

Review Article

Standing out for Justice even against Ourselves: Muslims and Terrorism in the Wider World

HOLY TERRORS: THINKING ABOUT RELIGION AFTER SEPTEMBER 11. By Bruce Lincoln. Chicago: University Press, 2002. Pp. 142. ISBN 0026481921 (HB).

TERRORISM: A VERY SHORT INTRODUCTION. By Charles Townsend. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. Pp. 157. ISBN 0192801686 (PB).

THE EMPIRE AND THE CRESCENT: GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS FOR A NEW AMERICAN CENTURY. Edited by Aftab Ahmad Malik. Bristol: Amal Press, 2003. Pp. 210. ISBN 0954054458 (HB).

WHO KILLED DANIEL PEARL? By Bernard-Henry Lévi, translated by James X. Mitchell. London: Duckworth, 2003. Pp. 454. ISBN 0715632612 (HB).

WORLDS IN COLLISION: TERROR AND THE FUTURE OF GLOBAL ORDER. Edited by Ken Booth and Tim Dunne. London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003. Pp. 376. ISBN 0333998049 (HB).

Millions of words have been spoken and written about terrorism and Islam since the attacks of 11th September 2001, but it appears that there has still been relatively little profound reflection upon this seminal event. Part of the problem is one of historical meditation on the hoof: that it is simply too soon to place this event in its proper context. One is reminded of Mao's comment when asked to reflect upon the impact of the French Revolution: he thought it was still too soon to tell.

There are too many 'unknown unknown's'—to paraphrase the current US Secretary of Defence, the mercurial Donald Rumsfeld. Will the current 'war on terrorism' survive the present Republican administration? Will the neo-conservative view on how to transform the Middle East remain the new orthodoxy (even here tensions are discernable between questions of short-term national interest and the security of energy reserves to the longer-term necessities of state building and the promotion of democracy even among old allies in the region)? Will America risk ending the NATO alliance by a continued unilateralism? Will either America or Europe risk continued inaction over the Israel-Palestine impasse? Will the 'war on terrorism' destabilise traditional

(Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt) and new allies (Afghanistan, Iraq), chiefly by deferring democratic reforms in favour of security considerations? What are the implications of the shift in the Middle East's geopolitical axis post-Saddam from Cairo-Riyadh-Tehran to Tel Aviv-Ankara-Baghdad? And there are so many other imponderables.

Charles Townsend, Professor of International History at Keele University, UK, has written an excellent primer on *Terrorism*, as part of the University of Oxford's 'Very Short Introductions' series. In it, he raises all the sensible questions that one might have hoped would have been asked by statesmen and journalists the world over in the last two years. For instance, he recognises that the problem of the definition of terrorism is unsolvable analytically. If—in political theory—states have a monopoly over the legitimate use of violence, then this means they also claim the sole right to define what constitutes illegitimate violence, whether by non-state actors or other states.

Thus, while states broadly agree that terrorist organisations are non-state actors, in the lexicon of the US Department of State, the problem remains the counter-claim by revolutionary movements to justify their use of terrorism to fight political oppression when no free political alternative exists. And the choice as to which cause to support often remains inherently a political one, whether the basis of that choice is driven by moral principle or political expediency and national interest. Western governments supported the anti-Tsarist anarchist terror groups on this basis in the nineteenth century. Thus a further inconsistency in the current hegemonic discourse is that illegitimate violence may be waged by 'rogue' states and appropriate violent insurrection by some non-state actors. It is little wonder that after inconclusive legal definitions of terrorism, states always have to list proscribed terrorist organisations (always leaving out un-proscribed ones).

It is also evident, beyond the stipulative, statist perspective of many definitions of terrorism, that both war and terrorism pursue political ends through coercive means. Townsend suggests that the real difference is one of emphasis: 'war is ultimately coercive, terrorism is impressive. War is physical, terrorism is mental. ... The point is that the physical power of terrorism can in principle be miniscule. ... Terrorism operates, therefore, through subjective psychological pressure.' (p. 15) Here we might therefore see the coincidence between modern mass communication and terrorism by which the 'propaganda of the deed', an idea of European nineteenth-century anarchism, emerged; a logic which came to be translated in radical Islamist terms as *ghadabah lillāh* (literally, 'fury for the sake of God') in the Egypt of the 1970s.

