobs, lower taxes, welfare reform and choice in education."

But at least some have a more sweeping agenda ... Some see takeover plans. More liberal Republicans say the Central Committee campaign is part of a widespread "stealth" effort to take over America by starting with little-noticed local races. They cite elections in San Diego County two years ago, when 60 of 90 Christian right candidates for low-level offices won election, largely by campaigning through conservative churches.
"Clearly the strategy is to control the central committees and then use the central committees to give credibility to their candidates," said Luis Buhler...

A fundraising letter ... includes "a call for the death penalty for abortion, adultery and unrepentant homosexuality."

Many of these links come from The Activists Handbook, by Frederick Clarkson and Skipp Porteous of the (no longer active) Institute for First Amendment Studies. Articles from the Handbook have been scanned for this site because they are not otherwise available on the web. These articles document the activities of the Christian Coalition from 1991-1993 as they began to take "working control" of the Republican Party.

To read about the covert tactics of the Christian Reconstruction movement, click here.

What happened between 1964 and 1994?

A group of Republican strategists who had worked on Barry Goldwater's 1964 presidential campaign were worried. Goldwater had been soundly defeated, and the strategists feared that the base of the Republican Party -- primarily southern segregationists and the very wealthy -- was too narrow. So they set out to expand the base calling themselves the New Right. Goldwater was not part of the New Right.

One member of the New Right, Republican Strategist Paul Weyrich, founded the Heritage Foundation in 1973 -- a think tank to promote the ideas of the New Right. Weyrich also founded ALEC, The American Legislative Exchange Council in 1973 to coordinate the work of Religious Right state legislators. ALEC initially positioned itself as a counterweight to liberal foundations and think tanks, focusing on social issues like abortion and the Equal Rights Amendment, but became a magnet for corporate lobbyists.

ALEC gives business a direct hand in writing bills that are considered in state assemblies nationwide. Funded primarily by large corporations, industry groups, and conservative foundations -- including R.J. Reynolds, Koch Industries, and the American Petroleum Institute -- the group takes a chain-restaurant approach to public policy, supplying precooked McBills to state lawmakers. Since most legislators are in session only part of the year and often have no staff to do independent research, they're quick to swallow what ALEC serves up. In 2000, according to
the council, members introduced more than 3,100 bills based on its models, passing 450 into law. Ghostwriting the Law, Karen Olson, Mother Jones, Sept.Oct. 2002

In 1979 Weyrich coined the term "Moral Majority." Their goal was to politicize members of fundamentalist, Pentecostal and charismatic churches - a constituency that had been basically apolitical.

Not all members of fundamentalist, Pentecostal and charismatic churches support the Religious Right, but those were the groups targeted by the New Right. And some members of churches outside of those mentioned support the Religious Right, while many other Christian leaders strongly oppose them.

1980 -- A Watershed Year

Paul Weyrich, speaking in Dallas in 1980, captured the spirit of this new movement. He said, "We are talking about Christianizing America. We are talking about simply spreading the gospel in a political context."

Jerry Falwell, who became the leader of the Moral Majority said: "get them saved, get them Baptized, and get them registered." (These two quotes can be heard on the video produced by People for the American Way called Life And Liberty for All Who Believe.)

thousands of fundamentalist preachers participated in political training seminars that year, and by June, more than two million voters had been registered Republican. Their goal was to register 5 million by November. In the 1980 elections, the newly politicized Religious Right succeeded in unseating five of the most liberal Democrat incumbents in the U.S. Senate, and provided the margin that helped Ronald Reagan defeat Jimmy Carter. The year 1980 was the year that a sleeping giant was awakened, and the political landscape of the United States was dramatically altered.

Many other organizations formed in the eighties. The Reverend Timothy LaHaye founded the American Coalition for Traditional Values -- a network of 110,000 churches committed to getting Christian candidates elected to office.

In 1980 LaHaye was present at the birth of the Moral Majority and agreed to serve on the organization's first board of directors.
under the tutelage of the Rev. Jerry Falwell, with whom he remains close today.

A year later, LaHaye was co-founder and first president of the Council for National Policy (CNP), a secretive umbrella group of far right leaders who meet regularly to plot strategy designed to advance a theocratic agenda.

"No one individual has played a more central organizing role in the religious right than Tim LaHaye," says Larry Eskridge of the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals, calling him "the most influential American evangelical of the last twenty-five years." (Rolling Stone, January 28, 2004.)

In 1979 Beverly and Tim LaHaye founded Concerned Women for American (CWA) claiming a membership of 600,000. With prayer and action meetings, the women were, and still are a formidable lobbying force. CWA was successful in defeating the Equal Rights Amendment, and their lawyers won an important textbook case in 1987 to combat Secular Humanism in the schools. That case was later overturned by the higher courts.

James Dobson, host of the radio show Focus on the Family, founded the Family Research Council in 1983 to act as the political lobbying arm of his radio show. Because an estimated four million listeners tune into his radio show daily, the Family Research Council has remained a formidable lobbying organization.

And the highly secretive Council for National Policy was founded in 1981 to conduct three-times-a-year strategy sessions. The CNP was and still is an umbrella organization of right-wing leaders who gather regularly to plot strategy, share ideas and fund causes and candidates to advance the theocratic agenda.

A Short-Lived Sigh of Relief

In 1988 Pat Robertson ran for President in the Republican Primaries and lost to George Bush Sr. In 1989 the Moral Majority disbanded. A lot of people concerned about the Religious Right breathed a deep sigh of relief. But there was one strange event that should have been a warning sign.

Pat Robertson beat Vice President George Bush Sr. in the Iowa Republican caucuses. How did Pat Robertson beat the Vice President in that state? Members of his campaign worked
precinct by precinct to take over the party leadership at the local level until, eventually, they controlled the state party apparatus. In March, 1986, I (Joan Bokaer) was on a speaking tour in Iowa and received a copy of the following memo Robertson had distributed to the Iowa Republican County Caucus:

"How to Participate in a Political Party

Rule the world for God.

Give the impression that you are there to work for the party, not push an ideology.

Hide your strength.

Don't flaunt your Christianity.

Christians need to take leadership positions. Party officers control political parties and so it is very important that mature Christians have a majority of leadership positions whenever possible, God willing."

As can be seen from the documentation on this page, one of their tactics was to tie up the meetings for hours until people left. Then they appointed themselves leaders and made key decisions. Once they took over the local leadership throughout the State of Iowa, they could control the state party apparatus. After their success in the Iowa '88 primary, they used the same tactic in several other states -- precinct by precinct.


The Decade of Pat Robertson

In 1990, Pat Robertson laid out his key organizing principle in his book The Millennium:

"With the apathy that exists today, a well organized minority can influence the selection of candidates to an astonishing degree."

Robertson said to the Denver Post in 1992,

"We want...as soon as possible to see a majority of the Republican Party in the hands of pro-family Christians..."

Robertson hired Ralph Reed as the Christian Coalition's political mastermind. To get their candidates elected Reed and Robertson taught them to use stealth: avoid publicity, stay out of debates, and work below the radar screen. Don't call attention to yourself.
And then Christian Coalition campaigned on their behalf exclusively in fundamentalist, Pentecostal and Charismatic churches.

While candidates avoided the limelight, Christian Coalition Family Values Voter Guides were distributed to participating churches. Church telephone directories were used for "get-out-the-vote" telephone banks.

1994: A Watershed Year

By election time in 1994 Christian Coalition had distributed 40 million copies of the "Family Values Voter's Guide" in more than 100,000 churches nationwide. 1994 was the year Republicans took control of Congress for the first time in 40 years. It was also the year that Republicans made a huge gain in State Legislatures.

The purpose of focusing on state legislative races was to enable Republicans to gerrymander Congressional Districts. To be sure, both parties have used the practice of gerrymandering to their advantage, but, in recent years, Republicans have elevated this practice to new heights.

Up until 1994, Democrats held strong majorities in both houses of most State Legislatures. In 1992 Democrats had majorities in both bodies of twenty-five legislatures, Republicans eight. In 1994, Democrats had majorities in eighteen, Republicans, nineteen. By 2003, Democrats had sixteen, Republicans, twenty-one.

Ralph Reed Time Magazine, in May, 1995, called Ralph Reed "The Right Hand of God" and credited the Christian Coalition with giving the Republicans their victories. Out of forty-five new members in the U.S. House of Representatives and nine in the U.S. Senate in 1994, roughly half were Christian Coalition candidates.

1996, 45 million voter guides were sent out.

In 2000, 75 million voter guides were sent out to support George Bush.

The organization appears to have lost much of its momentum, but it changed the course of American politics. The candidates it has supported now reside in the U.S. Congress, state legislatures, the courts, state boards of education and more. And most of the Republican leadership of the U.S. Congress consistently receive 100% scores from Christian Coalition. Thirty-eight out of fifty-two Republicans in the U.S. Senate received 100% scorecards from Family Research Council in 2003 and forty-one out of fifty-one Senators received 100% scorecards from Christian Coalition in 2004.

To see Senate scorecards produced by the League of Conservation Voters, a consortium of environmental organizations, compared to the scorecards produced by three organizations that promote the theocratic right -- the Christian Coalition, the Family Research Council, and the Eagle Forum -- click here. (These tables were provided by Glenn Scherer, October, 2004.)

Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS), speaking at a Christian Coalition gathering in October, 2002 said about the voter guides:

"As a candidate, I could see my polling numbers shoot up as those voter guides went out. I appreciate it and they work."

Bush-Cheney Campaign, 2004

Ralph Reed, former Executive Director of the Christian Coalition, relied on stealth tactics throughout the nineteen nineties. He no longer needs to use stealth. As a senior official of the Bush-Cheney '04 campaign, Reed attended the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention to ask pastors explicitly for their help in winning votes.

Mr. Reed delivered his remarks at a Bush-Cheney "pastors reception," paid for by the Bush campaign. The hosts were the departing president of the Southern Baptists and three other prominent leaders, and the reception was in a conference room of a hotel adjacent to the convention. As the pastors came in, a campaign aide collected about 100 signatures and addresses from ministers pledging to endorse Mr. Bush's re-election publicly, to "host a citizenship Sunday for voter registration," to "identify someone who will help in voter registration and outreach" and to organize a " 'party for the president' with other pastors" on specific dates closer to the election. (New York Times, June 18, 2004)
Biblical Law

Dominists seek to re-interpret the U.S. Constitution so that it conforms to their Biblical Worldview. Mathew Staver, founder of Liberty Counsel declares it's time to get Jesus into the judicial mix.

"Now we're working to establish Liberty University School of Law, which will open its doors in August 2004. We are going to teach lawyers to think in a biblical, Christian worldview."

According to dominionists, the Bible has supremacy over the U.S. Constitution. In a 2002 address to the Society of Catholic Social Scientists in Ann Arbor, Mich., federal judge James Leon Holmes, appointed in July, 2004, affirmed the supremacy of the Bible:

Christianity transcends the political order and cannot be subordinated to the political order.

The principle of separation of church and state has no place in his vision for the future:

The final reunion of Church and state will take place at the end of time, when Christ will claim definitive political power of all creation, inaugurating an entirely new society based on the supernatural.

Dominionist Dream: Repeal the 1st Amendment, Talk To Action, December 16, 2005

Come the Theocracy, Whose Bible Will Rule?, Talk To Action, December 30, 2005

Legal Strategies


God and Caesar in America, Gary Hart, Talk To Action, November 29, 2005:

The New American Theocracy requires judges who will go along and who will continue going along for the remainder of their lives. The ultimate goal is a Supreme Court philosophically attuned to the principles and purposes of those seeking a state that incorporates and promotes their religious beliefs. Only then will the presidential decrees and compliant congressional actions sought by the right be safe from assault by a judiciary dedicated
to the proposition that the law is established within the
framework of the United States Constitution, not the Bible.

Court-Stripping

Since the Supreme Court decision Marbury v. Madison in
1803, it has been clearly established that the courts have the
ultimate power to interpret the Constitution. But right-wing
ideologues, unhappy with some of the courts' rulings, have begun
to question this principle as part of a broader war on the federal
judiciary. The amendment that passed this week reflected an
effort to use Congress's power to stop the courts from standing
up for the First Amendment and other constitutional principles.
(New York Times, June 18, 2005: Congress Assaults the Courts,
Again)
The United States Constitution calls for three branches of
government. In order to impose their agenda on the country,
Religious Right legislators have been attempting to undermine
one of the branches of government -- an independent judiciary.
Christian Coalition activists "absolutely despise the federal
courts," according to author and journalist Rob Boston who
attended the Coalition's most recent Road to Victory gathering.
And they want their fundamentalist religious viewpoint to be
the law of the land for everyone.
Rob Boston reports in Church and State, November, 2004:

Despite the Christian Coalition's best efforts, those pesky
federal courts keep upholding the Bill of Rights and the
separation of church and state. But not to worry, the group has a
plan to fix that: take away the right of the courts to hear those
cases in the first place. This bold gambit, called "court
stripping," is all the rage among the Religious Right these days.
Katherine Yurica has transcripts of Pat Robertson's television
show, the 700 Club from 1985 where he explained his strategy to
strip the federal judiciary of its constitutional powers:

Roberston wanted to reduce or eliminate the power of the
judiciary. He denied that the Constitution provides a system of
checks and balances between three separate and equal branches
of government...

In fact, Robertson went further: he denied that the judiciary is
a co-equal branch of the government. Instead, he saw the
judiciary as a department of the legislative branch, which he
believed was the dominant center of power in the nation. His reasoning went like this: Since Congress has complete authority to establish the lower federal courts and to establish "the appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court," the court system is necessarily subordinate to the legislative. Robertson's idea was that congress could control the court by using its power to intimidate. For example, he said, "Congress could say There's a whole class of cases you can't hear' and there's nobody can do anything about it!"

Representative John Hostetler, R-IN, said at the recent Christian Coalition gathering:

"When the courts make unconstitutional decisions, we should not enforce them," he told attendees. "Federal courts have no army or navy.. The court can opine, decide, talk about, sing, whatever it wants to do. We're not saying they can't do that. At the end of the day, we're saying the court can't enforce its opinions."

The Hostettler Amendment and Marriage Protection Act

Hostettler authored two court-stripping bills that passed the House. On July 23, 2003, the U.S. House of Representatives approved by a vote of 260-161 an amendment to an appropriations bill that bars the use of federal funds to enforce the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decision that ordered the removal of a two-ton Ten Commandments monument from the Judicial Building in Montgomery, Alabama.

One year later, almost to the day, he drafted the Marriage Protection Act. On July 23, 2004, with strong backing from the Bush administration, the Marriage Protection Act was adopted in the U.S. House of Representatives 233 to 194. The bill would strip the federal courts of jurisdiction over legal challenges to the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), a federal law passed in 1996 that purports to leave the recognition of same-sex marriage entirely to each state.

To read comments on the Marriage Protection Act, Click here.

More Court Stripping Bills

On September 23, 2004, the U.S. House voted 247-173 to approve the "Pledge Protection Act," The measure, H.R. 2028, bans all federal courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, from considering constitutional challenges to the Pledge. "The federal courts should be open to all Americans seeking protection of
their constitutional rights," said Barry Lynn of Americans United.


Some ideas put forth by the Religious Right and its allies in Congress are so breathtakingly wrong-headed that it is difficult to know where to begin criticizing them.

From The New York Times, May 10, 2005:

Representative F. James Sensenbrenner Jr., chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, said Monday that the committee was considering the creation of an "office of inspector general for the federal judiciary" to watch over the courts.

Actually, It's Judge-Busters, Los Angeles Times, May 20, 2005
An Attack on the Courts, Washington Post, July 18, 2005
Rehnquist Resumes His Call for Judicial Independence, New York Times, January 1, 2005
Why Dominionists Despise the Federal Courts

Federal courts ordered Justice Roy Moore to remove his two-ton, Ten Commandment monument from the rotunda of the Alabama Supreme Court. In addition, a federal judge in Chesterfield County, Virginia, supported the right of a Wiccan to lead a prayer at the Board of Supervisors meetings where only Christian prayers were allowed. In another case, a federal judge ruled that the state of Louisiana's Abstinence-only sex education program had to stop proselytizing or risk defunding.

The Supreme Court ruling, Locke v. Davey, was a great victory for separation of church and state. It was a 7-2 decision, in which Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist authored the opinion. According to Barry Lynn, Executive Director of America's United, "This was staggering news. The chief justice is rarely a defender of separation of church and state." To weaken the judiciary, the religious right has been attempting to strip the U.S. federal courts of the powers.

Intimidating Judges click here

The Constitution Restoration Act of 2004, is the ultimate court-stripping measure introduced into both houses of Congress on February 11, 2004. Contrary to the intentions of the framers of the U.S. Constitution who wrote a Godless Constitution, it includes the acknowledgment of God as the sovereign source of
law, and threatens with "impeachment" and "conviction" judges who uphold church state separation. To read the Thomas Report from the Library of Congress click here.

This link lists the thirty-nine original cosponsors of the Constitution Restoration Act as of September 22, 2004. (Two have since retired.)

To read about the Constitution Restoration Act, 2005, click here. The sponsor is Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL). For the five cosponsors, click here.

From the Vermont Guardian, May 18, 2005

The Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments are the foundation of Biblical Law, so placing them in public buildings has great symbolic value. A Presbyterian Minister by the name of Rousas Rushdooney spearheaded the Christian Reconstruction movement when his book, The Institutes of Biblical Law, was published in 1973. The three-volume, 1,894 page treatise examines each commandment of the decalogue in detail, showing the application and implications of each.

A Constitution that conforms to Biblical Law will rely on the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament as its guiding source. Dominionist lawmakers are trying to pass legislation in various state legislatures that would allow government posting of the Ten Commandments in public buildings.

One such bill, The Ten Commandments Defense Act, H.R. 2045, has 116 sponsors in the U.S. House of Representatives. Rep. Robert B. Aderholt, (R-Ala.) author of the bill said during an interview with TV preacher Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network, "The Supreme Court does not always have the final authority over the interpretation of the Constitution." At last reading, the bill had 116 sponsors.

Alabama Supreme Court Justice Roy Moore gained notoriety by placing a granite monument of the Ten Commandments, weighing 5,280 pounds, in the rotunda of the Alabama Supreme Court building. The higher courts ruled that the monument violated the U.S. Constitution.

It was removed from the Alabama Supreme Court, and Judge Moore was removed from office for refusing to take out the monument.
To read about the U.S. Supreme Court rulings on two Ten Commandments cases, June 27, 2005, click here. To read articles about that ruling, click here.

Enforcing Biblical Law

Journalist Frederick Clarkson reports on the views of Rev. Joseph Morecraft, pastor of the Reconstructionist Chalcedon Presbyterian Church in Marietta, Georgia:

"In his book, and especially when speaking at the 1993 Biblical World View and Christian Education Conference, Morecraft discussed with relish the police power of the state. His belief in the persecution of nonbelievers and those who are insufficiently orthodox is crystal clear. Morecraft described democracy as "mob rule," and stated that the purpose of "civil government" is to "terrorize evil doers... to be an avenger!" he shouted, "To bring down the wrath of God to bear on all those who practice evil!"

"And how do you terrorize an evil doer?" he asked. "You enforce Biblical law!" The purpose of government, he said, is "to protect the church of Jesus Christ," and, "Nobody has the right to worship on this planet any other God than Jehovah. And therefore the state does not have the responsibility to defend anybody's pseudo-right to worship an idol!" "There ain't no such thing" as religious pluralism, he declared. Further, "There has never been such a condition in the history of mankind. There is no such place now. There never will be."


Biblical Law is enforced through legislation to ban same sex marriage. It was also enforced by punishing a President for adultery. (Read when President Bill Clinton was impeached)

U.S. Senator Rick Santorum

United States Senator Rick Santorum reflected Biblical Law in an interview with the Associated Press in April, 2003, discussing a case before the Supreme Court which challenged Texas anti-sodomy laws. On June 26 the Supreme Court declared anti-sodomy laws unconstitutional. Santorum said:

If the Supreme Court says you have the right to consensual sex in your own home, then you have the right to bigamy, you have
the right to polygamy, you have the right to incest, you have the right to adultery.

When Senator Santorum lumped homosexuality with incest and adultery, he was suggesting that consenting adult homosexuals, acting in the privacy of their own homes, are criminals. Criminals go to prison. And Santorum doesn’t stop with homosexuality. Adulterers should go to prison as well. Who in the United States wants to put homosexuals and adulterers in prison? The same people who would impeach a President for sinning against the Ten Commandments -- those who advocate Biblical law.

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia

Supreme Court Justice Scalia is the person who could have the greatest impact in helping the Religious Right establish its sovereignty. President Bush has talked about Scalia as the justice he admires the most.

In an article published in First Things, a journal of religion and public life, in May, 2002, Scalia quotes St. Paul:

"...Government...derives its moral authority from God. It is the minister of God with powers to "avenge" to "execute wrath" including even wrath by the sword (which is unmistakably a reference to the death penalty)."

Scalia appears hostile to Democracy: The "consensus" [that government is the minister of God]

"has been upset, I think by the emergence of democracy...It is much more difficult to see the hand of God...behind the fools and rogues...we ourselves elect of our own free will."

He sees democracy as obscuring the divine authority:

"the reaction of people of faith to this tendency of democracy to obscure divine authority...should [be] the resolution to combat it as effectively as possible."

Scalia views the United States Constitution as "dead" rather than as a living document that evolves along with society.

"...the Constitution that I interpret is not living but dead...It means today not what current society (much less the Court) thinks it ought to mean, but what it meant when it was adopted."

This view of the US Constitution as "dead" could become the basis of a strategy to dismantle the separation of church and state. In a speech on January 12, 2003, at a Religious Freedom
Day event, Scalia said that the principle was not imbedded in the constitution and therefore should be added democratically, which means through a constitutional amendment. An amendment to the Constitution on church-state separation would be impossible to achieve in the current political climate, so the argument is disingenuous.

Scalia, speaking to a crowd of about 150 in Fredericksburg to mark a "Religious Freedom Day," asserted that America's Founding Fathers never meant to "exclude God from the public forums and from political life."

"Scalia sounds like a TV preacher, not a Supreme Court justice," said the Rev. Barry W. Lynn, executive director of Americans United. "His job is to uphold the Constitution, not promote religiosity."

