

O you who believe, respond to the call of Allah and His Messenger when He calls you to that which would give you life...

Khilafah

magazine

DHUL-HIJJAH - MUHARRAM 1431AH. ... JANUARY 2011 ... ISSUE: 14



Wikileaks: **WHAT WE ALWAYS KNEW ABOUT OUR RULERS**

NEW REPORT LAUNCHED: ANTI-MUSLIM HATE CRIME ON THE RISE IN BRITAIN - AMERICA APPROVES CYBER-'CENSORSHIP' FOR WIKILEAKS AFTER 'CABELGATE' - THE AFGHANISTAN WAR 10 YEARS ON - CAPITALISM HAS NO PLAN B - AL-WALAA [LOYALTY] TO THE LAW OF ALLAH AND AL-BARAA' [TO BE FREE] FROM SECULAR RULE - THE AFTERMATH OF NATURAL DISASTERS - A PROMISE IS A COMFORT TO A FOOL - ISLAM AND 'HUMAN RIGHTS'

Editorial

Asalaamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh

If there is a single theme to this month's magazine, it is the undoubtedly the ailing situation of global capitalism.

This has been most noticeably exposed by the dramatic diplomatic cables leaked in the public domain by the website WikiLeaks. Sajjad Khan exposes the hypocrisy demonstrated by the US on the issue, but the leaks have more unashamedly uncovered just how servile the rulers in the Muslim world are to western interests; and quite how unethical western governments are in their dealings with other states.

However, our question and answer on the US-led occupation in Afghanistan highlights some quotes from former US officials that this is not about US-Homeland security, rather about naked power. Zbigniew Brzezinski, former US National Security Advisor to Carter, wrote in 1997 that the *"power that dominated Eurasia would exercise decisive influence over two of the world's three most economically productive regions, Western Europe and East Asia... and almost automatically control the Middle East and Africa. What happens with the distribution of power on the Eurasian landmass will be of decisive importance to America's global primacy and historical legacy."*

As ever, with America, it's about power and money. However, its economic situation is moderating its global pretensions.

Arif Samad argues that the west has no fundamental answers that would prevent a similar financial crisis from occurring again in the future. The economic crisis, which started as a financial crisis, has developed into a sovereign debt crisis that has engulfed Ireland. Our article by Idries de Vries, argues that Indonesia is at risk of following this same path in this climate.

Yet global capitalism's problems for humanity do not only lie in its inherent instability – rather, it is also in its inherent injustice. This is drawn out in the article addressing the UN World Food Summit earlier this year, which highlights the stark contrast between the United States, where obesity is at epidemic proportions, and the developing world where an estimated 1 billion adults struggle to afford food. At that summit, the bold claims once made in the millennium development goals to make poverty history lie in tatters. When the capitalist world had wealth it made poverty and inequality worse. Now these countries are broke, it is hard to see how they will convince anyone of these aims.

The extent of the change in the world – post crisis – became most evident in London, as the British Government has cut its budget for university education to such an extent that universities will soon charge students up to £9,000 per year. The passage of this bill through parliament has provoked strong protests, the last one descending into chaos, as Central London became engulfed in riots.

This change in the economic situation has heightened tensions in Britain and Europe, and this has added to the difficulties for Muslims, already under siege since the start

of the 'War on Terror'. A recent report highlights how Anti-Muslim Hate Crime is on the rise in Britain, but our article links this to the failure of secular liberal societies to harmonise their citizens of different creeds and races.

The world has never before been in such need of an alternative. And that alternative is Islam.

The Tenth of Muharram has just passed, the day that marks the liberation of Bani Israel from their slavery to Firawn, the tyrant of his day. Ancient Egypt's great advancement still endures till today. But the day of Firawn passed. In today's world, capitalism is the 'Firawnic' system that enslaves the people.

We look forward to the day that Allah (swt) will liberate humanity again from the Firawn of today.

New Report Launched: Anti-Muslim Hate Crime on the Rise in Britain



On 27th November 2010, a report was launched in London titled 'Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Hate Crime: UK Case Studies 2010'. The European Muslim Research Centre produced the report, in excess of two hundred pages, further exposing to the world the hostile face of Britain and Europe towards Islam.

The report documented media demonisation of Islam and Muslims. It described a parallel rise in the cases of attacks on Muslims, especially those – like women – who display observable features of their faith in their manner of dress; attacks on the masjid – including the use of bricks and stones, firebombs and leaving the heads of pigs outside of masjid buildings; and varying other acts of abuse towards Muslims in Britain.