What about the lineage of modern terror tactics and their ideology in the Muslim world? One possibility raised by Malise Ruthven (*A Fury for God*, London, 2002), although there is no conclusive evidence for this, is a direct genealogy between the violent and revolutionary Marxist groups of the 1960s, whether of Palestinian (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) or

European (the German Red Army Faction) origin. (The RAF, or the Baader-Meinhof gang, received training from the PFLP in 1970.) This influence was then translated in Islamic terms to the Egyptian groups of the 1970s; another motif was the model of the *coup d'état* to trigger mass rebellion, made effective by the assassination of a head of state, like that by al-Jihad of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981.

But even older perhaps, as Townsend suggests, is the influence of the originally anti-British Zionist terrorist gangs, the Irgun Zvai Leumi and the Lohamei Heruth Israel of the 1940s. Although most accounts stop with the establishment of the state of Israel, it is easily forgotten that the personnel and tactics of these groups, officially labelled as 'dissidents' by the new state, were incorporated into the Israeli army during the 'clearance' of Arab areas in 1948 and after. No early history of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, established in 1964, can afford to ignore this fact.

It is still worthwhile noting the relatively recent emergence of terrorist groups claiming an explicitly Islamic rationale (leaving aside for the moment the question of whether such rationales are orthodox in Islamic terms) over the last quarter of a century; despite forced attempts to trace a convoluted ancestry to the Ismā'īlī Assassins sect of the thirteenth century (e.g. Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam*, London, 2003, p. 112). If the Egyptian groups appear to be more anarchist in inspiration and tactics, we find that Hezbollah, Amal, and latterly Hamas (in the 1980s and 1990s), might fit more comfortably, in analytical terms, within the model of national liberation struggles, or given the incoherence of the Lebanese state, territorial resistance struggles; even if, to take an example, Hezbollah's tactics of truck-bombings and kidnappings are still recognisably terrorist acts. That such organisations are nationalist, despite their pan-Islamist rhetoric, is indicated by their resistance to al-Qā'ida's propagandistic attempts to galvanise global support on the basis of Palestine, and its insistence that the primary tactic is to hit the great Western powers first.

Al-Qā'ida, the world's first truly globalised terror network,¹ represents a further development of this very recent trend towards so-called Islamic terrorism, and is born out of the jihādī training camps of Afghanistan, and advocates a permanent vanguardist jihād against the West and Israel employing the most sophisticated techniques of terror. I would be inclined, with the *Observer* journalist, Jason Burke, to downplay the role of Bin Ladin and his immediate leadership clique, marginalized and disrupted in any case after 11th September, and define al-Qā'ida as the totality of radical jihādī Salafism, whose genesis is a complex matter with its roots in the Cold War, and whose persistence might owe much, ironically, to the ongoing 'war on terror'.²

Townsend points out that the Abrahamic traditions appear to agree that suicide in time of peace is forbidden, but that the line between a 'suicide bombing' and a 'martyrdom operation' in time of war is much more blurred. This is not only a matter of fine distinction for Muslims, as one might note of

the Armenian Christian celebration of 'death knowingly embraced' in time of war. It is this distinction between war and peace that highlights the equivocation over the issue of 'suicide-bombing' in Israel by leading Islamic authorities. After the 11th September attacks, the Shaykh al-Azhar al-Tantawi and Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi were explicit in their condemnation of suicide bombing. Both, however, have made an exception in the case of Palestine, in which martyrdom operations are considered as a defensive jihād on the part of a people without an established military force obliged to protect their land rather than as an offensive act against civilians. Given the relative novelty of the usage of modern terror techniques among both Sunnī and Shī'ite groups, there is no consensus among the leading '*ulamā*' as to the licitness of such techniques: unlike al-Qaradawi and al-Tantawi, the late Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia 'Abd al-Aziz ibn Baz and Justice Taqi 'Uthmani have ruled that suicide bombing is unlawful in all instances.