Scalia, States Rights, and "Legitimate Medical Procedures", Talk To Action, January 23, 2006

Supreme Zealotry (Post editorial about Supreme Court Justice Scalia), Washington Post, March 8, 2005

Beyond the Duck Blind, New York Times, March 15, 2004:

The swelling controversy [about duck hunting with Dick Cheney when a case was pending about Cheney's energy commission] has exposed other less egregious but still troubling outside activities by Justice Scalia. The Los Angeles Times recently reported that he delivered a speech to a $150-a-plate dinner of an anti-gay advocacy group in Philadelphia even as the Supreme Court was deliberating in the Texas sodomy case last year.

From Salon.com:

Scalia was a centerpiece of the 2000 presidential race. Candidate Bush had named him as a model of the sort of judge he'd like to appoint ... Three and a half years into the Bush presidency, Antonin Scalia is an increasingly marginalized player on the U.S. Supreme Court.

Scalia To Synagogue - Jews Are Safer With Christians In Charge, from CommonDreams.org, December 2, 2004

That Scalia Charm, New York Times, March 21, 2005

Psst ... Justice Scalia ... You Know, You're an Activist Judge, Too, New York Times, April 19, 2005

The Death Penalty
Scalia's article in First Things is about the death penalty. He writes:

"Indeed, it seems to me that the more Christian a country is, the less likely it is to regard the death penalty as immoral."
The textbook, America's Providential History views the death penalty as "the backbone of civil government." The book goes back to the time God brought Noah through the flood:

"When God brings Noah through the flood to a new earth, He re-establishes the Dominion Mandate but now delegates to man the responsibility for governing other men in order to protect human life. He does this by instituting capital punishment - the backbone of civil government."

Capital crimes in a theocracy, Theocracy Alert, July 27, 2005
For information on President Bush's judicial nominees, click here.

Judicial Tyranny
"NPR's Barbara Bradley Hagerty reports on religious conservative activists' frustration with the judiciary. They often see state and federal judges as the biggest obstacles to enacting societal change -- and they're trying to find new ways to go around the courts." Go to an NPR report called, "Religious Right Chafes at Judiciary Restraint."

Religious Liberty
The principle of religious liberty has become the legal tool used to make the U.S. Constitution conform to Biblical Law. To the framers of the Constitution, religious liberty was a very important principle. It meant the freedom from the tyranny of a dominant religion. They were reacting to the dominance of the Anglican Church in England at that time. Today, Religious Liberty has come to mean the freedom of one religion to impose its beliefs on others. Teacher-led school prayer in the classroom is one way to achieve religious dominance.

Arguments for "religious liberty" are borrowed from the ACLU. ACLJ Does the name in the picture remind you of a familiar organization? The ACLJ, which sounds a lot like the ACLU, is fashioned after the American Civil Liberties Union. The ACLJ was founded by Pat Robertson to fight for "Religious Liberty." Like the ACLU, the ACLJ basis its arguments on the first
amendment. The Houses of Worship Political Speech Protection Act, which the ACLJ helped draft, is about "freedom of speech." The Alliance Defense Fund is a conservative law firm specializing in First Amendment issues. The firm is representing Tom Vail, whose book promoting a Creationist version of geology is being sold at book stores in the Grand Canyon.

The Rutherford Institute is one of a number of organizations specializing in religious liberty legal cases. In 1982 John Whitehead, its founder and President said,

"the challenge of the Christian attorney is to be a vocal, dynamic spokesman for the true legal profession - the one with Christ at its center, and stop at nothing less than reclaiming the whole system."

If you read the web site of the Rutherford Institute, its mission sounds similar to the ACLU. It's not easy to know that the Rutherford Institute was tied to the Christian Reconstruction movement in its early years, and that Rushdooney was a favorite speaker and sat on their board. Chip Berlet reports in thr Public Eye:

"The politics of the Rutherford Institute, at least until recently, represented a form of theocratic Christianity that characterizes the hard right of the evangelical world. There is little reason to believe that a change in tone means a change in the underlying philosophy."

Rushdooney’s son-in-law, Gary North, is a prolific Christian Reconstruction writer, and founder of the Institute for Christian Economics. He wrote in Christianity and Civilization, Spring, 1982, on the subject of religious liberty.

"So let us be blunt about it: we must use the doctrine of religious liberty to gain independence for Christian schools until we train up a generation of people who know that there is no religious neutrality, no neutral law, no neutral education, and no neutral civil government. Then they will get busy in constructing a Bible-based social, political and religious order which finally denies the religious liberty of the enemies of God."

Miscellaneous Links and Filibusters click here
Speech by Ralph Neas
Ralph Neas, President of People for the American Way, spoke before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, October 10, 2002. He told the committee:

Mr. Chairman, the debate over the federal judiciary is part of an epic battle over the role of the federal government. The two-prong strategy of the right-wing of the Republican Party is simple but breathtakingly radical. First, enact a permanent tax cut which will eliminate $6 trillion in revenue over the next 20 years. That will in effect starve the federal government so it will be unable to fund many vital governmental functions performed since the New Deal.

The second prong is to pack the federal judiciary with right-wing ideologues whose judicial philosophy would turn back the clock on civil rights, environmental protections, religious liberty, reproductive rights and privacy and so much more. Take away the money. And then take away legal rights that have been part of our constitutional framework for 65 years. We do indeed need a national debate. Before the American people wake up one morning and discover that their fundamental rights and liberties have vanished overnight.

U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Obstructionism click here
Reflections on the Power of the Supreme Court
"This is about the future. This is about the Supreme Court," Karl Rove told the Family Research Council, March, 2002. The Supreme Court is of particular concern as some justices are likely to retire soon. The Supreme Court has the power to actually impose its will on the country as we witnessed with the opinion Brown vs. Board of Education, 1954.

Mandatory school segregation existed in twenty-one states. A very powerful Civil Rights movement along with a Supreme Court that believed segregation based on race was unconstitutional, led to the landmark decision, Brown vs. Board of Education. As a result twenty one states were required to desegregate their schools.

One scene from that period captures the power of the Supreme court to support the goals of a major movement. When James Meredith arrived on the campus of the University of Mississippi, students rioted, two men died, and hundreds of people were injured while state police stood by doing nothing. Because of the Supreme Court decision, Brown vs. Board of Education,
President Kennedy sent in 30,000 troops to quell the violence. They formed a physical barrier between the new students entering school and the rioting mob. That event captures the power of a Supreme Court opinion to force an entire region of the country to act against its will (in this instance, for the good).

Many of the great movements of this century changed conditions in this country because of a remarkable group of people who sat on the Supreme Court. Civil rights, women's and reproductive rights, worker's safety and minimum wage laws, environmental protections, anti-discrimination laws affecting all minorities and disabled peoples - all those rights and protections were established because of a Supreme Court that enabled the federal government to impose laws and regulations on states and industry. A court dominated by members of the Federalist Society will unravel the hard-fought federal protections of this century.

The Federalist Society

The Federalist Society formed twenty years ago in reaction to the powers the Supreme Court was granting the federal government. It is a network of lawyers, elected officials and scholars who want to free corporations from government regulations. It is hostile to civil rights, environmental protections, worker safety laws, a separation between church and state and more.

Some prominent leaders of the Religious Right play a dominant role in the Federalist Society. For example former President of the Christian Coalition, Donald Hodel is a board member. Twenty four of President Bush's top cabinet members and most of his court nominations are members of the Federalist Society. The list includes John Ashcroft, Attorney General; Spencer Abraham, Secretary of Energy; Gail Norton, Secretary of the Interior; and Theodore Olson, Solicitor General. Other notable members are Justices Scalia and Thomas, Orrin Hatch, Kenneth Starr.

People for the American Way prepared an in-depth report. The Federalist Society: From Obscurity to Power

The American Constitution Society

The American Constitution Society is a counterbalance to the Federalist Society. Their stated goals:

Formed in Spring 2001, The American Constitution Society for Law and Policy is a national organization of law students,
law professors, practicing lawyers and others. We want to help
revitalize and transform the legal debate, from law school
classrooms to federal courtrooms. We want to counter the
dominant vision of American law today, a narrow conservative
vision that lacks appropriate regard for the ways in which the law
affects people's lives.

http://www.theocracywatch.org/taking_over.htm
American militaristic foreign policy has estranged and alienated millions of Muslims and the peace loving people the world over. It has turned them against U.S and everything U.S claims it stands for.

America’s thirst for Arab oil and its determination to stop emergence of rival world power has made war on terrorism an intractable conflict. America cannot survive without Arab oil and world hegemony. Arabs will not tolerate degradation and loot of their natural resources and their subjugation for ever.

Under such circumstances the two sides tend to rigidify their perception and erect psychological barriers to distance themselves from each other. They become slaves of their own perception. They tend to distort or force meaning onto the information or event which seem threatening their identity and self-image. New information will be interpreted as confirming the already distorted view of the other side. They turn blind to all shades and refuse to see beyond black and white picture of each other.

This is what happened when Muslims particularly Iraqis and Afghans talk of America, and when Americans talk of Islam and Muslims. To take a holistic view of America. We have to see its all shades. Here we see three-in-one America. All the three have subculture, social base, power elite, Icons and symbols of their own.

One America is represented by Bush, the other by Noam Chomsky and the third belongs to the people who are suffering from crisis of representation and there are thousands who speak for them. But they go unrepresented and their voice is muzzled by mainstream media. The Americans people have been divided vertically and horizontally on class, racial, ethnic, religious lines.
As American people are flooded with lies and half truths. They fail to understand who is their foe and who is their friend, they behave like idiots and hold political positions which go against their own interests.

**Bush's America**

This is the America which means business. This is the America which thinks business. This is the America which understands that there is no good and bad in business. It commits genocides and still holds moral high ground, by selling genocide as liberation. This is the America which becomes Christian to take foolish Christians for a ride. This is the America which throws Iftar party for Muslims when its business is under attack by Muslims. This America commits genocide of Muslims if they resist loot and plunder of their natural resources.

However this business enterprise, called America Inc, is in bad shape. (Here we call this Bush's America. We are not demonizing Bush. We understand that he is merely a jockey of American capitalism (while common Americans are the horses). It is because Bush represents all the decadence and rottenness of American society and American state. Sociologically, this America can be called informal America.

Bush's America is autocratic, absolutist, retrogressive, reactionary, uncivilized, arrogant, barbaric and decadent. It threaten its own people (American civil society), its own clients (like Saddam Hussein) and its operatives (like Osama Bin Laden). It is confronting its own allies in Europe and Arab world. It destroys cities which it cannot build. It fights wars whose bill has to be paid by the conquered. It destroys civilian’s infrastructure of developing countries to get business contracts for its construction companies. Bush's America is decadent and rotten to its core.

Bush's America is in trouble. After Soviet power block it is now American block which is crumbling. European Union challenges American world hegemony. White domination of American state apparatus is being challenged by non Whites of Asian and
African origin. American women is shredding male domination in every field which is not liked by Christian Taliban’s in U.S who are becoming more and more active. They do not want to share power with Asians and African blacks. American media hegemony at world level is being challenged by Arab channels like Aljazeera run by brown Asians.

America is under siege within and threatened from outside by his own (former) allies and by his own "clients". Desperate and frustrated elements in Bush administration try to stop disintegration of American block and crumbling down of American empire. They might go to the extent of replacing constitution of America (the only sacred book Americans have) with the Bible and declare America to be Kingdom of God.

Imagine Mullah Omer of Afghanistan becoming the president of America. Imagine what will happen to Americans. What will happen to the world order. Mullah Bush is pursuing unilateralism and world hegemony. Every one of us feels insecure and helpless. Bush behaves as if he is God the same way as Mullah Omer of Afghanistan had the delusion. White racists, Christian right, Chauvinist nationalists, and capitalists, Jihad Jews dominate Bush's America.

The Bush's "war on terrorism" is "war for oil" and occupation of 3rd world countries. At home it is "war on democracy" to prevent criticism for his failure. Civil libertes are being curtailed and the spirit of American constitution diluted.

Bush's America is nervous, insecure, frustrated, and engulfed by one crisis after the other. Bush represents decadence of economy, American values of freedom, human relation crisis in American society, crisis of representation in American politics, American values of democracy and composite culture of America and crisis in international relations.

Bush's American is in pathetic shape: the fall in industrial production, consumer spending, and instability of stock market, corporate bankruptcies, recession, unemployment, wage curtailment, lowering down of living standards.
American president thinks that he is free as a nation to do what ever he can do and his freedom is absolute. This craving for unlimited and absolute power might lead to fascism. In that case America will ultimately be dismembered like Soviet Russia.

Bush’s America is culturally underdeveloped and alienated America. While it has developed hi-technology and massive macro social structures, culturally and socially most of the Americans are no different from an ordinary Afghan tribes.

The organized crime, drug trafficking, religious fundamentalism, racial tension due to domination of whites over American state apparatus, subjugation of women and flush trade, narrowing down of separation between religion and state, unilateral control over civil society and denial of media access to critics of Bush's policies reveals that Americans have ceased to be free people and have been enslaved by corporate. Bush's America is biggest merchant of death and destruction and selling weapons of mass destruction is its business, bread earner of some of the richest Americans, as the profit in this sector is 500%.

It is likely that Bush's America might get dismembered in its drive to subjugate whole of humanity with “hi-tech toys” America has stockpiled. Those who have moral courage cannot be defeated by military hardware. Americans might have seen how a pro democracy protester at Tiananmen Square in China challenged a battle tank with courage and conviction. The freedom loving people will not tolerate American hegemony any more. The way people of Fallujah fought against American terrorism must be an eye opener.

Once the people of America and Britain disown Bush & Co. Bush will hide himself in a gutter as there are no caves in Washington. Bush and Blair will be sent to gallows for crimes against humanity

**Chomsky’s America**

As imperialism is not a policy of a capitalist state but it is structural necessity of capitalist social relations. Imperialism is capitalist social relations manifested in international relations.
Noam Chomsky’s America is not really relevant in decadent phase of capitalism.

This is actually formal America represented by liberal and democratic power elite and one of its leading advocates is Noam Chomsky. This is institutional and constitutional America as manifested in its law formally on papers. It has no social base.

However this America is relevant for developing countries aspiring to establish a capitalist system in their own countries.

Chomsky’s America is democratic, non-hegmonistic, forward looking, pluralistic, and multi-cultural. This America talks of rule of law, respect for international law, autonomy of individual and for social and cultural groups, and relative autonomy of civil society from state.

Chomsky’s America is neither taken seriously by its friends nor by its adversaries like Bush. The Chomsky’s America has been silenced, ostracized, isolated, alienated by Christian Taliban’s and National chauvinists and has been denied media access by mainstream American media.

Capitalist world order has become incapable of growth and development. We have learnt from "war on terrorism" that the capitalism can only destroy and all of its promises of reconstruction are false. Afghanistan is recent example.

The Folk America

This is the people's America. The people like you and me. Good as well as bad. They actually pay the price of war. Their children get killed in war of occupations American army is killing the Asians and the American people pay the money for the bullets and bombs.

It is the people of America who get killed when they become victims of terrorism (again fueled and funded by their are own government). Their civil liberties are being suspended and spending in social sector curtailed. It is shocking to see common
Americans having been enslaved by repressive American State. They are no longer free people.

Americans should oppose their government by starting civil disobedience and non-cooperation and we in Asia should befriend militant elements in American society and support them. If any of them seeks shelter from American state repression, we should come forward and protect his/her lives.

We should do nothing to harm common Americans. Those who think in these terms should open their eyes see American peoples anger against American occupation and war against the people of Iraq.

We are not opposed to attacking American military targets including White house and Pentagon. American military targets are plenty through out globe. We are against any attack on American civilians who have not chosen to fight. We are against attacking those who faced bullets and police repression to express their solidarity with the people of Iraq, while the power elite of their own co-religionists in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, Egypt, and Kuwait collaborated with America in destruction of Afghanistan and Iraq.
Mirror reflections: fundamentalism and the market economy

29 - 5 - 2003
Alenna Leonard

The market economy and fundamentalist religion each aspire to colonise minds, dominate the public realm, and suppress free debate. Terrorism is only the extreme end of the much wider disaffection that results. The multiple insights of cybernetics and systems thinking are urgently needed to refresh minds, revivify politics, and offer practical ways out of the tunnel of dogma which marketolatry imposes on the world.

Since the destruction of the World Trade Center, both terrorism (with its links to Islamic fundamentalism) and intensified security (with its encroachment on civil liberties) have been part of our lives. As a practising cybernetician, I have asked myself what perception of circumstances could have led to the terrorists’ acts of hopelessness and defiance? In short, what were they reacting against?

The market’s overweening power

The extent to which the rules of the market economy trump any and all other legitimate concerns has struck me for some time. It seems the market economy is as rigid in its demands as any ayatollah.

As a ‘cradle capitalist’ living under a liberal government, I find this irritating and distasteful. So, it is predictable that some denied access both to the comforts of a consumer economy and to the rights of modern citizenship find these demands intolerable. If ruling elites flaunt their wealth while the majority of people live in poverty, discontent is inevitable.

As my partner, the late pioneer cybernetician Stafford Beer was fond of saying, “The purpose of a system is what it does”. The current system produces luxury at the top, anxious comfort in the middle, and misery at the bottom.

One of the activities Stafford and I enjoyed was touring the cathedrals in Britain. A favourite was Durham Cathedral, with its 900 years of history. What impressed me most was the sheer reach of the Church. The Prince Bishops of Durham had their own army, minted their own coin, directed trade and industry,
provided education, sponsored the arts and determined social relations as well as pronouncing on the theological, moral and ethical questions of the day. The Church even had its own legal system, and its wrongdoers were not subject to the king’s law.

Today, it would be hard to refute that such influence is held by the market. It is so much a part of our environment that we don’t notice how inescapable it has become. Economic considerations routinely conflict with the preservation of the natural environment, human rights and social justice, and they usually prevail.

Not even the rights of small countries to support a viable agricultural and industrial sector, or of large countries to protect their populations from being made guinea pigs of genetically modified foods, are safe. International trade agreements such as Gatt and Nafta protect commercial interests, but there is no comparable international protection for human beings or for nature.

Yes, we will protect the environment if it isn’t too costly; even better if we can develop new industries that will earn higher profits than the polluting ones. Yes, human rights are important, but not important enough to turn away from cheap oil, cheap labour and rich markets. Yes, it would be nice if the small banana producing countries in the Caribbean could earn a living, but we mustn’t allow exceptions to trade agreements that favour large plantations, even if that tilts farmers toward growing illegal drugs to survive.

And yes, it would be nice if ordinary people in countries run by despots had legitimate means to address their grievances and achieve their dreams. But, unless these despots openly defy the United States, it’s not our job to intervene, even if that leaves an open field for those who use religion and its promise of rewards in the afterlife to motivate people to violent conflict and terrorism.

The west spurns its friends

The west has a poor record of supporting informed and progressive leaders in developing countries. For example, Mohammed Harbi, exiled from Algeria to France, has received death threats from the Algerian secret police, the radical Islamists and some ex-pied noir settlers who have not forgiven him for his role in Algeria’s National Liberation Front.
Ezatollah Sahabi of Iran became a dissident after the CIA replaced Iran’s president, Mohammad Mossadeq, with the monarchy. He was imprisoned by the Shah and then again by the Islamic Republic after he criticised them for their repressive practices. With power held by dictators, beholden or not to the west, and no space for democratic dissent, radical religious elements are likely to become the only opposition.

In Iraq, with the secular despotism of Saddam Hussein defeated, only fundamentalist religious forces are politically well-organised. It is not certain that the United States will be willing or able to stay until secular political groups can acquire enough legitimacy to govern. President Bush’s unwillingness to involve the UN in a meaningful way and his distribution of lucrative contracts to political supporters at home won’t help this process.

Two forms of religion
The system we have is perfectly designed to get the results we’re getting. Although no one could deny the improvements in human life and standard of living achieved through market economies, or religion for that matter, neither has the requisite variety to address the full range of human concerns.

To some extent, the great institutions of the market economy have realised this. A recent World Bank report sounds the alarm about a number of acute problems; for example, while goods are moving more and more freely, many people are trapped behind political boundaries in desperate circumstances.

There are a number of similarities between the demands of fundamentalist religions and those of the market economy. Fundamentalist versions of religion and economics are known for brooking no deviation from their central concepts and for taking many of their own precepts literally even in the presence of disconfirming evidence.

As participants in the market economy, we are called to attend to advertisements. On TV, commercials may run four or five times an hour for four minute intervals. How often can one open a newspaper or a magazine, without going through the ads? Where can one walk down a main street without seeing signs and billboards?

There are ads on subways and before feature films. Some ladies rooms present you with noisy commercial messages on a video screen if you want to dry your hands. Similar screens are being
piloted in the back of New York taxis – one of the few commercial spaces left where people enjoyed some privacy. And the internet! Is that so different from ‘in your face’ religion with its frequent demands for public observance?

One of the distinctions between fundamentalist and modern religions is the way they address children. While modern religions teach children understandable lessons that relate to their own experiences, fundamentalist versions ask children to take on concepts that are far beyond their comprehension.

In television advertising, they actually speak about the ‘two to eleven year old market’. At the younger end of this ‘market’, they don’t even know what a commercial transaction means. Older children and teenagers do, but they are easily manipulated by advertising into making choices that are not in their own best interests. Commercials are dominated by snack foods that lay the groundwork for a lifetime of poor nutrition and expensive ‘branded’ toys and clothing.

Controlling minds, governing spaces
Many of us are put off by religions that regard people as of little value except as servants of their god. In the market economy, while we think we are customers because we have bought a ticket or subscribed to a magazine, we are also a ‘product’ and our value is based on our age, gender or income. This leads to bizarre outcomes such as people from the wrong postal code having their magazine subscriptions cancelled and discontinuing popular radio and television shows because their audiences were too old for the sponsors.

Fundamentalist religions have strict rules about what you can and can’t talk about. In the mall where I used to live, the Salvation Army wanted to continue their practice of soliciting contributions for the needy at Christmas. Many malls forbid this but, in our progressive community, it was allowed – on condition that they use cardboard bells saying ‘ding’ and ‘dong’. Real bells might distract shoppers.

Restrictions on free speech in private commercial space are much tighter than most governments would even think of imposing. Unfortunately, there are fewer and fewer public spaces where public speech is feasible. This was a problem when I was active in local politics in the United States. We couldn’t afford TV or much in the way of newspaper ads and weren’t allowed in
the shopping centres so we held up signs and passed out leaflets at traffic lights like squeegee kids. So much for public speech.

Religions often have an ‘elect’ with special privileges; so does commerce. Some well-known politicians raised ‘cash for questions’ or sold their attention to constituents who bought expensive tickets to receptions and, coincidentally, came to favour policies advanced by their contributors. Probably the worst example was when the second Bush administration invited the energy companies, including Enron, to formulate policy for the Department of Energy – and weren’t even ashamed to admit it.

This turns talking to one’s elected officials into a commodity. Fundamentalist religions and the market economy alike place little value on those outside their own circles. No money in poor countries to buy the branded drugs they need or develop them themselves (this after their herbal remedies are patented and they’ve been guinea pigs in the tests) – too bad. It is all ‘collateral damage’, but not wrong because there was no ‘intention’ that people die. Are they the market economy’s ‘infidels’?

Living in the “risk society”

Ulrich Beck proposes we think of ourselves as a “risk society”. Such a society is as much about the distribution of “bads” (or risks) as about the distribution of goods. Often, vital information does not get through as the hierarchy of wealth and power frequently precludes technical people and workers on the ground from having genuine communication with executive and political decision-makers. The people at the top can’t possibly have the necessary experience to understand these concerns.

As Stafford Beer used to say, the president of the organisation has the same size brain as the janitor. How can good decisions be made at the top without effective communication channels at lower levels? When catastrophes occur, it’s difficult to hold anyone accountable.

It has been widely accepted that the market is inadequate at calculating and accepting the full costs of its actions. Indeed, the practice has been to exaggerate the benefits while minimising the costs and structural adjustments. This phenomenon is most easily measured in the environmental field but it has equally serious impacts on social justice and human rights. The rules of the
market drive behaviour in this direction although individual business people might prefer other alternatives.

With so many real demands for fairness, justice and a decent life falling on the deaf ears of the market economy, what else would we expect but a fundamentalist alternative with an equally implacable set of constructs based on intangible rather than tangible goals? This is no less true because some leaders in both camps are in it for personal power and wealth.

If we want to strengthen the hand of Islamic (and other) moderates, then they have to be able to achieve, and be seen to achieve, some real gains. The market economy extols flexibility when it comes to expecting workers to be mobile and show up if and when needed, whether or not companies incur any continuing obligation to them, move factories to cheap labour zones, or invest pension funds in corporate adventures.

Would it be impossible to pay living wages, or to make respect for human rights a condition of doing business? No amount of security can eliminate the micro-revolts of terrorism as long as there are people who are willing to die to inflict damage. The only way is to eliminate the sources of hopelessness and rage that fuel such profound discontent.

Reconfiguring Spaceship Earth

Polarities are dangerous if one cannot recognise that each pole can have more than one opposite. The opposite of one fundamentalism could be another, or it could be pluralism. The opposite of modernism doesn’t have to be reactionism or selective nostalgia for past values: it could be a rethinking of what it means to be passengers on Spaceship Earth.

The field of cybernetics and systems has much to contribute to the necessary public debate. It embraces complexity and the parallel perspectives of observers of a probabilistic world. It recognises chains of feedback loops that may have an effect far from, and disproportionate to, their origins. It takes as given a number of process laws, such as the ‘law of requisite variety’ that states that a regulator of a system has to have as much variety at its disposal as the system it is trying to regulate. Does any public body presently have the variety to regulate, say, the biogenetics industry?

A cornucopia of concepts, models and tools – many of them interdisciplinary – are on offer.
Critical systems theory, hermeneutics and experimental epistemologies look at power relations, assumptions and frames of reference.

Kelly’s Personal Construct Theory, systemic anthropology and family systems deal with individuals and small groups.

Beer’s Viable System Model and Russell Ackoff’s Interactive Planning are among the tools that address organisational structure; designing in as much autonomy and democracy as the situation allows.

Forrester’s System Dynamics and other simulation packages, applications of Hubert Maturana’s basic research on biology, Prigogine’s work on non-linear systems, help understand the interaction of traffic patterns as well as chemicals. All draw upon understanding dynamic behaviours and how they interact.

The systems field has used its own concepts to pioneer approaches designed to make debate more authentic and inclusive – and used some of their own professional conferences to try them out. (See the New Economics Foundation’s Participation Works: 21 techniques of community participation for the 21st century, 1998).

Beer’s Team Syntegrity process is a good example: it draws upon geometry, neurophysiology, communication theory and psychology in an intense planning protocol that shares maximum information in a non-hierarchical format.

It would be nice, but not necessary, for a political party to take on this body of work. All of us who have a stake in this complicated and confusing world have a duty to make public processes work. If we can’t do this, we will find ourselves in a dystopia built by the short-sighted and whoever wins – at whatever cost – the battle to impose a simplistic solution.

The first step? Start talking. Ignore soundbites and spin doctors. Start today using today’s tools to address today’s problems.

Allenna Leonard is president of the American Society for Cybernetics. The views expressed here are her own and do not reflect those of the Society.

http://www.opendemocracy.net/faith-iraqwarphilo-shophy/article_1248.jsp
Economic Fascism

by Thomas J. DiLorenzo

When most people hear the word "fascism" they naturally think of its ugly racism and anti-Semitism as practiced by the totalitarian regimes of Mussolini and Hitler. But there was also an economic policy component of fascism, known in Europe during the 1920s and '30s as "corporatism," that was an essential ingredient of economic totalitarianism as practiced by Mussolini and Hitler. So-called corporatism was adopted in Italy and Germany during the 1930s and was held up as a "model" by quite a few intellectuals and policy makers in the United States and Europe. A version of economic fascism was in fact adopted in the United States in the 1930s and survives to this day. In the United States these policies were not called "fascism" but "planned capitalism." The word fascism may no longer be politically acceptable, but its synonym "industrial policy" is as popular as ever.

The Free World Flirts With Fascism

Few Americans are aware of or can recall how so many Americans and Europeans viewed economic fascism as the wave of the future during the 1930s. The American Ambassador to Italy, Richard Washburn Child, was so impressed with "corporatism" that he wrote in the preface to Mussolini's 1928 autobiography that "it may be shrewdly forecast that no man will exhibit dimensions of permanent greatness equal to Mussolini... The Duce is now the greatest figure of this sphere and time." Winston Churchill wrote in 1927 that "If I had been an Italian I am sure I would have been entirely with you" and "don the Fascist black shirt." As late as 1940, Churchill was still describing Mussolini as "a great man."

U.S. Congressman Sol Bloom, Chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, said in 1926 that Mussolini "will be a great thing not only for Italy but for all of us if he succeeds. It is his
inspiration, his determination, his constant toil that has literally rejuvenated Italy . . ."

One of the most outspoken American fascists was economist Lawrence Dennis. In his 1936 book, The Coming American Fascism, Dennis declared that defenders of "18th-century Americanism" were sure to become "the laughing stock of their own countrymen" and that the adoption of economic fascism would intensify "national spirit" and put it behind "the enterprises of public welfare and social control." The big stumbling block to the development of economic fascism, Dennis bemoaned, was "liberal norms of law or constitutional guarantees of private rights."

Certain British intellectuals were perhaps the most smitten of anyone by fascism. George Bernard Shaw announced in 1927 that his fellow "socialists should be delighted to find at last a socialist [Mussolini] who speaks and thinks as responsible rulers do." He helped form the British Union of Fascists whose "Outline of the Corporate State," according to the organization's founder, Sir Oswald Mosley, was "on the Italian Model." While visiting England, the American author Ezra Pound declared that Mussolini was "continuing the task of Thomas Jefferson."

Thus, it is important to recognize that, as an economic system, fascism was widely accepted in the 1920s and '30s. The evil deeds of individual fascists were later condemned, but the practice of economic fascism never was. To this day, the historically uninformed continue to repeat the hoary slogan that, despite all his faults, Mussolini at least "made the trains run on time," insinuating that his interventionist industrial policies were a success.

The Italian "Corporatist" System

So-called "corporatism" as practiced by Mussolini and revered by so many intellectuals and policy makers had several key elements: The state comes before the individual. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines fascism as "a political philosophy, movement, or regime that exalts nation and often race above the
individual and that stands for a centralized, autocratic government." This stands in stark contrast to the classical liberal idea that individuals have natural rights that pre-exist government; that government derives its "just powers" only through the consent of the governed; and that the principal function of government is to protect the lives, liberties, and properties of its citizens, not to aggrandize the state.

Mussolini viewed these liberal ideas (in the European sense of the word "liberal") as the antithesis of fascism: "The Fascist conception of life," Mussolini wrote, "stresses the importance of the State and accepts the individual only in so far as his interests coincide with the State. It is opposed to classical liberalism [which] denied the State in the name of the individual; Fascism reasserts the rights of the State as expressing the real essence of the individual."

Mussolini thought it was unnatural for a government to protect individual rights: "The maxim that society exists only for the well-being and freedom of the individuals composing it does not seem to be in conformity with nature's plans." "If classical liberalism spells individualism," Mussolini continued, "Fascism spells government."

The essence of fascism, therefore, is that government should be the master, not the servant, of the people. Think about this. Does anyone in America really believe that this is not what we have now? Are Internal Revenue Service agents really our "servants"? Is compulsory "national service" for young people, which now exists in numerous states and is part of a federally funded program, not a classic example of coercing individuals to serve the state? Isn't the whole idea behind the massive regulation and regimentation of American industry and society the notion that individuals should be forced to behave in ways defined by a small governmental elite? When the nation's premier health-care reformer recently declared that heart bypass surgery on a 92-year-old man was "a waste of resources," wasn't that the epitome of the fascist ideal—that the state, not individuals, should decide whose life is worthwhile, and whose is a "waste"?
The U.S. Constitution was written by individuals who believed in the classical liberal philosophy of individual rights and sought to protect those rights from governmental encroachment. But since the fascist/collectivist philosophy has been so influential, policy reforms over the past half century have all but abolished many of these rights by simply ignoring many of the provisions in the Constitution that were designed to protect them. As legal scholar Richard Epstein has observed: "[T]he eminent domain . . . and parallel clauses in the Constitution render . . . suspect many of the heralded reforms and institutions of the twentieth century: zoning, rent control, workers' compensation laws, transfer payments, progressive taxation." It is important to note that most of these reforms were initially adopted during the '30s, when the fascist/collectivist philosophy was in its heyday.

Planned industrial "harmony." Another keystone of Italian corporatism was the idea that the government's interventions in the economy should not be conducted on an ad hoc basis, but should be "coordinated" by some kind of central planning board. Government intervention in Italy was "too diverse, varied, contrasting. There has been disorganic . . . intervention, case by case, as the need arises," Mussolini complained in 1935. Fascism would correct this by directing the economy toward "certain fixed objectives" and would "introduce order in the economic field." Corporatist planning, according to Mussolini adviser Fausto Pitigliani, would give government intervention in the Italian economy a certain "unity of aim," as defined by the government planners.

These exact sentiments were expressed by Robert Reich (current U.S. Secretary of Labor) and Ira Magaziner (current federal government's health care reform "Czar") in their book Minding America's Business. In order to counteract the "untidy marketplace," an interventionist industrial policy "must strive to integrate the full range of targeted government policies—procurement, research and development, trade, antitrust, tax credits, and subsidies—into a coherent strategy . . . ."

Current industrial policy interventions, Reich and Magaziner bemoaned, are "the product of fragmented and uncoordinated
decisions made by [many different] executive agencies, the Congress, and independent regulatory agencies . . . There is no integrated strategy to use these programs to improve the . . . U.S. economy." 

In his 1989 book, The Silent War, Magaziner reiterated this theme by advocating "a coordinating group like the national Security Council to take a strategic national industrial view." The White House has in fact established a "National Economic Security Council." Every other advocate of an interventionist "industrial policy" has made a similar "unity of aim" argument, as first described by Pitigliani more than half a century ago.

Government-business partnerships. A third defining characteristic of economic fascism is that private property and business ownership are permitted, but are in reality controlled by government through a business-government "partnership." As Ayn Rand often noted, however, in such a partnership government is always the senior or dominating "partner."

In Mussolini's Italy, businesses were grouped by the government into legally recognized "syndicates" such as the "National Fascist Confederation of Commerce," the "National Fascist Confederation of Credit and Insurance," and so on. All of these "fascist confederations" were "coordinated" by a network of government planning agencies called "corporations," one for each industry. One large "National Council of Corporations" served as a national overseer of the individual "corporations" and had the power to "issue regulations of a compulsory character."

The purpose of this byzantine regulatory arrangement was so that the government could "secure collaboration . . . between the various categories of producers in each particular trade or branch of productive activity." Government-orchestrated "collaboration" was necessary because "the principle of private initiative" could only be useful "in the service of the national interest" as defined by government bureaucrats.
This idea of government-mandated and -dominated "collaboration" is also at the heart of all interventionist industrial policy schemes. A successful industrial policy, write Reich and Magaziner, would "require careful co-ordination between public and private sectors. Government and the private sector must work in tandem. Economic success now depends to a high degree on coordination, collaboration, and careful strategic choice," guided by government. The AFL-CIO has echoed this theme, advocating a "tripartite National Reindustrialization Board-including representatives of labor, business, and government" that would supposedly "plan" the economy. The Washington, D.C.-based Center for National Policy has also published a report authored by businessmen from Lazard Freres, du Pont, Burroughs, Chrysler, Electronic Data Systems, and other corporations promoting an allegedly "new" policy based on "cooperation of government with business and labor." Another report, by the organization "Rebuild America," co-authored in 1986 by Robert Reich and economists Robert Solow, Lester Thurow, Laura Tyson, Paul Krugman, Pat Choate, and Lawrence Chimerine urges "more teamwork" through "public-private partnerships among government, business and academia." This report calls for "national goals and targets" set by government planners who will devise a "comprehensive investment strategy" that will only permit "productive" investment, as defined by government, to take place.

Mercantilism and protectionism. Whenever politicians start talking about "collaboration" with business, it is time to hold on to your wallet. Despite the fascist rhetoric about "national collaboration" and working for the national, rather than private, interests, the truth is that mercantilist and protectionist practices riddled the system. Italian social critic Gaetano Salvemini wrote in 1936 that under corporatism, "it is the state, i.e., the taxpayer, who has become responsible to private enterprise. In Fascist Italy the state pays for the blunders of private enterprise." As long as business was good, Salvemini wrote, "profit remained to private initiative." But when the depression came, "the government added the loss to the taxpayer's burden. Profit is private and individual. Loss is public and social." The Italian corporative state, The Economist editorialized on July 27, 1935, "only
amounts to the establishment of a new and costly bureaucracy from which those industrialists who can spend the necessary amount, can obtain almost anything they want, and put into practice the worst kind of monopolistic practices at the expense of the little fellow who is squeezed out in the process. Corporatism, in other words, was a massive system of corporate welfare. "Three-quarters of the Italian economic system," Mussolini boasted in 1934, "had been subsidized by government."

If this sounds familiar, it is because it is exactly the result of agricultural subsidies, the Export-Import Bank, guaranteed loans to "preferred" business borrowers, protectionism, the Chrysler bailout, monopoly franchising, and myriad other forms of corporate welfare paid for directly or indirectly by the American taxpayer.

Another result of the close "collaboration" between business and government in Italy was "a continual interchange of personnel between the. . . civil service and private business." Because of this "revolving door" between business and government, Mussolini had "created a state within the state to serve private interests which are not always in harmony with the general interests of the nation." Mussolini's "revolving door" swung far and wide.

Signor Caiano, one of Mussolini's most trusted advisers, was an officer in the Royal Navy before and during the war. When the war was over, he joined the Orlando Shipbuilding Company. In October 1922, he entered Mussolini's cabinet, and the subsidies for naval construction and the merchant marine came under the control of his department. General Cavallero, at the close of the war, left the army and entered the Pirelli Rubber Company. In 1925 he became undersecretary at the Ministry of War. In 1930 he left the Ministry of War, and entered the service of the Ansaldo armament firm. Among the directors of the big companies in Italy, retired generals and generals on active service became very numerous after the advent of Fascism.
Such practices are now so common in the United States—especially in the defense industries—that it hardly needs further comment.

From an economic perspective, fascism meant (and means) an interventionist industrial policy, mercantilism, protectionism, and an ideology that makes the individual subservient to the state. "Ask not what the State can do for you, but what you can do for the State" is an apt description of the economic philosophy of fascism.

The whole idea behind collectivism in general and fascism in particular is to make citizens subservient to the state and to place power over resource allocation in the hands of a small elite. As stated eloquently by the American fascist economist Lawrence Dennis, fascism "does not accept the liberal dogmas as to the sovereignty of the consumer or trader in the free market.... Least of all does it consider that market freedom, and the opportunity to make competitive profits, are rights of the individual." Such decisions should be made by a "dominant class" he labeled "the elite."

German Economic Fascism

Economic fascism in Germany followed a virtually identical path. One of the intellectual fathers of German fascism was Paul Lensch, who declared in his book Three Years of World Revolution that "Socialism must present a conscious and determined opposition to individualism." The philosophy of German fascism was expressed in the slogan, Gemeinnutz geht vor Eigennutz, which means "the common good comes before the private good." "The Aryan is not greatest in his mental qualities," Hitler stated in Mein Kampf, but in his noblest form he "willingly subordinates his own ego to the community and, if the hour demands, even sacrifices it." The individual has "not rights but only duties."

Armed with this philosophy, Germany's National Socialists pursued economic policies very similar to Italy's: government-mandated "partnerships" between business, government, and
unions organized by a system of regional "economic chambers," all overseen by a Federal Ministry of Economics.

A 25-point "Programme of the Party" was adopted in 1925 with a number of economic policy "demands," all prefaced by the general statement that "the activities of the individual must not clash with the interests of the whole. . .but must be for the general good." This philosophy fueled a regulatory assault on the private sector. "We demand ruthless war upon all those whose activities are injurious to the common interest," the Nazis warned. And who are these on whom "war" is to be waged? "Common criminals," such as "usurers," i.e., bankers, and other "profiteers," i.e., ordinary businessmen in general. Among the other policies the Nazis demanded were abolition of interest; a government-operated social security system; the ability of government to confiscate land without compensation; a government monopoly in education; and a general assault on private-sector entrepreneurship (which was denounced as the "Jewish materialist spirit"). Once this "spirit" is eradicated, "The Party . . . is convinced that our nation can achieve permanent health from within only on the principle: the common interest before self-interest."

Conclusions

Virtually all of the specific economic policies advocated by the Italian and German fascists of the 1930s have also been adopted in the United States in some form, and continue to be adopted to this day. Sixty years ago, those who adopted these interventionist policies in Italy and Germany did so because they wanted to destroy economic liberty, free enterprise, and individualism. Only if these institutions were abolished could they hope to achieve the kind of totalitarian state they had in mind.

Many American politicians who have advocated more or less total government control over economic activity have been more devious in their approach. They have advocated and adopted many of the same policies, but they have always recognized that direct attacks on private property, free enterprise, self-government, and individual freedom are not politically palatable to the majority of the American electorate. Thus, they have
enacted a great many tax, regulatory, and income-transfer policies that achieve the ends of economic fascism, but which are sugar-coated with deceptive rhetoric about their alleged desire only to "save" capitalism.

American politicians have long taken their cue in this regard from Franklin D. Roosevelt, who sold his National Recovery Administration (which was eventually ruled unconstitutional) on the grounds that "government restrictions henceforth must be accepted not to hamper individualism but to protect it." In a classic example of Orwellian doublespeak, Roosevelt thus argued that individualism must be destroyed in order to save it.

Now that socialism has collapsed and survives nowhere but in Cuba, China, Vietnam, and on American university campuses, the biggest threat to economic liberty and individual freedom lies in the new economic fascism. While the former Communist countries are trying to privatize as many industries as possible as fast as they can, they are still plagued by governmental controls, leaving them with essentially fascist economies: private property and private enterprise are permitted, but are heavily controlled and regulated by government.

As most of the rest of the world struggles to privatize industry and encourage free enterprise, we in the United States are seriously debating whether or not we should adopt 1930s-era economic fascism as the organizational principle of our entire health care system, which comprises 14 percent of the GNP. We are also contemplating business-government "partnerships" in the automobile, airlines, and communications industries, among others, and are adopting government-managed trade policies, also in the spirit of the European corporatist schemes of the 1930s.

The state and its academic apologists are so skilled at generating propaganda in support of such schemes that Americans are mostly unaware of the dire threat they pose for the future of freedom. The road to serfdom is littered with road signs pointing toward "the information superhighway, health security, national service, managed trade," and "industrial policy."
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http://www.lewrockwell.com/dilorenzo/dilorenzo85.html
De-mystifying Islam
ISLAMIC THREAT OR THREAT TO ISLAM?

All-Russian Social Political Movement EURASIA
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
Moscow, June 28, 2001

Theses of the address of Sheikh-ul-Islam TALGHAT
TAJUDDIN
Supreme Mufti, Representative of the Central Spiritual Board of Muslims for
Russia and the East-European countries of CIS

1. Extremist heresies in the history of Islam The Islamic tradition has a centuries-old history. This history had different stages. The world of Islam is multifaceted and dynamically evolving. Sometimes not without contradictions. We know that since the very beginning there were oppositions between Shiites and Karidjites. There were many doctrinal disputations. The Shiites themselves were split. The same historically occurred to the followers of other confessions.

Gradually in the Islamic tradition four madhhabs (doctrinal schools) were established. Each of them represents the traditional Islam. The historically traditional Islam was opened to cultural and spiritual customs. It honoured the Abrahamic ones Judaism and Christianity. It accepted the traditions of other peoples, honouring their belief in the Only Creator. Canonical expression of Islam became the tariqat, the brotherhoods, the sects, the mystical orders.

But sometimes at the rim of this world there were heretical movements and sects. They lay outside the borders of traditional madhhabs, advancing religious and political theses withdrawing from a traditional Islam on impermissible critical spacing intervals.

Such were the Fatimide khalifate, the Mahadist rebellion and other manifestations. Sometimes heresy did arise in the Islamic
world, as a rule in the form of violent, terrorist practices. It meant the rejection of the traditional madhhabs, the exit from the borders of orthodox Islam. It was innovation, display of arrogance, which pushed the fanatics leaders to deny the Islamic rules, setting aside their fidelity to the original Islam, as a matter of fact introducing innovations in the true religion.