One of the fallacies in the pro-martyrdom operation argument in relation to Palestine is the contention that all Israelis are legitimate targets because they are either in the army, are reservists and have military training, support the occupation of Palestinian lands, or will grow up to fight in the army. Not only is this assertion counter-factual, but if upheld it entirely erases any meaningful moral or legal distinction between combatants and non-combatants. One might note a similarly dehumanising argument in favour of acceptable collateral damage, arguing that peoples may be more or less complicit, for a variety of reasons, with the governments that rule them, made by Barry Buzan (in K. Booth and T. Dunne (eds.), *Worlds in Collision*, London, 2002, pp. 85-100). Or indeed any rationale that puts children, Israeli or Palestinian or any other, on the front line.

A general point needs to be made here: that the development of ever more destructive weaponry effectively forces those who adhere to pre-modern codes of principled martial conduct, as seen in the classical rules of jihād, towards a pacifist position. If 90% of casualties in the First World War were military, in the conflicts of the twenty first century, 90% of casualties appear to be civilian. There is a close relation between the increasingly easy acceptance of 'collateral damage' as a necessary consequence of continuous high-intensity aerial bombing (the outstanding examples remain Hiroshima and Nagasaki) and the wilful targeting of civilians by terror groups. While there is a genuine point to be made about wilful targeting, the moral conundrum involving the availability and use of ever more destructive technology renders acceptable the apparently non-intentional loss of innocent human life (in the case of bombing targets). In the language of moral theology, it is a sin of omission rather than of commission. The political end justifies the use of heavy ordinance regardless of the quality of the intelligence and the minimal risk undergone by one's own military forces.

Takfirī elements have long held to a secret *fatwā* stating that if someone deliberately kills himself while attempting to kill others, he goes directly to Paradise

without Divine Judgement. Furthermore, these elements also believe that since all sin will be erased, then a free license is allowed prior to the operation (which explains the odd behaviour of the hijackers prior to 11th September that seemed anything but pious). In other words, this view represents a 'monstrous inversion [of Islamic teaching]...that you can be as bad as you like, but as long as you kill people and/or yourself, you will attain ultimate salvation.' (Vincenzo Olivetti, *Terror's Source*, Birmingham, 2002, p. 48) This is a clear perversion of the Islamic tradition in which the conduct of war must preserve innocent human life, and where the deliberate taking of one's own life in any circumstance is a mortal sin.

Beyond the consideration of moral and theological limits lies the question of motivation. A rather odd and at times deeply indulgent if unsettling work is Bernard-Henri Lévy's *Who Killed Daniel Pearl?* The author, a philosopher and the most famous public French intellectual alive today, records his investigations in the style of a self-reflexive detective novel, and is concerned with motive as well as means. Pearl, an investigative journalist with the *Wall Street Journal* and a liberal Jew sympathetic to Islamic culture and society, was ostensibly researching a background story into the Richard Reid case (a British Muslim convert convicted for an attempted airborne suicide bombing) when he was kidnapped and brutally executed by radical Islamists in Pakistan in 2002. The work is often rambling, exposing the reader to every failed hypothesis and blocked avenue of inquiry, rather than presenting its conclusions logically. It is uncomfortably voyeuristic, especially the scenes with Pearl's grieving family and later on with the besieged family of Omar Sheikh (the young Briton at the centre of Pearl's murder) who believe in his innocence, because Lévy is determined to get his questions answered even at the risk of emotional insensitivity.

The 'novel' is really a study in the motives of terror as Lévy becomes obsessed with understanding what makes Sheikh tick. At first he dismisses him as a patsy, tacking the rap for someone else, even as an intelligent, well-educated young Briton who, traumatised by the tragedy of Bosnia, becomes radicalised and who embarks on a series of bizarre kidnappings and terrorist acts in the Sub-Continent. However, by the end, Sheikh has become a veritable Fu Manchu, the spider at the centre of every web: an evil genius, a double agent for al-Qā'ida and the Pakistani Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), a favoured son of elite Lahori social scene, a friend to Mullah Omar, erstwhile Emir of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and a disciple of Mawlana Mas'ud Azhar, founder of the Jaysh-i Muhammad. Pearl, it turns out, might instead have been investigating a clandestine alliance between a radicalised faction of the ISI and al-Qā'ida, which is determined to put nuclearized weapons of mass destruction at the disposal of fanatical Islamism. Pearl was killed because he knew too much, Lévy argues, and Pakistan, not Iraq, constitutes the real threat.