In practice this was accompanied by fanaticism, religious intolerance, coercion, cruelty. Fanaticism, intolerance and coercion in belief are already in themselves distinctive signs of a break with a Islam, with our tradition of the Prophet Mohammed (a.s.s.) see how the Sacred Koran insists There is no coercion in belief , and the forerunner of the Prophet, about their adult children who accepted Christianity before their parents accepted a Islam, he invokes the people to lean not on ignorance and fanaticism, but on a weighted and reasonable judgement of the world created by the Most High God by the Creator and realised according to His omen. Will you really be equal, you who know and those who do not know? May you understand! (Koran) [+..]

2. Contemporary extremism with the islamic face Also in the contemporary world there is such contribution of heresies to Islam, which contradict our belief both in the letter and in spirit, both in theory and in practice. It is difficult to distinguish at first sight this fabrication from Islam. It satanically enters the ranks of Islam, it makes use of its symbols. But in spirit it has nothing in common with the true divine Islam. Such radical doctrines are concretely the doctrine of the Muslim Brother Hasan al-Banni, Wahhabism, Salafyism, the Pakistani Tabliq sect, originating the Talibani movement, and other similar phenomena. These phenomena are doctrinal heresies, they introduce into traditional Islam no lesser innovations than the so-called islamic modernists do. They affirm that all present forms of Islam are false, and only their doctrine, insisting on the literal execution of the orders of their leaders, is true in the last resort.

Spirit of reasonable choice, personal dignity of man, spontaneity of belief, respect for the peoples of the Scriptures and all the others all this is simply absent from these movements, which might be called as totalitarian sects of pseudo-islamic kind. They
also change the social meaning of the Islamic world-view. This is not simple politicised Islam, it would be wrong to consider it so, it is politicised heresy. Islam does not insist that all Muslims compulsory follow definite rules of moral, ethics, conduct, being guided in private and public life by the religious establishing of traditional Islam. Extremist Fanatics change this quite traditional setting into compulsory godliness, into a completely different pattern: they require literal observance to their own rules, invented by them, and call violence on everyone who does not obey them.

Every Islamic term is exposed by them to a distortion. In Islam there is the concept of jihad, of holy war. First of all it means al-jihad-ul-kabir, the Great War, which each Muslim believer must wage inside himself against defects, ignorance and evil. The Small holy war (al-jihad-ul-sagir) is led against those who brings violence and anger into the world, who deny belief and truth, who introduce lie, cruelty and intolerance, who aim at oppressing the peoples, at depriving them of their freedom. An example of real jihad was for the Muslims the Great Patriotic War, the war against the Nazi occupiers. And the first to set the banner of Victory above the Reichstag were the Muslim-Russians from Bashkortostan, and this despite of the 14,5 thousand mosques destroyed during the Stalin years. So in the course of the centuries the devout Muslims shared joys and sorrows of the Great Russia Homeland with their Orthodox brothers-countrymen.

Jihad is always war against evil and violence.

The sectarians-fanatics completely overturn this concept, proclaiming the so-called jihad against everyone who disagrees with them, so against the whole world. This has no more relation at all to Islam. Islam allows to use violence only as a means of last resort, and only against those who clearly showed their evil intents, and this means aggressors, rapists, killers. In all the remaining cases, the shariah calls for indulgence and exhortation. This is not at all the case of the extremists. Violence here becomes the fundamental law, violence against their own, against the others, against practically everybody.
Without noticing it, the so-called islamists invoke on their own head the true jihad. Challenging all the peoples of the Earth, and first of all traditional Islam, professed by the overwhelming majority of the Islamic world, these forces put themselves in opposition to Islam. And reacting against them is a religious, moral, social and political duty of each Muslim.

Alas, in some Islamic countries particularly in Saudi Arabia there is a tolerant attitude (to say the least) towards the representatives of this tendency. Thus there is a precedent of indulgence and even connivance to these regimes which in the unstable, crisis-bound regions of the Islamic world results in criminal consequences: surging terrorism and violence, large scale war and even genocide. The departing from the traditions of true Islam in theoretical questions necessarily results in such destructive consequences.

It is necessary to affirm unequivocally: the deviation from traditional Islam, from the bases of our belief, the aspiration to reinterpret in one’s own way the provisions of the Koran and the Sunna, to distort the sense of the shariah laws to the benefit of an aggressive extremist minority this is even more dangerous than the process of modernisation of Islam.

Aiming at defending Islam from the entry of non-islamic factors, islamists themselves quit Islam, break away with tradition, follow the fire of arrogance which has always been the main instrument of Ibliz-devil. The Talibans have blown up the ancient Buddha statues. In this way not only they profaned a relic of many Buddhist nations of the world, not only they deprived mankind of unique monuments of ancient culture; they also put themselves above their own ancestors and the million Muslims which lived in the territory of Afghanistan for centuries and whose spiritual exploits and achievement are by no means comparable with such aggressive half-learned maniacally ambitious rabble, forming the core of Talibani. But the also broke the prohibition of Allah, so that their adoration will offend the Most High God Allah and sin will fall on those who on a sacred land, where the envoy of Allah and his forerunners stepped became the reason of this blasphemy. And are they not under the slogan of protecting Islam sending tons and tons of narcotics to Russia, the CIS, and even farther, pretending, in this
way, to be corrupting the enemy? But you see, for Islam all people since the beginning of the Koran envoy are Ummatut-da va the community of the invoking, even those did not believe. That is why the wahhabite and salaafyite extremist fanatics blast tombs of Islamic saints and mazars both in Afghanistan and in Dagestan, in Chechnya and in Tadjikistan. The sacredness of the ancestors for them is nothing, just a living rebuke. These fanatics not only attack and destroy the religious attributes of other faiths, but also the same Islamic relics. So how it is possible to talk about an Islamic threat? When the world is filled with heroin not only from Afghanistan, but from Southern America and Southeast Asia! So, who is the director?

The threat really exists, but it stems not from Islam but from completely different sources, and this threat is terrible above all for the Muslims, just because it is manifested to the whole world under the name of Islam.

I shall account the reasons why:
- The fanatics-extremist of wahhabite kind use their charisma to recruit young people whose soul is not yet strong, aiming to exploit their warm belief, tempting them with aggressive propaganda, simplifications of primitive concepts, material subsidies from the clergy and the so-called centres. So we, the Muslims, lose best part of our people, the younger, who perish in the net of Iblis;
- These forces, acting ostensibly under our slogans and banners, actually discredit a Islam as such, cause the non-Muslims to refer to the Muslims with diffidence and fright, throw a shadow on all Muslims, handicap out active cooperation with other peoples;
- They distort the essence of our belief, give away our true tradition, high divinity and spiritual rituals in exchange for quickly blinding substitutes, primitive prescriptions, blind following behind the leaders.

To the other faiths this is easier, they see this threat from the outside. Such threat can be insulated, exiled, suppressed, eventually, by forceful methods. To us, Muslims, this terrible illness comes also from the inside.
Therefore we must be the vanguard of the fight with extremist pseudo-islamic tendencies and become a barrier against the odious plans of the international narco-business and other benevolent sponsors of the holy war. Killing the infection to the roots, not waiting while the wahhabites will declare this or that zone as a territory under their own control, untying terror and violence and spreading blood. These tendencies are necessary for counteracting also at the theoretical level, in its embryo stage, not permitting in our mosques and bookshelves the extremist propaganda not only open, but also veiled.

Even the idea of the so-called pure Islam, Salafiysm, the idea of wahhabism and other similar currents already hide the attempt to deeply corrupt Islam. Denying traditional Islam, appealing for its radical reform, salafiys and wahhabites break the thin balance of Islamic tradition between spiritual and secular, formal and inner. And terrorist activity is just the straight consequence.

If we want to cope with this threat, we must fight it in the embryo stage.

3. The role of traditional Islam in the settlement of the Caucasian crisis The situation in Chechnya results from many factors - social, historical, national, cultural and psychological. The conflict has a long history and was differently formulated at its different stages. It must be noticed that actually the Islamic element appeared on the foreground in Chechnya rather late, when the conflict was already in ignited.

Nevertheless, it was just the interposition of militants of heretical islamism, the activation of pseudo-islamic extremism of sects of wahhabite kind, that added the whole situation its dramatic, bloody character, and created a situation of virtual civil war in the Caucasus. Wahhabites and Salafyites introduced in the complex Chechen situation the element of fanaticism and extremism, formed an autonomous pole which from a certain time became a self-supporting and inextinguishable source of bloody military conflict.

Precisely due to the wahhabite influence, Chechnya became a gravity centre for the most fanatical and heretical pseudo-islamic
groups. And when the situation became more or less to be stabilised, this wahhabite pole was responsible of a new surge of violence, the aggression against Dagestan. Wahhabism and Salafyism are completely alien to traditional Chechen Islam, which, vice-versa, is distinguished by fidelity to the traditions of the ancestors, the cult of virds, the universal diffusion of Sufi brotherhoods, and its taypi [tribal] organization of society. All this is incompatible with wahhabism, and against this traditional Chechen Islam was directed the aggression of those who took the lead of armed resistance. In this case the extremists have come to the correct (for themselves) conclusion: without the destruction of traditional Islam in Chechnya, it would be impossible to subordinate this people to their will, to make of them a pawn in the complex geopolitical game.

We see a symbolical fact: leader of flatland Chechnya became the representative of Muslim clergy, mufti Ahmad Kadirov, conscious that the threat to the Islam in Chechnya stems from this wahhabite extremism, and that Russia acts in this case not as an opponent of Islam, but as its ally. And Russia has acknowledged this in practice, having made of the Head of the Chechen Muslims the first person in the Chechen Republic. But also in Mountain Chechnya where today acts of war against federal forces continue the wahhabites victory is only superficial. The majority of the population, and even of the armed squads, belong to traditional Islam. Now it is their turn to realise the threat which lays inside this politicised heresy, this totalitarian sect with its multinational mercenaries and international terrorist groups against the people of Chechnya. More and more Muslims realise in what trap they have got.

Our problem, of all Russian Muslims, as Central Spiritual Board of the Muslims (CSMM), and Coordination centre of the Central Spiritual Board of the Muslims of Northern Caucasus, and in a broader sense of all the Muslims of the CIS and foreign Islamic countries, where the majority professes the traditional Islam, is to help settling this bloody conflict and establishing peace and consent. Our brotherly Muslim Chechen people, traditionally professing our Belief, became the victim of a totalitarian sect, its blood continues to be poured.
And how is it possible to speak about the threat of Islam, when victims of the extremists under islamic banners become predominantly the Muslims, in this case the Chechens? The international mercenaries come and go at their own will, but what can the people do, who lived for centuries on the Chechen ground and wants to live there for centuries on?

We, Muslims, cannot stay indifferent to this question. Our belief, Islam, demands that we actively take part in the settlement of the conflict, especially since there is already a very correct - on my sight - solution to this conflict – an Eurasian solution. Its sense is granting the Chechen people a large degree of cultural, ethnic, spiritual and even juridical autonomy in the composition of a united Eurasian State – Russia. Each side will reach the purpose, but most of all the winner shall be the Islamic world, the ummah, in which Russia will show the whole world the true, shiny and humane face of Islam  the resignation in the hands of the Most High God Creator, the complete love of God and His creatures; a deep and original Islam, coming to rescue whenever they distort his sense, subvert its tradition, turn religion into heresy and substitute its true contents with a false one here, in Russia, on the soil of our Homeland, the granary of our eternal life. The State has an irredeemable debt to you, - was declared by President V.V.Putin recently during his meeting with the Presidium of the Russian CSBM in the Ufa councilary mosque  Lyalya-Tulip . But we, the Muslim Russia, we are not from Africa, our Homeland is here.

We wish peace and consent and prosperity on its sacred soil, and pray for this the Most High Allah. The rest is in the hands of Allah  to Him we belong.

The threat of pseudo-islam or islamism is a threat first of all to Islam, and our duty is to courageously as it is necessary to the true Muslims answer this threat. Together with Russia, together with Eurasia, together with all the people of good will Islam is not threat, but the offer of choosing the truth.

. The most effective remedy against false Islam is the true Islam.
Allah akhbar! Glory to the Most High Allah Creator of the worlds does not have enmity, except for as to the one who outrages feature legal and sow hatred, wrath and violence.

Trans. M. Conserva

Muslims As Co-Citizens of the West . . . Rights, Duties & Prospects

By Murad Wilfried Hofmann

Muslim German Thinker

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One major side-effect of the current process of economic and cultural globalization seems to be that our world is becoming multireligious. In particular, this results from the accelerated spread of Islam. There are already six million Muslims in the United States, virtually all of them American citizens, with an impressive and growing infrastructure. In Europe, due to labor migration, foreign students, war refugees, and asylum seekers, the number of Muslims is around four million in France, perhaps three million in the United Kingdom, and 2.5 million in Germany. Altogether, including Bosnia-Herzegovina, there may be about twenty million Muslims in western and central Europe today.1

Due to its structural tolerance vis-à-vis "peoples of the book,"2 the Muslim world has always been multireligious. Islam expanded into formerly Christian territories—the Near East, North Africa, Spain, Byzantium, the Balkans—without eliminating the Christian communities.

Nowhere is this more evident than in Cairo, Damascus, and Istanbul, and in countries like Greece and Serbia. This situation was facilitated by the fact that the Qur’an contains what may be called an “Islamic Christology.”3 Coexistence with the large Jewish populations within the Muslim empire—aside from the Near East in Muslim Spain, and subsequently in North Africa and the Ottoman Empire—was facilitated, in turn, by the extraordinary focus of the Qur’an on Jewish prophets in general and Moses in particular.4 On this basis, Islamic jurisprudence developed the world’s first liberal law called al-siyar for the status of religious minorities (al-dhimmi).5 In the Western world, developments were entirely different. Here, religious intolerance
became endemic, even between Christian churches; many sects were outlawed (as during the first Ecumenical Council in Nicaea, in 325), massacred (e.g., the Donatists in North Africa in the 5th century and the Albigenses and Cathari in the thirteenth century), subdued as victims of a “crusade” (Constantinople in 1205), or deserted (like Orthodox East Rome during the siege by Sultan Fatih in 1453). In Germany, a war lasting thirty years between Protestant and Catholic princes decimated the population (1618-1648).

Under these circumstances and fueled by the Church dictum extra ecclesia nullum salus (no salvation outside the church), even minimal tolerance of Muslims could not be expected. The expulsion of both Muslims and Jews from Spain in the sixteenth century—the first case of “ethnic cleansing” in modern history—made Europe virtually “Muslim-free.” There was interaction between the two camps-trade, scientific penetration, diplomatic missions—but no living Muslim presence in the Occident until the twentieth century. Against this background, it is not surprising that Muslims find it difficult to be accepted as fellow citizens in the West. There simply is no historical precedent for such a coexistence. Worse, collective memories dating from the Crusades and the Ottoman campaigns into central Europe linger below the surface. The Catholic Church, too, has not fully amended its negative attitude toward Islam. Although the Church (since the Second Vatican Council) has come to accept Islam as a way to salvation, it still shuns Muhammad as the guide on this way and refuses to acknowledge the Qur’an as God’s Word. This unfavorable climate has of course been reinforced by events inside the Muslim world—not least of them being the Salman Rushdie affair, the second Gulf War, and massacres in Algeria. Therefore, what appears as discrimination against immigrant Muslims is frequently a result of real fear of a fast growing foreign population seen as potentially aggressive and culturally very different. In the process, Islam risks becoming more the victim of ethnic prejudice than religious prejudice. To put it crudely: The man in the street in Cologne does not see Islam as the religion which opposes the notion of Trinity—he couldn’t care less about that!-but rather, as the civilization which makes Turks so strangely Turkish.
Under these conditions, contemporary Muslims may well pose themselves the question already posed in Spain 500 years ago, i.e., Is it permissible for a Muslim to take up residence in what has been labeled dar al-harb or dar al-kufr? This question was discussed in considerable depth when Spanish Muslims, overrun by the Reconquista, chose to stay, and even before this event, because the Prophet sent a group of Makkan Muslims to Christian Ethiopia (615-622). Some of the ‘ulama, including Imam Abu Hanifa, disapproved of permanent Muslim residence in non-Muslim territory. Imam Shafi’i, on the other hand, believed that Muslims could stay behind in former Muslim lands, provided that they could practice Islam and were not subject to Christian missionary efforts. In contrast to that, already in the eighth century, Imam Jafar al-Sadiq underlined that Muslims might serve Islam better when living among non-Muslims than when living only with Muslims. Al-Mawardi concurred with this opinion in the eleventh century. Later on the Hanif a madhhab became even more liberal. It accepted the idea that there might be pockets of dar al-Islam inside non-Muslim territories; in addition, they were ready to exempt emigrant Muslims from observing certain parts of the shari’ah if this seemed necessary because of ikrah (compulsion), durura (hardship), or maslaha (benefit).

Today, during the third Industrial Revolution—the communications revolution—there can be no doubt that Muslims in non-Muslim countries are not prevented or discouraged by fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) to maintain their residence there. In fact, (non-Qur’anic) concepts like dar al-Islam and dar al-harb have virtually lost their relevance. Most Muslims in the West find it rather easy to practice the essentials of their faith for the following two reasons: First, the West has become irreligious to a point where it tolerates almost anything posing as religion, assuming that it is a “private matter.” Second, freedom of religion has become part of the human rights bills and conventions universally applicable today. Indeed, Islamic research institutes are now flourishing in the West uncensored; mosques are being built from Zagreb via Rome to Lyon; and Islamic communities enter into treaty relationships with their countries of residence. Should this trend continue, as it is my wish and my hope that it will, then sometime in the twenty-first
century, Islam in Europe might become part of what is considered “normal.” And there is a model to be followed: German Catholics at the end of the nineteenth century were still suspected of being disloyal citizens because of their links to Rome. Because of the bitter division between the two Christian denominations, in many German cities and even villages one still finds a Protestant church facing a Catholic church in the very center of town. Today, this architectural confrontation no longer makes sense, and it is only logical for mosques, too, to be added.

The prospect of normalization of the Islamic presence in the West raises the issues of integration and assimilation. To what extent can Muslims be integrated without losing their identity (and their faith with it)? As it is, Muslims—whether foreigner or citizen (born outside the West or born in the West)—are seen as different in four respects:

1. Appearance: Men wearing large beards and caftans or other national dress, and women abiding by the traditional Islamic dress code, more often than not without any redeeming touch of fashion. Many of the Muslim population, even of the second generation, speak the local language with an accent.

2. Eating habits: The Muslims refuse alcohol and other drugs as well as pork and blood-sausages and demand halal slaughtering, thus clashing with local legislation.

3. Rituals: The Muslims want to interrupt their work for prayer, celebrate their own religious holidays, go on pilgrimage during specific days, build mosques with minarets (used for the adhaŷîn), and bury their dead in a particular way, also frequently clashing with local legislation.

4. Faith: The Muslims deny major tenets of Christian dogma (divinity of Christ; the trinity; original sin; Jesus dying on the cross); in addition, their ideal of the relationship between men and women, inside and outside of marriage, clash with what is considered politically correct. Also Muslims are seen as having second thoughts about democracy and human rights.
It is obvious that normalization, let alone integration, hinges on whether the Occident is willing to compromise with such features, and to what extent the Muslims are able and willing to compromise.

As far as the Muslims are concerned, there is room for flexibility, but only to the extent of what is considered “Islamic” civilization and not Islamic creed. Looking at the four points just listed, obviously there is no room for compromise as far as points 3 and 4 are concerned; there is no leeway within aquida and ‘ibadah. In particular, the old Hanafi idea of exempting emigrant Muslims from parts of the shari‘ah should be rejected; otherwise, there would be no end to this process of assimilation, leading the Muslims to compromise their din. A case in point is riba. If the Muslims allowed it, how could they propagate their scheme of profit and risk-sharing as a panacea for some woes of Western economies in which people increasingly refuse to accept risks, a behavior bound to destroy the essence of entrepreneurship? However, by this I do not want to argue against the possible development of what might be called a madhhab al-urubi, a fiqh for Muslim dhimmi (!) as developing from fatawah issued by Western ‘ulama for specific Western problems—if there is such a thing at all.

Concerning points 1 and 2, however, there is considerable room for adaptation. Hardly anybody will deny that a Muslim in the West is not obliged to eat with his hand, sit on the floor, or clean his teeth with a siwwak after eating. But it should be equally obvious that Western Muslims are under no obligation to wear the national dress from their countries of origin and—regarding Muslim women—to dress without any attempt at making their Islamic attire aesthetically pleasing. Nor is it indispensable that Muslims spice their everyday language with exclamations in Arabic—from subhana Allah to masha’ Allah. In fact, anything which reinforces the misconception that Islam is the specific religion of the Arabs (as Judaism has become for ethnic Jews) should be avoided. The result of such attempts should not be a “European Islam” or “American Islam,” let alone a French or Belgian Islam, but an eternal Islam practiced by people who in some other respects adhere to a particular culture. Indeed, as long as a Moroccan Muslim can easily be distinguished from a
Pakistani one, and a Turkish Muslim from a Senegalese one, why not a German Muslim from an Emirati one?

In the process of helping the West to become acquainted with Islam, Western Muslim intellectuals have a large role to play. Foremost is making the extremely important point that Islam, far from being a religion for obscurantists, is a religion for rationalists. Is there any holy script that appeals to man’s power of reasoning more often and more emphatically than the Qur’an? Is Islam not the religion which began with the appeal “Read”?12 In contrast, Christian dogma is based on “mysteries” and extrarational Gnostic concepts. It is Islam which-like (later) European philosophy (especially Hume and Kant)-has always denied the existence of a natural law of causality,13 and it is Islam which has remained conscious of the philosophically insoluble dilemma between predestination and responsibility: features of rationality which the Western intellectual world should positively appreciate.

Muslim intellectuals should help also to respiritualize Islam in the West.14 All too many immigrants from the Muslim world practice their religion in a rigid, legalistic fashion which impresses by its routine more than by its spiritual content so that Islam is not recognized, in a Christian environment, as a living creed which satisfies the spiritual aspirations of an “emancipated” individual.

Local Muslim intellectuals have an additional, indispensible task: Only they can develop the organizational infrastructure necessary for the Muslim communities in the West in their legal dealings with local authorities at the highest level;15 and only they can provide the literature indispensible for effective da’wah. Time and again, it is proven that Islamic books coming from the Muslim world are usually unsuitable for Western audiences. There are many reasons for this, such as faulty printing and translation; however, the major reason for this failure is that only a Western Muslim, raised within Western culture, can fully know how Western people “tick,” what their hang-ups are, and what makes them anxious. In this context, it is essential-and possibly decisive for the future of Islam in the West-that Western Muslim
intellectuals explain the Islamic position on the following three points: women’s rights, human rights in general, and democracy.

As far the the gender roles are concerned, Muslims cannot and will not abandon God’s own dictum that boys are not like girls (Al-Imran:36).

Concerning human rights and democracy the matter is different. There never has been a valid justification for Islamic jurisprudence to absent itself from the universal human rights discourse. It is entirely possible to make a case, based on the Qur’an and Sunnah, for the legitimacy of an Islamic democratic republic which practices division of power and judicial control over the rule of law, enforces a human rights bill, encourages a multiparty parliamentary system with free elections of an amir and shura council. Prestigious Western Muslims and Muslim fuqaha living in the West have defended this position-from Muhammad Asad to Fathi Osman and Rashid al-Ghannoushi.16 But such voices tend to be discredited and drowned-out by statements-as in Germany by Bassam Tibi-about the incompatibility of Islam with democracy.17 For this, European and American Muslims are paying the price.

To some extent, we have surveyed the historical background and a bit of the present situation of Islam in the West. The question is, Under the given circumstances, what are the prospects? Will Islam become the dominant religion of the next century? Will it fade away in a process of assimilation, engulfing the third generation of immigrants who, like the previous two, have found themselves mesmerized by the paradise of Western consumerism? Or, as a third alternative, Will Islam be forcibly ejected from Europe? I submit that all of the above are possible.18 Superficially, prospects seem good for Islam, thanks to the prevalent ideology of postmodernism (provided it is prevalent!).

Modernism is the arrogant conviction that man is the measure of everything, that his reason is capable of solving everything, and that the resulting Western culture means everything to everybody and therefore rings in the end of history (the Fukuyama-Huntington syndrome which was, and is, most inimical to Islam). This kind of thinking threatens to relegate the Muslim world to a
sort of zoological garden, a marginalized reservoir of obscurantism, fanaticism, and bigotry.

In contrast, postmodernism promises to honor whatever wants to remain particular, seeing to it that “small is beautiful” and “black is beautiful.” Also, postmodernism—the ideology of the so-called green movements—emotionally favors the Third World and its cultures. There are other trends that seem to come to the aid of Islam: Re-enforced by food scandals and animal diseases, many Western people are now more conscious than ever of the need to eat healthy food and to stay away from pork. The addiction to drugs of all kinds has started to frighten many people. Even the all-powerful American tobacco industry is heading for financial disaster. All this might help westerners to appreciate the Islamic position on food and drugs. Western feminists have recognized that it is was a mistake to seek, be-yond equal opportunities, an equality with men that borders on the impossible, i.e., identity. But their basic aim—to protect the dignity of women and to save them from male sexual exploitation—is identical with the Islamic concern. So, there too, prospects seem to be bright for better understanding. Finally, not only in the United States—which hardly practices atheism—but also in Europe—which largely practices a de facto atheism—there now is a remarkable resurgence of anti-establishment religion at the grass roots level.19 In addition, the dogmas of the Incarnation and the Trinity have rapidly been losing credibility, even within the Christian churches. Both factors could create a more favorable attitude toward Islam.

Nevertheless, in spite of such silver linings on the horizon, there are quite a few black clouds as well. As far as postmodernism is concerned it seems, alas, that all minorities might profit from it except Islam. It is the one minority that is considered dangerous, aggressive, and intolerant.

While concern about drugs has grown, it is also true that the police consider the “drug war” virtually lost. The green movements, the great proponents of postmodernism, favor drug legalization and the “right to drug oneself,” a position in direction opposition to Islam. While more women than men convert to Islam in the West, it is also true that the average
Western woman continues to be Islam’s most fervent foe, considering Islam an unacceptable threat to the very hard fought freedoms Western women have only recently gained.

While religious resurgence is a good thing, it has also produced fanatically anti-Islamic Christian groups whose professed aim is the elimination of Islam from Europe. Even the president of the Protestant Church of the German State of Hesse, Dr. Steinacker, in writing and on TV continues to maintain that Christians and Muslims “do not have the same God,” implying that Allah is a mere idol.

Which of the contradictory trends will prevail will largely depend on the acceptance of Islam as part of European heritage. When reference is made to it, people speak of Europe’s “Christian-humanistic” heritage, which may include Judaism but definitely is meant to exclude Islam. Therefore, it is essential to remind the Occident that all three monotheistic religions were born in the Near East and that Christianity has absorbed many more elements of Oriental thought and speculation than Islam. The Occident should also be reminded that

- the largest city, by far, on the European continent-Istanbul-is Muslim;
- Spain has been Islamic longer than it has been Catholic;
- the European Renaissance would have been unthinkable without the Muslim “input”; and
- the absence of a “church” in Islam saved the Muslim world from a situation that required Voltaire’s and Lessing’s confrontation (the Enlightenment) with a stifling Church; Islam therefore had no need for reenacting the European experience.

In other words, Western Muslims have to bring home the idea that not only is Islam there to stay, both in Europe and the United States, but also that it belongs there as much as Christianity. They have to convey the idea that it is not an Arabic or a Turkish
religion but the universal religion of submission to God as first practiced by Ibrahim, our common forefather.

Unfortunately, this task will be made more difficult by the effects of economic globalization on the employment possibilities in Europe. Resulting from the free flow of capital, technology, industrial products, and labor, all European countries currently experience structural crises which lead to a decline of the standard of life and demand severe cut-backs in all fields of social State intervention. It is almost certain that the present high level of unemployment will become structural, and it looks as if Western democracies cannot effectively cope with the unpopular measures thus required. All this spells possible disaster for the Muslim work force in Europe, which is already effectively accused of taking away jobs from local workers. It does not take much for a populist leader like Le Pen in France to focus public frustration in such a way that economic anxiety and racial phobia combine to make Islam in Europe the victim. However, I admit this is the worst case scenario. Wa Allahu ‘alim.
08/18/07 "ICH" Headlines scream out at you: “Lal Masjid threatens to give the call for jihad.” “Clash with security forces leaves 16 students dead.” And all this accompanied by pictures of women in burqas wielding lathis longer than themselves. Talk of women power!! Another one: “Flaming jeep drives into Glasgow airport.” (No, it was not Lucifer trying to catch a flight either). “Doctor from Bangalore was the driver.”

What’s the common thread in these and many other such headlines? The names of the actors are all Muslim. And the pressure mounts on all of us – normal, harmless, garden-variety of Muslims – to explain what is going on in the name of Islam. I remember a conversation with a friend, a senior police officer in India to whom I complained about the way the media and all who report such incidents malign Islam in their reporting. She said something that was rather shocking. “Isn’t it the organizations and people who perpetrate these things who claim to be doing them in the name of Islam, first? So what else do you expect anyone else to do? They are only repeating what the originators have said in the first place.”

In the strange world we live in, we Muslims and our Islam seems to be designed either by the strident discordant cries of people like the Imam of Lal Masjid or the despicable lies spewed out by the likes of Salman Rushdie, Tasleema Nasreen, Irshad Mani and Hirsi Ali. Both these groups seek to foist their version of Islam on the rest of us. I believe the time has come for us, people who are practicing Muslims, proud of our great religion and culture, obedient to Allah, conscious of our accountability to him, with no intention of changing Islam or its Shari’ah in any way whatsoever; to stand up and say, “Do what you want but
leave Islam out of it. You don’t represent us. You are not our leaders.”

We Muslims ourselves are in a state of denial. The usual standard answer that we get when we mention the different acts of violence allegedly perpetrated by Muslims is that actually these have been done by or orchestrated by agencies of the enemies of Islam. We have become used to blaming the West, so-called ‘International Agencies’ or who-have-you for whatever happens that involves Muslims. What helps the proponents of this stance is the fact that there have been incidents in the past where it has been proved that one or more of these agencies have in fact had a hand in either staging an act of violence and laying it at the door of Muslims who had nothing to do with it; or of aiding and abetting Muslims in committing hara-kiri of one kind or other.

However the uncomfortable fact remains that there are many incidents that have happened and continue to happen that are entirely the effort of Muslims themselves. Call them misguided. Call them ignorant. Call them extremist. Call them what you will. The fact remains that what they did was of their own volition, with no encouragement from anyone else. The Lal Masjid fiasco is a classic case in point. So are the Shia-Sunni killings in Iraq. So are the Shia-Sunni killings in Pakistan. So are the various fatawa that are given for all kinds of things by obscure clerics with limited knowledge of the religion and even less of the issue of public image. Yet they have no hesitation in making the most outrageous statements, all in the name of Allah and His Messenger. And the media goes to town on them. Ask Muslims why all this is happening and the standard answer you get is that it is not happening. Now that is amazing because it denies blatantly visible facts. But that seems to be the major issue. Like the US, the Muslim Ummah seems to be in a stage of massive denial. We don’t seem to want to admit that we have some serious problems within ourselves, which are the cause of our global suffering.

We don’t seem to want to admit that we need to bring about some major changes in our education system, our cultural
moorings, our behavior with others, our social fabric and our very thinking and mindset if we want our image to change. For example, it is true that the US intervention in Iraq has caused some major upheavals in the social order in that wretched land and that the Americans are killing Iraqis like flies, but it is equally true that it is not the Americans who are killing anyone in the Shia–Sunni murders in Iraq. These are of the Iraqis, by the Iraqis, for the Iraqis, thank you very much. The Iraqis seem quite self sufficient in terms of sending each other off to the happy hunting grounds in large numbers. Yet, Muslims blame everyone except themselves for what is happening. We hear long stories of the Western policy of divide and rule and how it is being applied once again. We don’t however hear reasons why after more than 300 years of colonial domination of one kind or another, we still have not learnt that unless a group is willing to be divided, nobody can divide them. What does that say about the intelligence of our leadership and so-called intelligentsia?

The British divided and ruled India because that is what Indians wanted them to do. That is why so many Indians (Sikhs, Maratha and Rajput Rajas, Baniyas of Delhi and Afghans) supported the British with information, money and soldiers while their own compatriots died before British cannon on the walls of Delhi in 1857. And when the War of Independence was lost, they stood in line for Knighthoods, Rai Bahadur-hoods and other sundry ‘honors’ from their colonial masters, for having been good collaborators. And to this day, these worthies are not roundly cursed for being the traitors that they were. Instead we blame the British. My question is that when we know that it is the job of the enemy to divide and rule, why blame him for doing it? It was our job on the other hand, to remain united and not allow anyone to divide us, which we did not do. So whose fault is it if we are divided and then finished off piecemeal? But try telling that to our dear ones!!!

So what is the reason for this terrible situation that we find ourselves in? I believe that this sad situation that we find ourselves in is the result of the effective division of Muslim society into discrete, mutually exclusive groups who have little or nothing in common with one another. What I am writing
below is with specific reference to the Indian sub-continent, home to more than 350 million Muslims in 4 countries. However I have no doubt that many issues herein will be common to Muslims in other places as well.

4. mutually exclusive groups

1. The Ulama by and large are a group unto themselves with a distinct education system. On the one hand they need to be applauded for providing free education to a staggering 4 million children most of whom come from families living below the poverty index. These Ulama raise funds by asking for donations from Muslims (the poorest community in India) and feed, house and educate these children but strangely, instead of being admired and thanked they are looked upon by disdain by their own people and maligned by others (who call them fundamentalists and worse). If only one would take the trouble to look, the reality is very different. One can only do what is in one’s power. So since the Ulama themselves are mostly not knowledgeable about modern subjects and don’t have the money to hire professional teachers, most Madrassa students are not taught anything at all of modern subjects or the English language and so their knowledge of the world and the ability to understand current events is almost non-existent.

2. Then there is the group of so-called Danishwaraa-e-millat (the Wise People of the Community). Let us not ask about the nature of this wisdom or of what it has yielded in the last 200 years. These are the business people, professionals, scholars of modern subjects in universities and general well-to-do Muslims. This group, by and large speaks a different language from the Ulama, does not understand the language the Ulama speak, sees them as necessary only for leading the salah, delivering the Juma Khutba and performing the funeral prayer. All things that the normal Muslim male is supposed to be able to do, but is never taught how to. A ‘priestly class’ has therefore come into being in a religion that expressly bans all priests. This person alleviates his own guilt by throwing some money from time to time at the local Madrassa or masjid. He has no idea what is taught in the
Madarassa, has probably never seen the inside of the Madrassa even in his own town and generally treats the Ulama with a mixture of wary respect, suspicion and disdain. The fact that Ulama come from time to time to ask for donations makes it easy for these people to hold them in disdain as being supplicants rather than people with any respectable power. Seems rather complex, but believe me, we manage to do this quite well.

3. Then there are our political leaders. By and large they are corrupt, prey on Muslim society directly and indirectly through their henchmen, win elections by fanning the flames of hatred or fear of the ‘Other’ and showing themselves as the saviors. Ask them what they did during the Gujarat genocide or thereafter to bring the murderers to book and you will see the exact value of these ‘saviors’. Thankfully for them, we have the periodic communal riots and the mentally retarded rantings of the likes of Bal Thackaray, Narendra Modi, Ashok Singhal, Uma Bharati, L.K. Advani and other leading lights of the Sangh Parivar, which are an undisguised blessing to keep the flames alive. Also they have enough deaf, blind and dumb constituents to ensure that they are repeatedly elected to office. In short these political leaders are for sale and will do anything that is required to remain in power and have the minimum possible interest in their constituents.

4. Then there is the vast multitude of the so-called ordinary Muslims. People, who live their daily lives, go to the masjid on Fridays, observe Ramadan, celebrate the festivals – the wear sherwani and eat biryani variety. These have no voice of any kind and their only time in the limelight is when they get killed in police firing somewhere (notice that the political leaders who incite them never do the dying) or when they are seen in processions, shouting slogans for one obscure cause or another. In this they are regularly used by all political parties and thrown aside when their function is over like so much waste paper.

All these groups have almost no contact with each other, no way to influence each other, no shared knowledge or experience and no mutual understanding. Instead there is a very high degree of mutual suspicion, aided and abetted by clever propaganda and
lies manufactured by one group against another which widens the divide. The result is that there is no common authority or voice, either at a country level or at a global level. Every Muslim is therefore a ‘Khalifa’ unto himself and there’s no central authority. Consequently no Muslim is answerable to anyone else. And so does what he or she feels like doing or what makes ‘sense’ to them in their frame of reference. No matter that this frame of reference may be neither logical nor reasonable, much less theologically correct.

It is true that Muslims worldwide have genuine grievances about the way they are treated, especially by the West. They have grievances about the slavery they find themselves in, enforced in most cases by the puppet regimes that have been placed on their heads by Western powers, making them prisoners in their own lands. They have on the one hand to live under totalitarian regimes who are vicious and brutal and who will not hesitate to commit mayhem on a massive scale to put down any popular uprising.

Simultaneously and ironically on the other hand they have to suffer being called non-democratic, unwilling to rise up against their rulers and dictators and generally apathetic. The fact that these very rulers have been put in place and are supported and kept in place by Western military strength is not mentioned in the breath that it takes to condemn those who are suffering under such rule. Be that as it may, the fact remains that bursting bombs in airports, night clubs and malls is not going to change any of this. Instead, what it will do is to strengthen the hands of the oppressors and give them even more power to arm themselves and their allies, create a more closed society, bring in more draconian laws and generally perpetrate more crimes in the name of maintaining security.

So what is the solution? In my view the solution lies in the amazingly fortunate situation the Muslim Ummah finds itself of being in the eye of the world, provided that we can get our act together and act proactively in a coherent, sensible, creative and positive manner. Potentially Muslims today have access to the world media, any channel, and any country, free of cost.
Anything that has an Islamic bent attracts the cameras and the world watches. Whose fault is it that almost all of it is negative? If our people drive flaming jeeps into airports; that is what will be shown. If they hole up inside a masjid or madrasa keeping women and children hostage, that is what will be shown.

If they claim responsibility for some act of violence perpetrated on innocent people, that is what will be reported. Propaganda is created and propagandists thrive in a situation where their victims readily provide them with real data and events to twist and report. And that is what we continue to do.

Key: Non-violent struggle for truth: Satyagrah

The key is to do what Gandhiji did during the Indian Freedom Struggle; create media events that show you in a good light while shaking the foundations of power. The Gandhian method of Satyagrah (non-violent civil disobedience) is a wonderful method that works very well in a situation where the establishment is law abiding. Today this is more or less true of all the places where Muslims live. And bright lights and cameras will do the rest to ensure that the first action is not the last. So if we have issues that we want the world to see and take action on, then we need to create the equivalent of a Salt Satyagrah which very simply, challenged the authority of the British Government to make laws in its Empire. And all that Gandhiji did was to walk to the beach and make some salt.

Today, the real battle is for mindshare. And it is on the television screen. That is where governments of the developed world are made or unmade. Popularity is the god that the West worships. Because popularity translates into money and power. That is what we have to do; become popular. Setting off fireworks is not the way to do this. No matter what the provocation.
Think Tanks & Team work

I believe that the first step in this direction is to get the minds of the Ummah together. I propose that Think Tanks be created at a local level in every place where Muslims live. These must comprise of a cross-section of all the segments that I mentioned above. People who participate in them must learn how to collaborate, dialogue, differ and deal with conflict. They must learn to disagree without being disagreeable. They must learn to focus on issues of common concern while agreeing to live with the differences. They must learn to put the interest of Islam and the Muslim Ummah above their own narrow partisan concerns. And they must learn to obey an Ameer. These individual local groups must network and come together at a country level and in time at a global level. There are many secular and other religious organizations today who follow this model, very successfully. All it needs is sincerity and dedication. The methods are all known, Islamic in origin and easy to follow, but only for those who genuinely want to follow them.

These Think Tanks must identify important emerging issues, deliberate on them, take expert advice and then create solutions for them from an Islamic perspective. These solutions must be innovative, attractive and powerful and with great media savvy, must be made public. Believe me, if we do the right thing, world media will be only too glad to give us air time free of cost. After all the Nobel Peace Prize went to Mohammad Younus of Grameen Bank fame with a battery of appearances on all the major media channels, with his Islamic identity clearly visible in every appearance.

A Dundee Salt March with a Gandhi leading it will make all the headlines and primetime shows in the world, even today. And it will be free for the Gandhi and his followers. That is what we need. If you become news worthy, you become news. I believe that it is time for the thinking ones to wake up and start thinking so that they don’t allow the mindless to hijack their image and thereby draw suffering on their heads for no fault of their own.
Lethargy in today’s world is a crime. Especially lethargy in a situation where our very existence is threatened. Let us remember that as long as we are seen as people who are addicted to violence neither we nor our religion are likely to be seen in a positive light. Whether this image is fact or not is immaterial. It is the dominant image today. And it is an image that must be debunked. Nobody likes to be with or to support murderers of innocent people. We don’t either. But it is now time to come out of our drawing rooms and not only say so loudly and clearly but to create systems where an alternate voice is heard at least equally clearly. A time will come, insha’Allah if we do this, that the world will turn to us for solutions to its problems. For it will see Muslim society free from such evils. That is the differentiator which will set us up clearly as the leaders of the world. But when the world sees Muslim society also like itself, in the clutches of ignorance, violence, barbaric customs and mindless traditions of social exploitation, do you blame it, if it sees no difference?

After all sheep are sheep, no matter how many. And sheep can never be shepherds.

Mirza Yawar Baig
Member, Muslim Consultative Council

http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article18209.htm
Understanding Political Islam

By M.A.HUSSAIN

The ethnocentric, parochial, temporocentric and myopic view of Islam has led some ignorant “uncivilized” “Western” intellectuals to talk of “clash of civilizations”. They are those who do not understand their own “civilization” and ignore how “the West” has been cradle of fascism and Stalinism. The West alone cannot take credit for secular humanist thought and achievements of industrial revolution. All of us have contributed to secular humanist thought and technological achievement of humanity. (Muslims have played an important role to bring about renaissance in so-called West.)

It has become necessary to present holistic view of Islam not merely black and white picture, differentiate between Islam as a political ideology and Islam as a faith and between Islam as a religion and Muslims as living persons.

In Islamic societies, in addition to humanist thought and education, there are three systems of social communications or streams of thought which make a Muslim's culture what it is. The influence of these, in a Muslim's life, makes his mind-set and his psyche different from that of a non-Muslim.

The first is the Islamic scriptures --Quran and Hadith as interpreted by Ulamas, Mullahs, Muftis and Maulavis, and communicated through Madrasahs and Mosques and administered through the Islamic state wherever there is one. This is Islam as a political ideology. Let us call it as political Islam or Islamism. This should not be confused with Islam as religion.
The second is Tasawwuf (Islamic mysticism) which seeks truth through personal religious experience, not through the scriptures and is espoused by the Sufis (religious mystics).

The third is Adab (a concept broadly meaning art and literature) as a sub-culture of broad-minded and urbane people of high learning and literary tastes. Poets, writers and artists are its communicators. Among Indian Muslims the medium of Adab was Persian. Now it is Urdu.

All the three modes of socialization and modes of thought differ in aims and objectives to be attained and the methods to be adopted. Whereas orthodox Islam of the Ulamas seeks to control the collective affairs of the society by capturing political power, as in Algeria, Turkey, Egypt, Pakistan, Afghanistan. Sufis, messengers of love, advocate the principle of Sulh-i-kul: peace with all and conflict with none. Poets, Sufis and liberal Muslim intellectuals have invited the wrath of Mullahs and Ulmas from the very beginning. Often they have been accused of blasphemy and heresy by Islamists. Whereas Ulama’s Islam is political, tied with state and political power. The folk Islam was spiritual and existentialist. The Ulama's world view is completely antagonistic to that of Tasawwuf and Adab. The degree of animosity between Ulamas and Sufis can be gauged by the fact that long after the death of a Kashmiri Sufi Sheikh Noor Din, his shrine at Chhara-Sharif was reduced to ashes as the perpetrators of violence -- foreign mercenaries and their local counterparts in Kashmir have no respect for the Sufi's world view.