Lévy, the philosopher, admits that he uses his imagination in parts of the narrative where the evidence fails (elsewhere he is meticulous about his

documentation), and indulges in deconstructionist doubt about his own desire for a complete story, for an explanation that will fit both fact and motive seamlessly. At times, Lévy is his own worst advocate as if voicing the reader's objections for them will alleviate them. Yet at times the brilliance of his writing, particularly his gloomy evocation of a radicalised, seedy Pakistan casts a powerful rhetorical spell: one suspects that the text is unlikely to be recommended by the Pakistani Tourist Board. A memorable moment, rich for its evocation of sudden danger is Lévy's inadvertent discovery of an ISI briefing and debriefing centre for jihādī groups in transit between Afghanistan, the North West Frontier Province and Kashmir masquerading as a hotel.

One's doubts over the certitude of his speculative conclusions (which while not improbable do not deserve the burning conviction he invests in them) are somewhat allayed by the veiled threats and consistent misdirection he suffers, despite being an official representative of the French government, from police and military officers and senior ISI figures towards the end of his investigation when he begins to ask the right questions. This quirky, rambling but engaging quasi-novel grapples with the essential issues, but would have been improved by greater concision and circumspection.

Like their compatriots in the heartlands, it appears that Muslims in the West must, more than ever, take a double stand against the extremists in their midst and against the rise of the American hyper-power on the back of the 'war on terrorism', an approach admirably outlined by *The Empire and the Crescent: Global Implications for a New American Century*, edited by the rising intellectual star, Aftab Malik, of the UK. This collection distinguishes itself merely by the fact that it represents a collaboration between liberal and left wing Western intellectuals and Muslim moderates. (One of the contributors here, Hashim Kamali, reminds us that moderation in the Islamic conception is one of balance between laxity and extremism.) By and large, there is a welcome degree of collaborative self-introspection here: the non-Muslims taking neo-American imperialism to task, and the Muslims taking on the *takfīrī* elements.

Much of the anti-imperial polemic in the first part on 'Empire' is well researched and worthy if predictable, but one might question if American motives are always so one-dimensional. Of note is the first-class piece of investigative journalism from Pepe Escobar on 'The Project for The New American Century' (pp. 25-44) in which he unpacks the ideological Cold Warrior origins of the neo-conservative movement by detailed profiles of the key think tanks and hawks, but notes an important ideological tension between paid-up Lukidniks (Richard Pearle) and liberal interventionists (Paul Wolfowitz), which is now being played out in the politics of reconstructing Iraq. But another piece by Robert Dreyfus, 'The Thirty Year Itch', is representative of other articles here, positing a thirty-year plan to seize Middle Eastern oil and gas reserves that seems overdone and too neat (pp. 54-64).

A more plausible explanation, which strips through all the pro- and anti-US rhetoric, is given by the realist political theorist, Colin Gray, 'Politics as Usual after September 11th' (in K. Booth and T. Dunne (eds.), *Worlds in Collision*, London, 2002, pp. 226-234). The American reaction, like that of ancient Athens, is rooted in notions of honour. The US does not see al-Qā'ida as a first-order threat, but 'for the sake of its reputation, its priceless "honour" ... the hegemon must hunt down its irregular foes to the last man' as the Romans did with the Jewish zealots (p. 229). In addition to revenge, such a hunt only indirectly serves the current world order and is 'rather... a reaffirmation of hegemonic dignity and *pour encourager les autres*' (p. 230).

Much more unusual in the present glut of publications on the post-11th September world is the second section of *The Empire and the Crescent* in a series of theological (rather than political) engagements from Western Muslim intellectuals of a neo-traditionalist bent. Hamza Yusuf's piece, 'Seeing with Muslim Eyes' (pp. 107-11) is disappointingly slight, but three interesting pieces by Zaid Shakir, Abdal Hakim Murad and Hashim Kamali are substantial. Shakir (pp. 129-41), a prominent US Muslim scholar and a former politics professor of international relations, reviews the classical exegesis of key Qur'ānic verses to show that the current polemic typifying jihād as the opposite of the American foreign policy doctrine of 'perpetual war for perpetual peace', a model which Shakir admits has had its recent Muslim advocates like Sayyid Qutb, 'Abd al-Salam Faraj and Usamah bin Ladin. Nonetheless he goes on to show that the Verse of the Sword (9:5) was not understood to be of unrestricted application but rather exegetes like Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal restricted it to the ancient polytheists of the Arabian Peninsula, such it can no longer be said to have legislative weight. Others like Qāḍī Abū Bakr ibn al-'Arabī argued that it only referred to those polytheists who attacked the Muslims first. Shakir goes on to argue that in *fiqh* it is permitted to sue for peace, particularly in the face of overwhelming military and technological advantage; in other words, a futile almost nihilistic resistance might very well end up serving the strategic aims of US foreign policy hawks. Thus for moral and pragmatic reasons, this distorted interpretation is to be discarded.