**Tasawwuf**

Tasawwuf in essence is self-education and self communication (or intra-personal communication) where one’s own self and one’s relation with God is subject of study. For the Sufis the knowledge was not the knowledge of Quranic do’s and don’ts but that of one’s self, Ma-rifah. For a Sufi, a man’s inner self and not the Sheriah was the true moral guide. These existentialist communicators thus deepened the spiritual concerns of the Muslims. Their love of God was disinterested, without hope for paradise and without fear of hell, a love in which the distinction
between God and the world (including man), between lover and beloved, and between non-Muslims and Muslims disappears.

Islamic mystics seek to find the truth of the divine love and knowledge through direct experience of God, not by reciting Quran or by observing Islamic rituals. For a Sufi, the truth of divine unity and divine love has to be realized in the existence of each individual and so its expression will differ.

The Sufis were not apolitical or “spectators on the fence” but socially responsible and politically active people. They were zealous missionaries and have contributed more to propagation of Islam than their critics (Wahabis) have. Although Sufis unlike Ulamas had no official recognition of their religious status and no authority to impose their views. They had their own social base and the political clout. That is the reason why Ulamas (executive agents of Islam) could not wipe out or suppress them. In spite of the facts that Sufis were strong critics of Mullahs and Islamism, they managed to spread their message and survived attempts to suppress or censor their views, most of which were propagated orally through poetry. Presently the Sufi tradition as a socio-cultural movement is dead because of schism, ritualism and elitism (regimentation of its ranks and file). Islamism has become politically active and has bridged the gap in fractured Ummah. Islamists have succeeded to a large extent spreading the gospel of political Islam in cities and among educated Muslims all over the Muslim world.

Adab

The word “adab” simply means norms of conduct or customs including good etiquette, deemed praiseworthy in the medieval Muslim world. But here the word “adab” is a broad term meaning a sub-culture or a “taste culture” of a certain social strata’s of Muslim community. Adib means a well-bred and cultivated person who possesses knowledge of poetry and literature including oratory. Adib – author of adab- produces Adab or literature, elegant prose or poetry written in a style rich in vocabulary and the good of the humanity as its subject.
In Islamic society Adibs were “free thinkers” who did not view the world in black and white like a Mullah but in all shades and colours. The Persian and Urdu Adibs have always been at war with Mullahs who often issued Fatwas against them. They are active in fighting the forces of darkness. The Urdu culture can rightly be called “counter culture” or “adversary culture” in South Asia.

Tasawwuf and adab are closely related. Sufis have used poetry as a vehicle for expression for their ideas. The only difference between the two seems to be that Adab was urbane and high brow and Tasawwuf belonged to common folk and rural masses. In India Urdu adab has played a key role in the freedom movement fighting divisive forces and in emancipation of people and enlightened their minds with progressive ideas. But presently discrimination against Urdu pursued as a state policy in India has dented its fighting spirit. It has resulted in a cultural divide between Indian Muslims and their fellow countrymen, one more divide in already fragmented Indian society. Urdu adab is silenced in India and Pakistan, no longer a potential adversary of intolerance and fascist forces.

Islamism

The Madrasahs as locus of Islamism emerged as structural necessity of transition of Arab society from a non-literate to literate society and emergence of new trans-tribal power elite, which was to be educated formally and socialized for trans-tribal governance.

As Quran marked a shift in Arab society from non-literate(oral culture) to literate society, dominated by tribal chiefs to society dominated by trans-tribal power elite. It gave an impetus to learning and writing Arabic language, compilation of law, philosophy, science, printing and publishing.

It was seen as a great revolution in tribal Arab society, which threw literate trans-tribal elite to political power. This divided Arab society vertically. The pagans were annihilated and illiterates(particularly rural masses) put to a disadvantageous position as Arab society progressed under Islam. This gave rise to Islamic clergy as power elite and Islamism as political
ideology of governing class as opposed to counter-Islam or folk Islam of common Arab masses during Mohammad’s life time. The folk Islam driven by Arab cultural traditions has been ruthlessly suppressed by Islamists after the death of prophet of Islam.

In addition to sectarian divisions in Islam, there emerged two Islam’s: one written, formal or official (Islamic rulers) and other folk non-literate Islam of those who were ruled and governed by religious power elite. This divided Muslim society vertically. The two camps are at perpetual war against each other: One imposes laws and social code of conduct in the name of Islam and the other seeks new ways to subverts and defy these laws.

As the Islamic societies are getting secularized, a traditional power elite with Madrasah mind-set finds himself in a 1400 year old world constantly in confrontation with the present day world and entangled in the mother of all battles the so-called Jihad, a war against all non-Muslims (including non-Islamic Muslim states like Turkey, Egypt, Algeria etc.) and also against the Muslims and Muslim women, not willing to be guided and governed by Ulamas and Mullahs.

**Madrasahs**

Madrasahs have originated from mosques where “scholars” congregated to discuss the Quran considered as the ultimate authority in all legal and religious matters. There emerged a few who were recognized as an authority on these subjects and others grouped around their seat in a semi-circle as their teacher. With the passage of time, the situation became somewhat formalized and a rudimentary Islamic school, known as a Halqa, took shape. A Halqa was generally a single teacher school and represented a school of thought in Islamic theology (later this bred sectarianism amongst Muslims).

The Halqa grew into Madrasah, an institution of higher learning of Quran, Islamic tradition, Arabic literature and history. It was funded by the rulers and rich men. (In addition to Madrasah, a Maktab, a small school is attached to almost every mosque, where pupils are taught reading and reciting and memorizing Quran's necessary portions required for the daily prayers. Some
Maktab also teach writing and elementary arithmetic’s. The whole educational system is un-integrated and undifferentiated and is fractured by denominational and sectarian interests and unrelated to practical life.)

One of the functions of the Madrasah is to prepare the students for the administrative and judicial posts like Qazi, Muhtasib, etc. and also for various religious functions in a mosque like Imam, Mozin, Mo-alim, Maulavi, etc. Naturally the "degree Holders” of Madrasah will have a vested interest in establishing an Islamic state where they are locus of power and have tremendous scope for employment. It explains why even those Ulamas and Maulavis (like Moulana Maudoodi), who had opposed Jinnah, went to Pakistan soon after partition as they saw no role in India for themselves.

(Furthermore, because of its sectarian and divisive nature, Madrasah system cannot have any equation with the secular educational system, and Madrasah-qualifications cannot be taken at par with non-dogmatic educational qualifications. In fact, there is no place for Madrasah education in societies not governed by the Ulamas and Maulavis. Where there is no Islamic state (mullah raj), there should be no Madrasah education. The educational system in Muslim world needs to be modernized.)

Seeds of Intolerance

The seeds of intolerance were sown into the Muslim societies, when the Islamic scholars and Ulamas succeeded in winning over the rulers to their sides, and became an arm of the Islamic state and started suppressing their contemporaries who, after interaction with the humanist philosophy, dared to oppose their teachings and started questioning the established religious ideas. To meet the challenge of new the thinking, a sharp distinction was made between the religious or dogmatic and non-dogmatic sciences. The latter were excluded from the curriculum of the Madrasah. The gap between the two began to widen because secular and scientific knowledge is deduced from self-evident principles (not from divine sources), and is constructed and critically analyzed anew by each learner. Whereas the theological knowledge is beyond doubt, questioning is
considered as blasphemous or heretic. Madrasahs tend to reinforce accepted values rather than develop and disseminate new ideas.

Moreover the conflict between the aims and objectives of religious and secular education are irreconcilable as far as Madrasah system is concerned. This is because the sole aim of Madrasah education is attainment of the pleasure of God, not material prosperity and progress of mankind. To understand and to seek knowledge has not been the aim of the Madrasah as it considers attainment of bliss in the other world the only goal of the life.

As the Ulamas turned into power elite, Madrasahs became places of indoctrination where critical and free-thinking meant blasphemy, a cognizable offence!. The critical attitude and freedom of thought was suppressed as teachers took the role of the "thought police". The physical punishment and strict discipline became a part of the Madrasah milieu. (Taliban Chief Mullah Umar's slapping one of his generals in the presence of journalists tells the whole story of authoritarian Madrasah milieu). The learning was confined to memorization which impoverished the intellectual creativity of Madrasah students. There is no academic freedom left and stick is regarded as a valuable teaching-aid for a teacher. Madrasah has been a closed system characterized by intolerance towards everything which is new, creative and not prescribed in the Quran. Even Aurangzeb, when he grew older, is said to have complained to his teacher about narrowness of Madrasahs' curriculum and its being unrelated to practical life.

Censorship

As Madrasahs were part of the state and Mullahs, Ulama, Muftis and Qazis as its executors, some kind of censorship was built into Muslim society, particularly in the field of printing and publishing. The office of special public prosecutor, known as Muhtasib was created. He was placed in-charge of public morality. He would direct police, judge offences against the public morality and supervise weights and measures. It was his duty to suppress views that were not in agreement with the
accepted (or official) religious teachings. He had to make sure that people observed Islamic dress code, Namaz and fast in the month of Ramadan. His job was to impose fine against those who dared to violate these. It was he who could decide what was within the religious code and what was socially acceptable. What Taliban's religious police are doing in Kabul is nothing new. Muhtasibs were there in Afghanistan before the Soviets invaded Afghanistan.

In a totalitarian or a collectivist society socio-cultural governance and political governance (the sociological processes like "social control" and “state control” over social behaviour of an individual) overlap and get centralized, killing personal liberty and autonomy of the individual. That is what is happening in the Muslim societies like the one in Pakistan, which are dominated by Ulama and Mullahs.

Not surprising that banning and burning of books and libraries, flogging and public punishment for moral lapses and death or imprisonment for holding un-islamic views have become characteristics of such societies. Madrasah mind-set not only impoverished Muslims culturally but also whichever society and culture came under their domination. The hostility towards everything alien to Ulamas and their world-view resulted in cultural subjugation of so many non-Islamic cultures and societies.

In India we have seen Madrasah mind-set in action during Aurangzeb's regime when he reversed Akbar's policies of democratization and secularization of education that aimed at enabling every student to receive education according to his religion and his world view by widening the scope of the curriculum based on needs of the student and the practical necessities of life.

**Cultural impoverishment**

Anything heretical or un-Islamic and alien had no chance to survive or get circulated in the society dominated by the Ulamas. Whatever was not expressly sanctioned by Islam had no value. Art, literature, music, painting, drama etc. were considered to be
against Islam. The chanting of Quran has been -- for centuries together -- the only music for Mullahs and Ulamas. For a Mullah who thinks of man as a puppet, God is the only actor, there is no place for drama and films. God is the only law-maker (and Ulama the only interpreter and executor of such a law) who provided Shariah (legal code) to man, man has no capacity to enact laws of his own because they will be imperfect. God is a great knower, man should surrender his reason before His book, Quran, which is the complete manual of good living. God is a great artist. Man should not mimic His creations through visual art. It is piracy!

The epistemological basis of this world-view is that man is a puppet in the hands of God, not a creative and active being -- and his reason is fallible, imperfect and limited. Man is incapable of shaping his own life, developing the code of his social conduct and managing his collective affairs without God's intervention. This view of man is not in tune with the scientific and secular traditions of the Indian civilization and it has already resulted in the cultural impoverishment of the Indian people.

**Fractured Ummah**

As Islam is the mainspring, at least in theory, of all the activities of Muslims and as it embraces everything: morality, law, politics, economics and education it makes Muslims a political community. In the Muslim societies dominated by the Ulamas, who are a part of the power structure and actively engaged in power struggle, Islamic theology became a vehicle for power politics rather than for understanding of the Quran and Hadith.

The purpose of the Madrasah-education is to secure the allegiance of the students to a particular theological school sponsoring that Madrasah. Thus Madrasahs not only divide the humanity between the Muslims and the non-Muslims but also Madrasahs divide Muslims themselves on sectarian lines and fill their hearts with poison against each other. This often leads to the Shia-Sunni riots. Mullahs struggle for power has played havoc in Algeria, Egypt, Afghanistan and Pakistan.
At places where Islam was preached by Sufis (as in India), Madrasahs' education created a sharp cleavage between the orthodox Islam of the Ulamas and the folk-Islam of the people. This resulted in an everlasting tussle between the two. Thus Madrasahs have divided the Muslim community according to their world-view too. It has fractured Ummah, the brotherhood of Muslims further.

**Pan Islamism**

Among all the three streams of thought, Madrasah mind-set is the most dominant mode of thought in a segment of Muslim populations in third world countries due to under-development and lack of human resource development.

On the one hand, Madrasahs have divided the Muslim community on sectarian lines but on the other hand, these are helping in transforming the fractured Ummah into a transnational political community. A single language, Arabic, had become the medium of scholarship and theology. The Madrasahs are torch-bearers of Pan Islamism, cutting across all barriers of ethnic, racial, lingual and political divisions among Muslims.

But as the Madrasah teaches a very narrow world outlook and seeks to overthrow all non-Islamic states world over, and Islamists have associated themselves with violence and terrorism throughout the world including the Muslim countries.

Pan-Islamism seems to be internationalist movement but it is essentially driven by nationalist interests and fought within nationalist framework. The Islamist movement can be viewed as a local response to a global situation: capitalist decadence, globalisation and underdevelopment, couched in religious terms.

Pan-Islamic ummah(Islamic brotherhood) is a facade. We have seen how Arab guest fighters were hated in Afghanistan. How the guest fighters in Bagdad were betrayed by the local population there.

But there are elements in Islamists who see nationalist movements as vehicles to promote Pan-Islamic brotherhood.
Earlier Islamists were allies of America in their fight against communism. After the collapse of Soviet block and emergence of unipolar world. Pan-Islamism (after Eurocentricism) is being viewed as an anti-American and anti-imperialism political force. But Islamism is inherently anti-left and against Urban values as they both try to win over working class.

**Hezbollah**

As Islamists view a non-Islamic state as well as the Muslim states like Turkey, Egypt and Algeria ruled by corrupt liberal Muslims as ruled by the Satan, Ulamas and Mullahs consider themselves as a party of Allah in such a society, as if assigned the role of opposition to the Satanic secular rule. (Hence the name Hezbullah.) Therefore where the state is not an Islamic one, Mullahs and Ulamas consider active, practical and criminal disobedience and overthrowing such a state as their religious duty. Thus Madrasahs mind set pose several problems and is a potential threat to a pluralistic society.

It is not that every Mullah and Ulama turns against the states. Some even favour non-Islamic states and seemingly work in their favour amongst the Muslims by preaching status quo and territorial nationalism, and allying themselves with one or the other faction of the ruling class to share the political power with them. It is not out of conviction but out of compulsion that they are doing so, because Ulamas do not like to remain "out of power" without the usual perks and berths. These status quoits are equally dangerous as the fundamentalist Mullahs. In Kashmir we have seen that Mullahs (including Jamaat-e-Islamia Mullahs) began supporting the insurgents only when the latter gained the upper hand. They were against late Maqbool Bhat and would oppose celebrating his death anniversary, now he is their hero. It shows how Mullahs adapt to the changing circumstances to safeguard their interests.

**Decadent Values**

The Islamists and Madrasah milieu nurses decadent values. At the present times when politics, economics, ethics, philosophy,
education and culture have been liberated from the clutches of religion, the Maulavis want to reverse the process. They do not understand the truth that moral values cannot be preached or imposed. These must be cultivated and are determined by the nature of social relations. Moral values do not come from the heavens. These change with the change in the mode of existence of man's social life and the structure of social relations in a society.

Feudal and tribal values cannot operate in a capitalistic society. Hence they cannot be imposed upon the capitalistic man. In a world where the market economy is dominating every aspect of our lives, religion has lost its pre-eminence. Now market is deciding what is good and what is bad for us, what we should do and what we should not.

As a result Madarasah mind-set, (as Christian fundamentalists do) sees itself at war with all and everything -- from the Barbie doll to the Dish antenna, from the condom to the TV ad on a napkin. They have enemies within their own families: i.e. their own daughters, their own sisters and wives. They are a frustrated lot. Even late Zia-ul-Haq of Pakistan faced resistance against the adoption of Islamic dress code from as meek women as the newsreaders on the Pakistan television. Islamists need to understand that women's empowerment, autonomy and personal liberty of an individual, democratization and secularization of education, globalization of communication and domination of economics over all aspects of our lives cannot be reversed through coercive means.
What is Real Islam?

By M.A.Hussain

The “civilized” Western media particularly Christian right (and also “Hindu” right) wants us to believe that Islam is responsible for conflicts and chaos the world over and unless Islam is stamped out (with the help of WMD of course), there can be no peace in the world. The same sources of mystification and lies used to tell us that unless freedom of money (turning of everything into saleable and exchangeable commodities) and (human) rights of (non-human) American capital are not restored in “God denying” former Soviet block, there can be no peace in the world. The Christian right thinks that the only way to bring peace is to establish Kingdom of (White) God all over the world and to facilitate world domination of the only Christian super power, America. They forget that the credit for dismantling “God Denying” Russian empire goes partly to Islamists. It was American Imperialism that used intra-tribal feuds of Afghans to defeat “infidel” communist Russia and fostered the forces of political Islam and armed and funded them in their fight against Russia.

After the demise of “God denying” so-called communist Russia, proponents of New World order promised us world peace, progress and prosperity. They talked of non-violent multi-lateral conflict resolution and disarmament. Nevertheless, “death of communism” did not bring peace to the world. It resulted in more wars, conflicts and chaos.

We all know that the cold war was styled as war between “God-fearing” private capitalism and “God denying” state capitalism popularly labeled as Communism. Now the battle lines for world war third are being drawn between those who are anti-Islam and oil thirsty (this includes oil rich Muslim rulers) and those who are pro-Muslim and anti-imperialism (against looting Arab oil).
It seems that this disgraced humanity is plunging into abyss of large scale death and destruction once again. After “the success” of Bush doctrine of “pre-emptive barbarism”, lunatic elements in American administration are thinking of winnable nuclear war against Iran. It is to stop the mother of all battle to take place between 80% of humanity sharing 20% of world resources and 20 % inhuman thugs garbing 80% of world resources.

They are now holding “God fearing” Islam responsible for capitalist barbarism being unleashed by American imperialism the world over. Forgetting that the containment of God denying Russia was joint venture of “God fearing” Islamists and “civilized” capitalist countries including God fearing Christians right. Who was responsible for death and destruction during two world wars and under fascism and Stalinism? It was not Islam (and Church did not oppose these wars).

Soon after Sept 11 criminal act, the American people and the world community were lectured about what Islam is and what Islam is not. As if understanding Islam might lead to understanding the causes of Sept 11. The adversaries of Islam “celebrated” the day Sept 11 by flooding media with lies about Islam (some of them sought this opportunity to launch anti-abortion and anti masturbation campaign!!). Osama Bin Laden became hero of Christian right who took him as spokesman of 1.3 billion Muslims and thanked him for opening their eyes (some called Osama bin Laden God sent). The fact remains that terrorism is against Islamic and Arab (and Afghan) tribal traditions. Terrorism is one of the manifestations of capitalist social relations and has nothing to do with orthodox Islam.

The adversaries of Islam have engaged writers, intellectuals, and “research” scholars who are churning articles and “research” papers to prove that Islam teaches terrorism and to demonize Muslims by profiling them as terrorists. Osama’s lectures and videotapes are their favorite reference material. (One India born Hindu writer who used to indulge in third rate Islam bashing was awarded “noble” prize after a long wait!!). This clearly reveals that neither so-called the West wants to know what the Islam is nor it is interested in containing terrorism. All this public relation exercise-- with the help of billion-dollar consent engineering
industry-- is being launched to conceal the crimes committed by American imperialism against humanity from America people and the world community.

For me Islam has no relevance except that 1.3 billion human beings call themselves Muslims. I am sworn enemy of all organized religions including political Islam. However, my opposition to political Islam will not stop me from siding with common Muslims particularly when they are under attack of imperialist forces.

I am not an Islamic scholar and I do not want to become one. Particularly when everyone in the media speaks as if he/she knows everything about Islam. Some of them are adamant that they fully know the true face of Islam (one lunatic called Quran Hitler’s Mein Kemp). I do not want to dispute their claims. However, I would suggest them to know themselves first and their racial, ethnic and religious biases before they claim that they know what the true Islam is. I want to tell these simple folks that the way they are exposing “the true face” of Islam, they are exposing themselves, their hidden agenda and their own racism. I suggest the proponents of “clash of civilizations” to prove that they are “civilized” before talking of “clash of civilizations”.

I see any attack against common Muslims or common people irrespective of colour, creed and caste, as crime against humanity. It is not that I do not talk of deplorable conditions and discrimination of non-Muslims minorities in some Muslims countries. American imperialism is not concerned with their human rights and minorities. It is American imperialism under whose “command and control” such Muslim countries are “operating”. Had America been interested in human rights and rights of minorities it would have influenced its allies like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

Religion is a social fact not an objective reality out there to be perceived. Quran can be studied, if at all it is relevant to present day world problems, as a book of literature, book of mythologies, book of polemics, a subject matter of history. Islam is not all black or all white. Is Jihadi Islam real Islam or not, let Muslims decide it for us. Let us not make it an academic issue.
But that does not mean that defining Islam is “internal affair” of Muslims or it is an academic issue to be settled by academicians and intellectuals of all persuasions.

**The problems of interpretation of scriptures**

It is impossible to tell what Islam is objectively and what Islam is not. There are several problems of interpretation of religious scriptures which are insurmountable such that there cannot be “real Islam” or “real Christianity”. The interpretation of religious scripture whether by a nonbeliever or of any believer is a subjective process.

The religious scriptures belong to history and history is nothing but a point of view. The "objective history" or "objective historical process" is not accessible whatever methodology you adopt. Neither you can give an objective account of history nor can you predict future historical trends objectively or scientifically. In short, there cannot be single authoritative interpretations of any religious scripture including Quran. As the interpreters have to take into account the nature and the content of social relations and social formations at the time of birth of Islam, which makes interpretation more difficult.

We cannot help ourselves in interpreting Quran in terms of present experiences and stock of knowledge. Neither Quranic historical period, nor its original audience, nor its author (God or Mohammed) nor the cultural traditions (lingual and non-lingual) of its time are available to the serious interpreter of Quran. The interpreters are influenced by pre-understanding of all these.

In fact every one of us belongs to history more than history belongs to us. Hence, all interpretation of Quran are *ethnocentric* (describing the condition of viewing and judging other cultures and societies according to the assumptions of one’s own society.), *temporocentric* (that is the thinking that one's period in history, culture and heritage is necessarily of a higher value than everything else), parochial and subjective. There are time-bound and culture-bound meanings which we can never know. In other words, the historical distance between the Quran and its
interpreter cannot be bridged. Hence the WORD OF GOD is neither available to believers nor nonbelievers scientifically.

**Diversity of views on Quran**

First, there are two views on Quran: one of the believers, the Muslims and the other of the non-believers. Secondly, within the believers one of elite Islam (Islam of the literate people and power elite) and the other folk Islam (Islam of non-literate people and the governed).

Under both of these categories, there is Islamist Muslim’s view of Islam and the other of liberal Muslims view of Islam. All these divisions of believers have sectarian differences in interpretation and within a sect, there are different schools of thought among interpreters of Quran.

Among the non-believers, there are as many interpretations as there are interpreters.

Who can tell us what is real Islam? The Muslims whether literate or non-literate have right to do so.

For a believer Quran is uncreated and eternal having mystical powers and for him the "perfection and inimitably" of the Quran are the proof of its divine origin. For a non-beaver, no scripture is self-validating and self-authentic and Quran fails to convince its readers of its scared nature or divine origin. Who is right and who is wrong is not the question; the question is to accept the diversity of views on Quran.

There are countless "Quran's" and countless"Islam's"", such that no one can claim having knowledge of " real Islam" and "real Quran". No one can claim what Allah said to Mohammed and what Allah meant. The loss of meanings is bound to happen when information travels from one "gate keeper" to the other i.e., from Allah to the messenger of Allah and from messengers of Allah to the creatures of Allah.

Like all scriptures, Quranic text is a piece of literature and having a literary form and genre of its own. One needs to be a
student of Arabic language. As every text is, a structural whole and meanings reveal itself through and in form and structure of Quranic text. (As a piece of literature, it can be subjected to literary analysis which is a secular method looking at Quranic text as a human cultural product.) In order to understand Arab culture and society, one needs to be student of Arab culture.

For a "scientific" interpretation of Quran, the analyst has to separate himself from analysand to observe its subject with disinterested neutrality and detachment, which is not possible here. Neither a believer nor a nonbeliever can do so. Hence there is nothing like real Islam or Christianity even in the realms of academic field if anything is real that is “real Muslims”. What they do, what they believe, how they live and how they relate to non-Muslims is real Islam.

**Sectarian View of Islam**

As there are countless Islam’s, there are countless Muslim sects claiming themselves to be “Real Muslims”. Each sect of Muslims claims to be believer’s of real Islam and label all others as infidels. The recent example being Osama calling Saddam Hussein an infidel. Such is the animosity between the sects, that one sect of Muslims is officially declared as non-Islam in Pakistan and one sect of Muslim kills the other sect in mosques while reciting prayer in Pakistan. Which sect represents “real” Islam no one can tell us.

**Multi-cultural view of Islam**

Muslims are not a monolithic entity and they belong to diverse races, cultures and linguistic groups, social classes. They pursue varied life styles, cultural patterns, world views and have their own versions of Islam which they believe to be the real Islam and which is more in tune with their native cultural traditions than Quranic traditions. There is American Islam, European Islam, Chinese Islam, Arab Islam, Russian Islam etc., The list is endless. In spite of trends of cultural absolutism and Pan-Islamism prevalent among socially underdeveloped and culturally backward segment of Muslim populations the world over, normally Muslims share more with their own natives than
with their co-religionists belonging to other races, collectivities and cultures.

**Elitist View of Islam**

Muslims world is vertically divided between folk Muslims and professional Muslims (those who are “executives” of Islam and earn their bread by administering Islam in various capacities), between Muslims who are ruled and governed (most of them are non-literate and are treated like herd of sheep) and those who are professional Muslims and earn their bread by policing and governing (play the role of shepherds or power elite) Muslim society in the name of Islam.

This has caused a split in Muslim culture into two cultures, one of power elite and the other of folk Muslims. Their epistemology and cognitive styles are diametrically opposed to each other. Muslim power elite sees everything as eternal, immutable, readymade, unchanging and in black and white. While as the common Muslims are willing to change with the change in their mode of social existence. Muslim power elite looks backward for the solution of the present problems while as the common Muslims tend to look forward for new solutions to new problems. The common Muslims are rational while professional Muslims see reason as fallible, imperfect and limited. Folk Muslims are in majority everywhere. They are multi-cultural, existentialist, apolitical, generally sentimental and espouse counter-Islam.

Professional Muslims or political Muslims are cultural absolutists, power elite, authoritarian and Arabized. Political and professional Muslims although wield tremendous influence but they remain a tiny minority in Muslim world.

There is perpetual tussle between professional Muslims and folk Muslims. Sometimes open and sometimes hidden, in which from A.K 47 to verbal threats are used against each other. Who is representing “real Islam” and who does not, nobody can tell us?
Non-literate view of Islam

Islam as a religion was non-elitist as its prophet was non literate. Mohammed nourished folk Islam. He established a “primitive direct democracy”. He treated Arab Muslims with respect. For Arabs he was one among equals. Mohammad did not treat his followers like a shepherd treats his herd of sheep as Muslims clergy is treating common Muslims. As a trans-tribal leader of Arabs (appointed by Allah) he used mosque as a trans-tribal parliament and made himself accountable to the common people who usually questioned him and sought explanations and clarifications. His governance was transparent one and backed by general will not by any full time professional standing army or moral police.

Unlike Brahmins in India who treat their religious scripture as their intellectual property and have monopoly over scared knowledge. Quranic revelation was open to all and part of oral cultural traditions of Arabs guiding and governing their social relations. The Quran as a book was compiled much later after Mohamed.

In fact an adherent of Islam is an interpreter and administers of Islam in his own right and capable of self-guidance and self-direction. Liberal Muslims can rightly claim to be mujtahids (interpreters) of Islam capable for creative application of Islamic values and principles in contemporary world.

Islam does not recognize any expert in the realm of religion. Under Islam, there is no scope for professional Muslims. Muslim clergy emerged as a new leisure class that enjoyed patronage of propertied class and Islamic state after death of Mohammed.

With increasing separation of civil society from Islamic state gulf between folk Islam and “official” Islam of professional Muslims widened. Islamic theology became a vehicle for power struggle rather than for understanding of the Quran and Hadith. Clergy coming from Madrasahas strives to hold monopoly over Islam and claims to be expert in matters of Islamic faith. Thus Islamic state of Mullahs deprived the common Muslims of the
“primitive direct democracy” and civil rights which they enjoyed under Mohammed’s rule.

**Arab-centric view of Islam**

Islam took birth in tribal cultural milieu of Arab world. The social relations were communal and face-to-face and society was small scale and collectivistic. Under such societies, there is no separation between society and individual (the individuality is defined by social group or tribe).

The society regulates all aspects of an individual, autonomous individual does not exist in such society. Primitive collectivism or tribalism does not differentiate between society and state (if there exists one), state and government, culture and politics, religion and political ideology. It stands for subordination of individual to the society and the state, subordination of economics and culture (including Art, literature, music, painting, and drama) to political ideology or religion. As a whole (i.e. society or class) determines its parts (i.e. individual), it holds the salvation of individual is predestines and determined absolutely by God uninfluenced by one deeds and social practices.

After conquest of non-Arab land and “submitting” of non-Arabs Muslims to Arab hegemony. Arabs build an empire on the edifice of Islam and they became a “world power”. Arabs thought themselves to be rulers and treated non-Arab land as their colonies. Arabs thought that they are superior to non—Arabs Muslims.

For them Islam meant to become Arabized. Whichever society and culture came under their domination, got culturally improvised. Not only Arabic language became cross-cultural language for political communication across Muslim world but Arab preachers made Arabic the only language of communication between Allah and believer of Islam. As if Allah could only understand Arabic language. This resulted in cultural subjugation and improvising of many native Muslim cultures coming under Arab rule and they lost whatever cultural capital they had accumulated. There were non-Arabic versions of Islam
propounded by non-Arab Mullahas like Bhaiism and Ahmadiyat but they were brutally suppressed.

While Arabs themselves selectively assimilated Arab cultural traditions and social practices, they viewed non-Arab traditions and social practices as un-Islamic. Arabs insisted on Arabization of all Muslims. They were helped by Non-Arab Muslim clergy who developed vested interest in Arabization of Islamic faith. As this alone could keep their monopoly over interpretation of sacred scriptures and set them apart from non-Arabic knowing natives.

There are small minorities of cultural absolutists among Muslims who are against multi-cultural, non-elite, non-literate folk Islam. They label multi-cultural folk Islam as un-Islamic. For them, Islam means one language, one culture, one God, one prophet, one Quran, one interpretation, one Shariat. Such Islam can be safely considered as a variant of fascism. Wahabis and Osama belong to this category.

The Christian right wants us to believe that Osama bin laden and professional Muslim clerics who couch their political ideology in Quranic jargon are real Muslims. They never listen to common Muslim what he/she thinks Islam is and they call liberal Islam “intellectual dishonesty”. The speeches of Jihad Muslims are music to their ears. How one third of Muslims live alongside non-Muslims as minorities they do not want to ponder over. How Arab Jews “co-exist” in their native Arab countries while Jews have been prosecuted even burnt alive by “Christians” the world over. They are deliberately disregarding immense cultural, racial, ethnic, linguistic and sectarian diversity among Muslims.

We may sum up that there is nothing as real Islam. What is real Islam is matter of opinion and subject to interpretation. No one can speak on behalf of all Muslims or any of its sects. The Jehadi view of Islam suits to adversaries of Islam and helps them to demonize Muslims and profile them as terrorists. They ignore that the vast most majority of Muslims take quiet different viewpoints. This is being done to rationalize attacks on Muslim minorities and Asian and African immigrants in their countries. This needs to be exposed.
Anti-Muslim cartoons: An act of racism

By M.A. Hussain

The escalating controversy over provocative politically motivated racist cartoon of the Prophet of Islam published in European newspapers has exposed secular pretensions and racism of Christian dominated so-called “Western” media elite. The protests against these cartoons are equally politically motivated and reveal sense of alienation and frustration among Muslim masses the world over.

The recent cartoons are an attempt to profile Muslims as terrorists and Islam as a problem. Socially underdeveloped and culturally backward oil thirsty rotten Christian Right, uses "Western" media as a weapon of mass deception to demonize their oil rich "enemy.” the Muslims. In possession of the most advanced weapon systems, Christian Right strives to subjugate the whole world and try to impose its hegemony. They teach us that Islam is responsible for conflicts and chaos the world over, unless Muslims are deprived of their oil resources, they will make nuclear bombs and weapons of mass destruction and threaten the world peace.

In fact terrorism is against Islamic and Arab cultural traditions. It is a modern phenomenon. Islam is not a problem, the capitalism is one. Terrorism is one of the manifestations of capitalist social relations and it has nothing to do with Islam. The so-called civilized West has shared bed with forces of political Islam long before. It is American imperialism and occupation of Iraq that should be called terrorism. U.N.O is a club of international terrorists gangsters. The Muslims the worlds over are victims of international terrorism, which no so-called "Western" free press talks about.

These cartoons are a part of a psychological war against Muslims. It is what West did with Jews, before roasting them
alive. They held them responsible for every problem European societies faced at that time. Jews were demonized, ostracized, humiliated and alienated from their own countrymen. The Christian Right wants to do the same with Asian and African immigrants’ particularly Arabs living in Europe and America. It is here that we seek support of all peace loving people in favour of Asian and African immigrants in America and Europe.

I do not have any problem with any anti-Islam stuff as such. As an apostate of Islam, while condemning the cartoons, I defend right to blasphemy as the part of the right to freedom of speech and expression. This right includes tiring apart all religious symbols and icons with ruthless criticism and analysis. The atheists do not have scared cows, do not have taboos, and do not respect any one’s sentiments when it is a question of facts about a religious faith. The atheists do not treat any prophet or apostle as touch-me-not--above criticism. Mohammed is not a living person, hence he does not have any rights and no one has locus standii to speak on his behalf. Mohammed is a historical person and history does not belong to any particular sect, community or race. Anyone can write whatever he wants about any prophet. But these cartoons are not an artistic expression or genuine critique of Islam but an act of racism.

Quran, Muslims holy book, is not Muslims’ intellectual property. Whole humanity is claimed to be its audience. Hence all of us have right to analyze and criticize Quran or any other so-called holy book. It is being said that Islam does not believe anyone having monopoly over the interpretation of Quranic scared text. The Quranic revelation was open to all and part of Arab oral cultural traditions, guiding and governing social relations of Arabs at that time.

Islam as a religion was initially non-elitists as its prophet was a non-literate. Islam does not recognize any expert in the realm of religion. There was no social space for professional or political Muslim under Mohammed’s rule. There was no standing Islamic army. Mohammed nourished folk Islam. He established a "primitive direct democracy" in Arab world. For Arabs he was one among equals. As a trans-tribal leader he used mosque as a trans-tribal parliament first time in Arab world. He made himself
accountable to the common people who usually questioned him and sought explanations and clarification. This made decision-making process in Arab worlds civil not political to a large extent.

The arrogant and ignorant white racist media elite do not understand ethnic, racial and cultural diversity of Islam and composite nature of Muslim culture. They equate traditional folk Islam with political Islam (that might have not more than 1% adherents among Muslims. The CIA’s Political Islam Strategic Analysis Program's former director, Emile Nakhleh, says that only two to three percent of the world's 1.4 billion Muslims were politically active).

Blinded by their lust of political power and hegemony, they fail to appreciate how multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and composite is so-called Western culture. These racists do not differentiate between capitalist West and so-called western civilization. They seek parity with socially underdeveloped feudal/tribal Muslim world to attain a moral high ground and fake sense of pride. Also to cover up their own moral degradation, rabid racism and capitalist barbarism.

I have seen the cartoons. I found these neither funny nor satirical but bad in taste. Instead of poking fun on Mohammed, these cartoons convey nothing but reveal racist psyche of the cartoonist. One cartoon offended me the most. Depicting Mohammed with a turban-shaped bomb on his head is nothing but profiling of Muslims as terrorists. That needs to be condemned by all peace loving people of the world. These cartoons are a part of psychological war being unleashed against Muslims.

First and foremost, these cartoons are purported to humiliate Arab and African immigrant living in America and European countries and to alienate them from rest of their countrymen and to breed intolerance among Christians against Muslims. It is an attempt to derail the world public opinion against American barbarism in Iraq and to win over the European public option in favor of America’s terroristic war on terrorism.
These provocative cartoons are also attempts to convince non-Muslim “Western” masses of their fake moral superiority, social values and the freedom they are enjoying under so-called secular and corporate West. After acts of shame in Abu Gharib prison and Guantamobay, faceless West still deem to have moral high ground in its conflict with developing Muslim countries.

It is shameful that the regimes, which talk of freedom of press, killed journalists not in bed with them and bombed them from air. This spineless media does everything to hide American war crimes against innocent Iraqis and Arab and Muslim the world over for no fault of theirs except that oil is running beneath their feet. It is senseless to style this cartoon controversy as a value conflict between capitalist West and feudal/tribal Muslim world, between freedom of press and Islamic fundamentalism.

The violent protests against these cartoons by fundamentalist Muslims are being used to convince Muslims masses that demanding freedom of press and free speech is blasphemy and anti-Islam. They want to tell Muslim masses that everything "Western" is evil and anti-Islam and every "Western" is enemy of Islam hence slaughterable. Thus these cartoons serve Christian right as well as Muslim fundamentalists.
Irakische Widerstandsgruppen sind gewinnen
Voice of Sanity from Iraq
The media platoon of the Islamic Jihad Army. On the 27th of Shawal 1425h. 10 December 2004
People of the world! These words come to you from those who up to the day of the invasion were struggling to survive under the sanctions imposed by the criminal regimes of the U.S. and Britain.
We are simple people who chose principles over fear.
We have suffered crimes and sanctions, which we consider the true weapons of mass destruction.
Years and years of agony and despair, while the condemned UN traded with our oil revenues in the name of world stability and peace.
Over two million innocents died waiting for a light at the end of a tunnel that only ended with the occupation of our country and the theft of our resources.
After the crimes of the administrations of the U.S and Britain in Iraq, we have chosen our future. The future of every resistance struggle ever in the history of man.
It is our duty, as well as our right, to fight back the occupying forces, which their nations will be held morally and economically responsible; for what their elected governments have destroyed and stolen from our land.
We have not crossed the oceans and seas to occupy Britain or the U.S. nor are we responsible for 9/11. These are only a few of the lies that these criminals present to cover their true plans for the control of the energy resources of the world, in face of a growing China and a strong unified Europe.
It is ironic that the Iraqi’s are to bear the full face of this large and growing conflict on behalf of the rest of this sleeping world.
We thank all those, including those of Britain and the U.S., who took to the streets in protest against this war and against Globalism. We also thank France, Germany and other states for their position, which least to say are considered wise and balanced, til now.
Today, we call on you again.
We do not require arms or fighters, for we have plenty.
We ask you to form a world wide front against war and sanctions. A front that is governed by the wise and knowing. A
front that will bring reform and order. New institutions that would replace the now corrupt. 
Stop using the U.S. dollar, use the Euro or a basket of currencies. Reduce or halt your consumption of British and U.S. products. Put an end to Zionism before it ends the world. Educate those in doubt of the true nature of this conflict and do not believe their media for their casualties are far higher than they admit.
We only wish we had more cameras to show the world their true defeat.
The enemy is on the run. They are in fear of a resistance movement they can not see nor predict.
We, now choose when, where, and how to strike. And as our ancestors drew the first sparks of civilization, we will redefine the word ?conquest.? 
Today we write a new chapter in the arts of urban warfare.
Know that by helping the Iraqi people you are helping yourselves, for tomorrow may bring the same destruction to you.
In helping the Iraqi people does not mean dealing for the Americans for a few contracts here and there. You must continue to isolate their strategy.
This conflict is no longer considered a localized war. Nor can the world remain hostage to the never-ending and regenerated fear that the American people suffer from in general.
We will pin them here in Iraq to drain their resources, manpower, and their will to fight. We will make them spend as much as they steal, if not more.
see the video message: http://waronisraeliapartheid.com/iraqiresistence.htm
We will disrupt, then halt the flow of our stolen oil, thus, rendering their plans useless.
And the earlier a movement is born, the earlier their fall will be.
And to the American soldiers we say, you can also choose to fight tyranny with us.
Lay down your weapons, and seek refuge in our mosques, churches and homes. We will protect you. And we will get you out of Iraq , as we have done with a few others before you.
Go back to your homes, families, and loved ones. This is not your war. Nor are you fighting for a true cause in Iraq .
And to George W. Bush, we say, ?You have asked us to ?Bring it on?, and so have we. Like never expected. Have you another challenge??”
Arab Eyes

- by M. Junaid Alam

Glares of the oppressed
Shoot out from shadows writhing
under black war boots strapped on white skin
Arab-dirtied in desert sands.

Rising in the nascent sandstorm
of national struggle
can these angered Arab eyes
these twin towers of Resistance
stare down
buildings stretching into the sky
and empires digging into the (s)oil.

Dark Eyes, yes,

of Bandits, bastards, Ba'athists
of Renegades, rocket-repelled
'Remnants'
of a family
village
city
nation
bombed into oblivion;
Exploding from obsidian
bursting brightly into tears, anguish and
Revolt.

Sorrowful, spiteful eyes stare out
Stinging and soaking in
the fatal fumes of Freedom:
depleted uranium mayhem
cluster killers and
napalm neurotics
released on the breath of
two-bit Crusaders
three-star hotel rats
four-star generals
and five-sided war bureaus
loyal to flags of
blood-stained stripes
and six-sided stars

America!
Look into those Arab eyes, those darkened mirrors!
And weep for our tainted souls
descending down the war path
to a faintly calm doom:
a last hurrah of fireworks
and freedom fries
As we fizzle out in the fires
of nationalist flatulence;
Sizzling deep-fried
to the death-tune
of cascading arrogance.

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http://www.counterpunch.org/poems08232003.html
Resistance is winning

“And the resistance is winning. Never mind the "proportions" - five or ten or twenty Iraqis for each colonial soldier (...) The "Iraqi April Days" are a lesson to for the whole Third World and other would-be imperial colonialists: Mass armed resistance cannot be politically or militarily defeated. The heroism of the Iraqi resistance stands in stark contrast to the cowardly self-styled Arab leaders Third World Resistance and Western Intellectual Solidarity”

by James Petras
April 7, 2004

Falluja, Baghdad, Ramadi, Nasiriya - an entire people has risen to confront the colonial occupation army, its mercenaries, clients, and collaborators. First in massive peaceful protests, they were massacred by US, British, Spanish and Polish troops: Bare hands against tanks and machineguns. The armed resistance, in the beginning a minority now indisputably the most popular force, backed by millions.

The colonial armies, fearful of every Iraqi, shoot wildly into crowds and retreat; they encircle whole cities, fire missiles into crowded working class neighborhoods, helicopters pour machinegun fire into homes, factories, mosques. In the eyes of the colonial soldiers, the enemy is everywhere. For once they are right.

The resistance resists, every block, every house, every store rings out with gunfire, the resistance is everywhere. Every house takes hits, the resistance fight on. The people aid the wounded fighters, wash their wounds. They provide water to the thirsty to quench
their parched throats and cool their hands - the automatic weapons are hot.

And where are the western mercenaries? The $1,000 dollar a day hired guns with their flak vests, dark glasses, --their swagger and insolence have disappeared. They too have seen the charred bodies of their ex-partners of death.

Hundreds of Iraqis have been killed, thousands have been injured, many more will die but after each funeral tens of thousands more, the peaceful, apolitical, "wait and see" ones have taken up the gun.

'It's a civil war', brays the bourgeois press. This is wishful thinking. Shia and Sunni are in this together, brothers and sisters (yes, women street fighters) in arms, each covering their comrades' backs as they confront the tanks.

And the resistance is winning. Never mind the "proportions" - five or ten or twenty Iraqis for each colonial soldier. The Iraqi Resistance has won politically: No appointed official has any future : They exist as long as the US military remains but they will flee from the rooftops of their bunkers as the US withdraws.

Militarily, the US and the mercenaries are taking thousands of casualties -scores of deaths and wounded everyday. In Washington, the civilian militarists, the architects of the destruction of Iraq are panicking. "Send more troops!" say Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, and the would-be president Kerry.