In 'Tradition or Extradition?', Abdal Hakim Murad (pp. 142-55), a lecturer in Islamics at the University of Cambridge, argues for a recovery of that traditional Islam at home in all cultural climes which can easily accommodate itself to new minority contexts in the West. Unless such an understanding is reached, a new anti-Semitism, this time directed at Arabophile Western Muslims, might fan the flames of a xenophobic American nativism that has arisen periodically throughout US history. Finally in 'Fanaticism and its Manifestations in Muslim Societies' (pp. 175-207), Hashim Kamali, Professor of Law at the International Islamic University of Malaysia, provides a humane and learned commentary upon the golden mean of moderation in Islam and its aversion to fanaticism.

Bruce Lincoln, a Professor of Divinity at the University of Chicago, in *Holy Terrors*, has produced a thoughtful series of dense theoretical meditations on theological discourse itself, revisiting the basic questions of comparative religion through the lens of 11th September. In Chapter One, Lincoln re-examines the definition of religion through the analysis of an instruction document left by the hijackers in an abandoned car at the airport, which is reproduced in an appendix. He notes that all actions become ritualised and atomised, and whether 'grubby, banal or lethal' (p. 11), each act is a sacred duty; its sacredness conveyed by recourse to Divine authorship rather than human responsibility. In this particular discourse, ethics and religion are formally indivisible, such that any deed becomes divine and unailing. (p. 16) Yet in a discussion devoted to a general definition of religion, let alone Islam or a particular Muslim discourse, Lincoln mentions no particularities. There are strong jihādī Salafī overtones to the document, allied with some outrageous blasphemies alien to orthodox Islam, which suggests to me a highly personalised credo, presumably that of Muhammad Atta, thought by Bin Ladin himself to have been unsound in doctrinal matters. Firstly there is a personalised *basmalah*: "In the name of God, of myself and of my family" (Section 15, p. 94) and secondly a likening of the calculated murder of human beings to the ritual slaughter of animals (Section 31, p. 97). Can any general conclusions be safely drawn from such a heterodox document?

Chapter Two is a careful deconstruction of two 'texts': two speeches made by the US President George W. Bush in an address delivered after the start of the Afghanistan campaign, and the Emir of al-Qā'ida, Usamah bin Ladin, in a pre-recorded video released through al-Jazeera, both on 7th October 2001. Lincoln delights in drawing subversive parallels. Both sought to impose a Manichean social order on the world: for Bush, his opponents are outlaws, murderers and killers, barbaric killers who harboured evil plans and above all terrorists, a term he makes his own; for Bin Ladin, his primary opponents are infidels who are vain, arrogant, duplicitous and prone to wanton violence. Both seek to protect vulnerable children from the menace of the other side. Yet differences are apparent too: Bush centres his appeal on core national ideas and his authority is mostly official and corporate; Bin Laden identifies with the pious vanguard of Islam and his authority is personal, charismatic and non-official. Usamah seeks to rally all Muslims, while George W. aims to rally all Americans regardless of their religious affiliation and to reach out allied nation-states including those in the Muslim World. Bin Laden's discourse is explicitly religious (17%) while Bush's is minimally so (0.3%)