From his Texas ranch, Bush proclaims the resistance leader Moqtada Sadr a "killer". Far from the fire, the mayhem, the massacres, his television doesn't show the child with the mangled face. Bush once again is far from the killing fields - Vietnam and now Iraq. Now he can claim a draft deferment - he is nominally the President who unilaterally declared the end of the war in May 2003.
Now, April 2004 there are more than 600 dead US soldiers as the Iraqi resistance rose to meet Bush's challenge "Bring them on" and took the streets from the colonial army, then they came on and conquered the cities and with sheer courage and absolute determination they hold their ground.

The "Arabs" resist, while the overstuffed cabbage Sharon is silent. His once loquacious agents, Wolfowitz, Feith, Abrams and their underlings are strangely silent. Are they worried that there might be a mass backlash against those who cooked the data to get the US into a war in which thousands of US soldiers will die and be maimed - in order to "protect" Israel's undisputed claim to dominance in the Middle East?

In the early spring of 2004, in April to be exact, the dreams of a new colonial empire came crashing down on the masterminds of the New World Order, an undisputed, unilateral Empire. The end of the Sharon-Wolfowitz-Blair-Chaney "Greater Mid-East Co-Prosperity Sphere". The Iraqi resistance has turned the Rumsfeld-Wolfowitz dream of a series of wars against Syria, Iran, Cuba, and North Korea into a nightmare of bloody street battles on every block in Falluja and Sadr City, Baghdad.

The heroism, the valor, the inspiration, the mass resistance is all the more so as the Iraqi people draw on their resources, their own solidarity, their own history, their belief that they will be free or take down every colonial soldier as they fight to the death.

The phrase "Patria o Muerte" takes on a special and very specific meaning in Iraq: It is not a slogan of a leader, a vanguard, to arouse and inspire the people - it is the living practice of a whole people. Patria or Muerte comes out of the mouths of teenage street fighters as well as street vendors and widows with black scarves.

The "Iraqi April Days" are a lesson to for the whole Third World and other would-be imperial colonialists: Mass armed resistance cannot be politically or militarily defeated. The heroism of the
Iraqi resistance stands in stark contrast to the cowardly self-styled Arab leaders:
The Jordanian and Saudi monarchs, the garrulous corrupt "President for Life" Mubarak, the Iranian Ayatollah collaborators. Not one has moved a finger to aid the Iraqi national liberation struggle. They fear the example of the successful Iraqi resistance will light a fire under their ample buttocks.

And the Western intellectuals? Since the resistance began a year ago, not a single US intellectual, of the dozens of progressive, critical thinkers ("Not in My Name") has dared to declare their solidarity with the anti-colonial struggle. They have "problems", I hear, "about supporting Arab fundamentalists, terrorists, anti-Semites etc."

Echoes of the French intellectuals who also opposed the popular armed resistance movements against the Nazis because the "Communists had taken over." or later because the 'colons' in Algeria also had a "right to be in Algeria" (Albert Camus). In his book "Listen Yankee", C. Wright Mills challenged US 'progressives' who balked at supporting the Cuban Revolution in the early 1960's. "This is a real blood and guts popular revolution", he said. "You can make a difference, you can be part of the solution or part of the problem."

The Western intellectuals are a problem. They are not ordering the troops, even less are they (or their children or grandchildren) pulling the triggers murdering Iraqi school kids. They are sitting on their hands. "But", they protest, "we oppose the war" while they scramble to endorse candidate Kerry who does support the war and even calls for 40,000 more troops to pour missiles into crowded neighborhoods., under U.N auspices to be sure.

So where are the Western intellectuals in these days when the Iraqi people have risen arms in hand to resist the US military juggernaut? There are two sides: An entire nation fighting a colonial occupation army and US imperialism.
Serious and consequential political intellectuals must make a choice:
To refuse to take sides is tantamount to complicity, intellectual complacency is a luxury for intellectuals in the empire which doesn't exist in Iraq. Over 1000 Iraqi intellectuals and professors have been murdered during the occupation. The issues are not obscure or complex. One side demands free elections, a free press, and self-determination while the other, the colonial officials, ban newspapers, appoint puppet rulers and murder their opponents.

The paralysis of the US leftist intellectuals, their inability to express solidarity with the Iraqi resistance is a disease which afflicts all "leftist" intellectuals in the colonial countries. They are fearful of the problem (the colonial war) and fearful of the resolution (national liberation).

In the end, the comforts and freedoms they enjoy, the university applause and adulation they receive in the colonial motherland weighs more heavily than the mental costs of a straightforward declaration of support for the revolutionary liberation movements.

They resort to phony "moral equivalences", against the war and against the "fundamentalists", the "terrorists", the 'whoever' who is engaged in their own self-emancipation and has not paid sufficient attention to the self-appointed guardians of Western Democratic Values. It is not difficult to understand the absence of solidarity with liberation movements among the progressive intellectuals in the imperial countries: they too have been colonized, mentally and materially.

Thousands of humble people in Iraq are giving these erudite intellectuals a practical lesson in solidarity: on April 4, 2004 in the midst of hostile tanks and helicopter gunships, thousands marched from Baghdad to Fallujah carrying food and medicine to the embattled and encircled people in that city which will forever be remembered as the cradle of emancipation.
Will our intellectuals take note? Can they at least circulate a statement "In Our Name" in solidarity with the iraqi resistance?

In the meantime, the mass popular resistance in Iraq takes on the well-fed, over-armed armies of occupation in hand to hand warfare. They do no ask if their neighbor, friends or comrades are Sunni, secular, Shia, Baathist or Communist, they do not stand aside when a mosque, a school or a housing project is bombed or machine-gunned, they have made a commitment to engage in the struggle, to join in one national movement to oust the invader, the oil thieves, the murderers at hand and afar.

It's a pity, more for themselves than for any material contribution they could make to the historical struggle that the US progressive intellectuals have chosen to abstain and once again demonstrate the irrelevance of the Western intellectuals to Third World Liberation.

http://globalresearch.ca/articles/PET404A.html
Against the most heavily armed opponent in the history of War, Fallujah has still not let itself be “taken” to date. The mightiest military machine in history has met its match. A turning point in military affairs? The end of warfare, as practiced by the Americans - the application of overwhelming force to obtain a victory?

ABHAY MEHTA

Fallujah per se, on the face of it, is not a strategic or a militarily significant target. It however represents the “great challenge” to the US/UK’s military occupation of Sovereign Iraq since April 2003.
In the first siege of Fallujah in April 2004, the Iraqi Resistance inflicted a severe defeat on the Americans. In April 2004, while over 1,200 Iraqis were killed, blown up, burnt or shot alive by the Americans — two thirds of them civilians, mostly women and children — while 2,000-pound bombs were falling on the the city, AC-130 Spectre gunships were demolishing entire city blocks in less than a minute and of course silence of the plop as Iraqis targeted by Marine snipers hit the ground, nonetheless the operative portion remains - The Marines were beaten back in no uncertain terms. This was followed by a “truce”.

The truce did not hold for very long.

This humiliation of the American military was spun as a “strategic retreat” but the desire to get rid of the “weeping sore that Fallujah was” has been on top of the US agenda since then. Fallujah represented a “stellar act of defiance” one that allowed the resistance to “actually secure and control a city, and to beat off the US military”

The second formal large scale assault on Fallujah (Nov./Dec 2004) pitted images of the world’s most powerful military force against fighters in tennis shoes, wielding homemade rocket launchers. There were three declared tactical objectives. The first was to either kill or capture the Jordanian born “terrorist” “Abu Musab al-Zarqawi” (if indeed he exists) and to “battle and destroy some 4000 to 5000 suspected fighters”. The Americans also vowed to “liberate” the residents of Fallujah from “criminal elements” and to “secure Fallujah” for the January elections. Lastly, it appears an additional declared tactical/political objective of the American Military’s task was to engage in a “fight of good versus evil”. Additionally it appears (presumably per their intelligence reports) that the mission also was to “destroy” “Satan” since it appears that “he lives in Fallujah”
On the face of it, it appears as if none of these tactical/military objectives have been met, including, it appears, the desire to presumably meet Mr Satan, resident of Fallujah.

As for the other very laudable and rationally quantifiable objectives including that of stuffing democracy into a city by simply obliterating it, all of these seem to be a bit astray.

48 hours into the offensive, the official narratives were filled with reports that Zarqawi (if indeed such a entity exists) may have “slipped outside” of their perimeter defenses.

This of course left Mr “Satan” still in residence together with the rest of the unfortunate inhabitants of the “militant stronghold”. The city of 300,000 residents had perhaps an estimated 40,000 civilians left per the US military. Since this estimated number included 5000 resident “militants”, one can presume that the rest (per the US military) would be civilians?

The actual civilian count remaining in the city on the 8th of November is around around 60,000 to as much as 100,000 since males between the ages 16 and 60 were disbarred by the US military from leaving the city.

One can also infer the most vulnerable—the poor, the old, the women, children and the sick—continued to reside in their city in significant numbers — of the order of 40,000+

With the “target softening” bombing raids that killed a few hundred civilians in the first week of November, the first formal target of the US military armored assault was doctors and the nurses. These were the first to be eliminated as these were “legitimate military target” and since “insurgents” were “forcing the doctors there to release propaganda and false information”.

The assault has left as many as 10,000 civilian dead—perhaps much more. The Red Cross/Red Crescent estimate was upwards of 6000 as of November 25th. Till date no formal Red Cross/Red Crescent operation has been allowed in the city.

What the images of Phantom Fury did not convey is that this assault is the largest concentration of heavy armour in one place, since the fall of Berlin. This was the first time since World War II that “an American armored task force” has been turned “loose in a city with no restrictions”.

More to the point, the force of as much as 20,000 soldiers (12,000 to 17,000 American/coalition soldiers, about 2000 odd Iraqi “National guards” and perhaps 1000 odd peshmergas) were supported by an estimated 1100 to as much as 2000 armored vehicles and tanks. Air support was largely carrier based out of the gulf and B-52’s from bases outside of Iraq.
The armor alone represents the heaviest ever concentration of armor since the fall of Berlin (1945) in one place against a single military objective.

Phantom Fury was officially underway on the 8th of November and declared to be a sweeping victory on or about the 15th of November.

Thereafter the military communiqu’es and the press reports have been limited to occasional deaths in the “Anbar province”. That all of Fallujah is under “coalition” control since then i.e on or about November 15th 2004. Since then detailed stories on Fallujah in the official narrative have stopped completely or refer to action/discoveries between the 8th and the 19th of November 04.

There is no evidence of what has transpired save intermittent but very very regular losses attributed to “pockets of resistance” in the “Anbar Province”. And, yes, reportage on the brand new movie on Fallujah starring Harrison Ford.

Now for a moment, consider the substantive anomalies in the official discourse. Consider one such example- Satellite Imagery of Fallujah (block by block including “after action”) available to the media till the 15th of November and carried in graphic detail day by day from the 8th of Nov. through the 15th stopped abruptly. There are no explanations.

There are no satellite pictures of Fallujah available in the public domain after November 15th.

Or consider that the Red Cross/Red crescent has not been allowed to enter the city in any substantive manner. Today is the 20th of Dec and it has still not been allowed.

Or consider another break in the regular stream of consciousness. No reporter has set foot in the city or after the 22nd of November.
These anomalies are noteworthy. Therefore it is very unclear whether this is indeed the case or as a matter of fact, the converse is indeed the case.

Fallujah has not been taken. Not only has Fallujah not been taken, but the coalition forces have staged several retreats and are now confined largely to the outside of the city.

The Iraqi resistance is currently in control of most of the city and have forced back at least three of the largest armored assaults in recent history.

In fact, one can make a claim that this was the largest series of armored assault ever. The objective is 16 sq km and if one were to normalise over time and term for incremental intensity in firepower that this represents, then these are historically unprecedented. Now if these were not only repulsed, but perhaps defeated, it leads to something that ought to be examined more carefully.
Despite being flattened (perhaps about 12,000 to as much as 20,000 homes out of an estimated 50,000 razed) by the application of, as US Army Gen. John Abizaid put it, “more military power per square inch than anybody else on earth”.

Curiously, the US general then very very strangely goes on to add: “If you ever even contemplate our nuclear capability, it should give everybody the clear understanding that there is no power that can match the United States militarily.”

Oh. Let me contemplate the nuclear capability of the US. Never mind. It is a bore.

So?

The General also said, when talking about generating “more military power per square inch than anybody else on earth”.that “every one knows it”. Oh. The words of the General—the mightiest general of them all—Commander Centom, do not appear to have been heard. At least, the Iraqi resistance has not heard them.

The mightiest military machine ever in world history with the mightiest firepower the world has ever seen has been mightily trying to capture Fallujah. But no luck so far.

Instead the Americans faced an opposition that broke the back of the assault. Instead of “breaking bone by bone” and crushing “the backbone of the insurgents”, it seems to appear that the same has been done unto them as they were planning to do unto the resistance.

At the peak of the assault, the Americans held no more than 35-40% of Fallujah (largely the north on or around the 18th of November.) Thereafter, they appear to have been steadily repulsed and in fact the coalition forces currently have been repulsed to where they were on November 13th or thereabouts and to the outskirts of Fallujah.
Now consider the fate of the rest of the occupation. It is in tatters. The mightiest military in the world cannot control a 8 km stretch of road, perhaps the single most important road in all of Iraq ? the Airport Road from the center of Baghdad to the airport. The purported troop concentration is 120 soldiers per km of a open road and despite that the Australian defense minister could not even make it to the green zone and simply flew back from the airport.

Unlike Vietnam, where the American were largely in control of the cities for most parts (save Tet, and even there complete control was not lost), the US/UK garrisons are isolated in the middle of a hostile population.

They cannot even traverse a km or two out of the ‘green zone”. Their supply convoys have come to a standstill over the last month and a salvage operation of re-supplying by air has started over the last 10-12 days. Air supplies are limited and there is no reason to believe that these can be significant (a max of 400 tonnes a day, slated to rise to 1600 tonnes a day against an estimated minimum 20,000 odd tonnes needed daily to keep a force of 160,000+ fed, watered, armored and resupplied).

The 300 mile long supply line is toast. Well, at least any thing dark, metallic, armored or otherwise. (4000 pounds of armor on a humvee that can carry a max load of 5000 pounds) Can it move? And even that is not helpful ? in the words of the great military strategist, Rumsfeld, circa Dec 04, even tanks blow up. Why bother at all?)

Against the most heavily armed opponent in the history of War, Fallujah has still not let itself be “taken” to date (As of 20th Dec, 2004). Falluah and indeed the rest of Iraq post April 2003, heralds “supersymmetrical” warfare and the end of conventional warfare. This represents a turning point in military affairs ? the end of warfare—as practiced by the Americans i.e the application of overwhelming force to obtain a victory.
The cost/personnel advantage is noteworthy. With minimal or no training, just about any one can operate a RPG. A squad of say 3 would cost perhaps no more than $5000 to equip. Against this, the M1 Abrams (“the mightiest tank”, 70 odd tonnes of steel, a few million a pop).

Now consider the mightiest Gun in the West against the rookie squad of three. Throw in a street. Add cover (even rubble will do, in fact quite nicely, thank you)-

Even odds?

Now consider for a moment. Consider a force of say a few thousand men — the best in the business and certainly the bravest men on the face of this planet—say no more than 3000, anything more and it would be one sided. 3000 against 12,000 to 20,000 sounds about right)

Now add ingenuity, intelligence and passion and a good reason to be very very angry. Throw in a just cause. In fact, the “most just cause of all”.

Now consider that these are equipped with only say RPG 7s as well as say RPG 9s, a few dozen Strellas, a few thousand modified versions of the SSK rocket, basic antiaircraft guns, a few hundred tonnes of say c4/semtex (it is quite cheap), a few thousand fin stabilised rockets (52 mm to 152 mm), basic artillery and mortar (say 60mm, 82mm, and 120mm shells), a few SAMs (say SAM7 and SAM 9), a few thousand grad rockets, faithful ole Kalasnikovs, a few hundred sniper rifles with say .50 mm explosive ammo. It may also be possible that few Samud and Abgail missiles (range of 100 km) are available.These are not very large missiles. Add a few more, nothing fancy again—say, the Tariq and Katyusha, very very basic indeed).

There is more, but you get the idea. Not very state of the art weapons, far from it. But very very functional. Now, consider the sheer amount of counter offensive power these represent
Add to that pre-prepared defensive positions, not very fancy for sure but very functional and very very functional minefields with a variety of triggers. Throw in, the “most ingenious” booby traps ever.

Add the Iraqi resistance—the bravest of the brave—operating these. Well now, it is state of the art. The State of the Art of Urban Warfare.

Oh yes, And yes, how can I forget toys. Well, one needs to buy those since “remote controls from toys” (Well at least as per the American Military) are a primary trigger in IEDs.

So we add a few 10s of dollars per toy car and remote kit, say from your local K-mart.? Turns out that an army cannot be equipped from K-mart to quote the great military tactician Rumsfeld once again, circa early Dec 04). Also turns out Centcom claims that they cannot jam these (circa Dec 04.)

It does appear that we have a problem here. Toy remotes. Rather sad, would you not say? Coming from the second in command of the Mightiest Super powers’ mightiest command. Beam me up, Scotty.

Now pit against them a “superpower” that has already spent 150 billion of declining currency for sure but buys plenty still. Do not forget to add 450 billion recurring every year. Hey it can buy anything but armor). Add another 100 billion on the cards (Jan 04).

But this does not help.

Short of using a neutron or a nuclear bomb (the Americans did use chemical weapons in Fallujah), despite all efforts, what the Americans have been able to achieve is relatively little, if
anything at all, even in the best case estimates of the official narrative.

45 days and going on and on and on and on.

Oh, oh, but, but, but we took Baghdad in 21 days.

45 days for 16 sq kms.....

The opposing American army in this case has not been able to be actually “take” them out. Never mind control or physically occupying 16 sq kms.

In fact, even a neutron bomb would not be militarily significant. You need to “take” it and keep it and keep on keeping it and keep on and on and on....

And they have not. They will not. They cannot
The limits of raw firepower have been reached and no matter what (2000 pound bombs to container cluster bombs to the new “large Abrams” tank. Oh well, if not a RPG7, a RPG9 or two will do the trick, thank you), the American military objective is no longer possible.

Shoulder-held surface to air weapons limit the role of armored copters. In fact there are several ‘copter graveyards in and around Fallujah. Big ones. Some of them are quite near the tank killing fields. Yes, several hundred armored vehicles resting, not quite in peace but hey...

Close air support is not feasible on account of the proximity of “friendlies”. Savage bombing without limits does not help.

The war in the former Yugoslavia is a case in point. Despite 72 days of non stop bombing, it is now (post facto) a conceded position that the opposing side lost no more than 5-10% of their military hardware. (The loss was political, but that is another story.)
Now consider an entirely different narrative. Of the the land between the two rivers, of your ancestors and my ancestors, of the fountainheads of civilisation, of Sumer, Ur, Mesopotamia, of Lions, of Hammurabi, of Salah al Din Yusuf Ibn Ayyub and much much more.

And yes, a place. Called Fallujah. But, say, about 84 years ago

And now add to the narrative, parts of the present: a unilaterally disarmed opponent (remember the tizzy circa late march 03 about night vision equipment? Night vision? Never mind state of the art SAMs and Kornets. The sanctions? Oh what were they?)

Now add 25 million men, women and children ? the richest denizens on this planet (Yes the richest. In every sense. As the very inheritors of civilisation itself. Or in a more mundane sense with 300 billion+ barrels of oil, an average Iraqi’s garbage would be reconstructing the streets of Manhattan in a fairer world (the Americans have in contrast 22.5 billion barrels left), and, yes, the bravest. And the most suffering on the face of this planet

Add to that the Story of Fallujah (circa late 2004). Then perhaps you will not be so astonished to hear what appear to be strange words to your ears.

For these are Iraqi words. Yes, Iraqi. Dated 10th of December 2004

“The enemy is on the run. They are in fear of a resistance movement they can not see nor predict. We, now choose when, where, and how to strike. And as our ancestors drew the first sparks of civilization, we will redefine the word ‘conquest’. Today we write a new chapter in the arts of urban warfare”

The Iraqi resistance has put an end to “the end of history”. A new history is being written. Yes indeed it has been written. Not just another chapter but an entirely new book. One may see the
beginning of the great American retreat across the oceans, if they are lucky. Over 50,000 American soldiers have been medically evacuated out of Iraq till Nov. 2004 (interesting number, is it not?).

Yes, there will be a lot lot more lives lost and the endgame’s contours are still unclear.

Oh the last line. Yes the last line addressed specifically to one Mr George W. Bush:

“You have asked us to ?Bring it on?, and so have we. Like never expected. Have you another challenge?”

Yes Indeed, has he another challenge? No, he is a trifle busy, you see. We did try a photo-op on 18th of Dec 2004. We are not fools you see. But no photos.

I wonder why..
Raw unopposed firepower has reached its limits. Never have so few battled against so many in face of overwhelming odds and brought a superpower to its knees. And the nightmare continues.

It is indeed the greatest military victory in history. The self proclaimed mightiest empire that ever was, in fact, turns out to have had the shortest reign ever. This Empire met its match in the land between the two rivers.

if this is indeed correct (and there is no reason to consider any other alternative) then the Iraqi Resistance’s repulsing the assault and indeed the forcing back of the American positions represents not only a turning point in the American occupation of Sovereign Iraq but in fact a turning point in warfare itself.
In fact, it would certainly be one of the greatest military victories in history.

Over the last 30 years since Vietnam, the normative amount of explosive power and force multipliers available to the Americans and their opponents (compared to say the North Koreans in the 50’s, the NVA in the 60s) has normalised and in fact are comparable if one were to factor in the context in which the firepower is used and deployed.

The ‘normalisation” of firepower on a level playing field- In this case, Fallujah, or for that matter the rest of Iraq, is noteworthy.

Consider one such example. A RPG 7 can travel up to 300/700/950 meters. At 300 meters, even a basic warhead can penetrate 330 mm of steel armor. Yes, 33 cms, 13 inches—that is a lot of steel. The projectile would cost perhaps $30-40. Conservatively, a squad of 3 armed with RPG-7s have more than a fighting chance against a M1 Abrams. In close urban quarters, the advantage that the tank had (in say open ground in a conventional war) is completely lost.