If Lincoln overlooks much of significance in Bin Ladin's address that has not been missed by other commentators (like Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam*, xv ff.), he is superb in unpacking the subtleties of Biblical reference and allusion in Bush's speech. Bush does not use the traditional formula employed in presidential addresses, 'God bless America', held to satisfy the requirements of

both the formal separation of religion and state and the reinforcement of basic Christian American values. Instead, he goes further, 'May God continue to bless America', in other words as long it remains righteous it will still enjoy God's favour, thus hinting at the evangelical view that these basic values are under threat. Bush alludes that 'the terrorists may burrow deeper into caves [escaping God's judgement, see Revelation of St John 6:15-17, and American bombs] and other entrenched hiding places.' Those that side with Bin Laden and 'the killers of innocents' (a nod to Herod's slaughter in Matthew 2), 'will take that lonely path at their own peril' (a reference to Biblical passages contrasting the paths of righteousness and of perdition). In an overwhelming non-religious speech, there remain significant hints and paraphrases that give mundane human acts transcendent significance whereby 'America's adversaries have been redefined as enemies of God, and current events have been constituted as confirmation of scripture'. (p. 32) Thus, Bush underscores his sympathy with a key constituency—the Christian Republican Right—even if practical politics forbids him from plain expression.

In Chapter Three, Lincoln turns his forensic skills upon Jerry Falwell's jeremiad against liberal opponents on Pat Robertson's *700 Club* on 13th September 2001. In his address, he blamed liberals from distancing the nation from its true relationship with Christ such that it suffered its first attack since 1812. The verse cited here, II Chronicles 7:14, has been a leitmotif of the Christian Right since the 1970s, whereby the history of Israel is reread as part of the American experience:

If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

In the history of ancient Israel, the golden age of Solomon is followed by a decline after which the prophets call for repentance in the reign of the last sinful king, Zedekiah. Ignoring the calls for repentance brings about the Destruction of the Temple, military defeat and national humiliation for the Israelites. For the Republican televangelists, as Bill Clinton was the sinful king but Bush is a true believer, the hijackers, acting merely as God's instruments, have given America a wake-up call. Thus 11th September was a reminder rather than the cataclysm of the Destruction of the Temple. Bush mildly rebuked Falwell for his outspokenness, but then requested him and others to lead the prayers at the National Cathedral on 14th September, and to inaugurate a prayer revival in January 2002 to provide, in Bush's own words 'a spiritual shield that protects the country' (p. 46). Bush must maintain his links with this constituency, but cannot afford to alienate the mainstream vote, for the Christian Right aims ultimately to reconstitute the American state, church and nation on a Christian basis.

The remaining chapters take on broader themes such as the relation between religion and culture, religious conflict and the post-colonial state, and the distinction between religions of revolution with those of the status quo, and less attention is directed specifically towards the post-11th September world. Some of the remarks that Lincoln makes are worth noting. Whatever well-meaning believers intend, in times of conflict, the moral constraints on violence become elastic. (p. 73) Where religion comes to define a society, then all of its conflicts for scarce resources of one sort or another will come to be defined in religious terms too. (p. 74) The European Enlightenment cannot be construed as the triumph of secular ideology over religion, but rather of true religion over superstition, whose reformers dreamt of 'a spiritual republic based on moral foundations' (which sounds very similar to the current Islamic revival). (p. 87)

Worlds in Collision: Terror and the Future of Global Order, edited by the British political scientists, Ken Booth and Tim Dunne, offers 31 essays broadly covering terror, international order and questions of inter-civilizational relations, and a wide range of political views from left to right, although there is only one Muslim contributor (Abdullahi Ahmed an-Na'im). There are some big names here but they deliver essays that do not significantly develop either their own thought or our understanding of the post-11th September world like Francis Fukuyama, Immanuel Wallerstein, Noam Chomsky, William Maley, Fred Halliday, Benjamin Barber and Richard Falk. Besides the articles from this collection that were briefly referred to above (Barry Buzan and Colin Gray), three others are worth mentioning briefly for their insights.

James Der Derian considers the mediatized nature of the Afghanistan campaign, a feature of conflicts after the Gulf War of 1991, to have been a media war between terrorist, Internet and primetime networks 'linked by a push/pull propagation of violence, fear and dis/mis/information' (p. 106). At one point, the Pentagon asked Hollywood directors to come up with possible terrorist scenarios that it would have to prepare contingency plans for. Perhaps today, Hollywood, the mass media and the war on terror have been conflated so that the old military-industrial complex has become MIME-NET (the military-industrial-media-entertainment network). (p. 112) Arthur Cebrowski, the head of the Pentagon's Office of Force Transformation, contends that at the lower end of decision-making the speediest network wins, even at the expense of human deliberation. Der Derian therefore asks that if the speed of technologically driven events outpaces organic (i.e. human) modes of comprehension and action, inducing possible trauma or information overload, it thereby runs the risk, at such levels of complexity, of creating the paradox of the 'integral accident'. (p. 114)

Saskia Sassen, in his 'Governance Hotspots: Challenges We Must Confront in the Post-September 11 World', importantly refocuses the debate away from religious or civilizational distinction towards the inequality between the global

North and South, for while inequality cannot justify terrorism it does create a breeding ground for radicalism. The bottom line is the need to regulate the global economy. The illegal trafficking of persons is estimated at 4 million, creating a global criminal profit of \$7 billion in 1998, directed mainly towards the rich North. The deregulation of the markets of the South has mostly further indebted its countries and made them more reliant on remittances from the North (some \$70 billion a year), thereby incentivising the illicit trafficking of human beings. The number of hyper-indebted countries is over forty and rising, but the forgiving of all debt is less important given that massive liberalisation has endangered the well being of middle-ranking economies like Argentina. Some countries that pay over 50% of government revenues in debt servicing suffer deleterious effects in education and health. The North has already moved to restrict immigration, despite a shrinking and aging population, a trend that 'security concerns' over 11th September will exacerbate. Migration flows are now determined by the global economy and like trade (with the GATT and the WTO) require global regulatory institutions. Sassen is optimistic that more responsible governance can meet the challenges of wealth inequality and migration.

Bhikhu Parekh posits 'Terrorism or Intercultural Dialogue' as the central moral dyad rather like Akbar Ahmed (*Islam Under Siege*, Cambridge, 2003), who contrasts hyper-fundamentalism/nationalism/tribalism with interfaith dialogue. The merit of Parekh's brief paper is his imagined opening salvos between an American and a Muslim, both of whom are self-critical and critical of the other. The points, concisely made here, would constitute good material for any relevant interfaith group. The Muslim complains of global interference in the affairs of small nations, the easy assumption of civilizational superiority and the aggressive enforcement of its values and mechanisms through an international order, the double standards of the hegemon, the need to identify an enemy to justify a further expansion of power, and supporting despotism in the Muslim World. The American in reply argues that Islam is intolerant of other religions claiming superiority over them and uses interfaith to further its missionary aims, Muslims themselves have hegemonic ambition and are not genuine anti-imperialists, Muslim polities are in a crisis of despotism and yet Islamic thinkers have no coherent idea of a modern, democratic and egalitarian state informed by their religious values, Muslims have too easily blamed others for their own failures, and moderates did nothing to stand up resolutely to the fundamentalist upsurge of the last few decades. Parekh remarks in closing that 'the views... attributed to each side are based on the public and private remarks of their spokesmen, and... since they are widely held and form the often unarticulated background against which each perceives and relates to the other, they need to be stated, confronted and carefully examined.' (p. 282)

Muslims the world over are now facing a great test of their conviction and courage in the Qur'anic demand to stand up for justice for others and even

against themselves (4:135). Nothing less than this standard will enable them to counteract extremism in the *ummah* and to unite with others in arguing for a fairer, consultative and egalitarian global order with integrity and dignity. The post-11th September world now provides not just a challenge but an opportunity to reflect upon the extremism that has become too widespread in our communities and societies, and to work for the recovery of a true sense of balance and moderation. To downgrade the importance of this opportunity or to question its political necessity (or wisdom) in the name of resisting the 'Empire' will only condemn Muslims to reduce their religion to a residue of empty defiance.

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Notes

1. In Bruce Lincoln's formulation, al-Qā'ida is not 'a militant fragment within a nation-state, [rather] it understands and constructs itself as simultaneously the military vanguard and the most faithful fragment of an international religious community.' (*Holy Terrors*, Chicago, 2002, p. 75)
2. Further recommended background reading includes J. Burke, *Al-Qaeda*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2003; J. Cooley, *Unholy Wars*, 3rd edn., London: Pluto, 2003; G. Kepel, *Jihad*, Harvard: Belknap, 2002; and A. Rashid, *Taliban*, 2nd edn., London: I.B. Tauris, 2001.