One of the authors described the attacks as causing him to feel sickened when he heard about them, whilst another saw a parallel with racist hate attacks that he witnessed living in the Britain in the 1960's and 1970's. All expressed concern over inadequate recognition of these problems at an official

level and were troubled by the widespread sentiment that such attacks on Muslims might be justifiable or even understandable.

The report quite correctly outlined the incorrect belief that exists in political circles that more Islam equates with further propensity to violence, and went some way to redress this flawed thinking.

Several speakers at the report launch expressed concerns about labels of 'extremist' and 'radical' being selectively applied to suit political and ideological ends. One highlighted that there were clear parallels with the old colonial policy of 'divide and rule'.

The authors are non-Muslim British/American academics and said the evidence in front of them disturbed them. One of them said that he hoped that this research would give an opportunity for empirical evidence to be the basis of opinion in this debate, and not ideology -as it had been hitherto.

Some of those who attended the launch event did express concern that there was a danger that this report may have, unwittingly, simply replaced someone else's classification of 'moderate' and 'extremist' with the authors' own preferred definition, albeit more inclusive; with both models using liberalism as their criteria to define Islam and Muslims. They had voiced their aim to claim back liberalism from the clutches of 'liberal hawks'. Hence, their discussion within the exclusive framework of liberalism, not from an Islamic perspective, was understandable, though not an approach Muslims would willingly adopt.

THE PURPOSE OF THE MEDIA ATTACKS ON ISLAM

The open season on Islam and Muslims in the media appears to be about values: that Muslims must adopt the dominant values of the host society, rather than retaining and

strengthening their own, which is what had happened under the policy of multiculturalism that existed in many European countries as well as others.

The debate about multiculturalism emerged in Britain around 2004 and was concluded almost as soon as it started. A dominant consensus had rapidly emerged that multiculturalism was wrong, and that 'new' cultures to Britain could – and should – be challenged critically, whilst British culture and values should be strengthened in the media and through institutions like schools.

One prominent western think tank Civitas articulated its concern with this policy in 2004 saying: *"it is not enough for the vast majority of decent, peaceful, law-abiding Muslims to renounce terror in principle... If they choose to live in Western liberal democratic societies, they must accept the values of liberal democracy-as Jews, Sikhs, Hindus and others have done for many years"*.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel seemed to echo this back in October 2010, saying that the *"approach of saying, 'Well, let's just go for a multicultural society, let's coexist and enjoy each other,' this very approach has failed, absolutely failed."*

In 2008, David Cameron, speaking before he was Prime Minister, argued *"State multiculturalism is a wrong-headed doctrine that has had disastrous results. It has fostered difference between communities. It would provide succour to the separatists who want to isolate and divide communities from the mainstream."*

But the consensus seemed to end as to how to define and promote 'Britishness'. Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali once voiced concerns that Britain was divided between those who held predominantly secular liberal 'enlightenment' values, and those who held more traditional

values rooted in Britain's Christian heritage. This split is manifest throughout Europe when Angela Merkel faced the criticism, when she said German values were 'Judeo-Christian'.

Many commentators were aware that Muslims now comprised significant and growing minorities in European countries, and voiced fears that this confident adherence to Islamic values in a Europe that was not confident about its own, could mean that in decades to come those Islamic values will be more visible in society.

All of this was set against the backdrop of 9/11, the Madrid and London bombings, which allowed the two issues to become conflated, giving urgency to issues of integration and assimilation they had never had before.

Consequently parody, vilification and one-sided debates about Islam became the norm in some quarters, arguably leading to the kind of hate crime described in the report.

THE EFFECTS OF THESE MEDIA ATTACKS

Amongst Muslims there can be said to be two reactions.

Firstly, anger at yet more attacks on Islam and the feeling that there is nothing that can be done to satisfy the unending demands of the liberal hawks.

Secondly, there is, mainly amongst an older generation, a fear not to speak out or rock the boat.

For Muslims as a whole, the attacks may force them to question why they should bother to put up with the abuse. But to date most seem to have answered this question with a firmer conviction in the belief in their Creator, and the way of life brought by His Messenger (saw).

So the consequence of nearly ten years of demonisation in the West has produced Muslims who have an ever greater yearning for knowing Islamic views on every issue – the exact opposite of what it was intended for Muslims.

NO EASY ANSWERS

But for the majority non-Muslim society there are no easy answers to this conundrum in Europe.

Ordinary people, faced with being told repeatedly by the media they trust for information that Muslims are a threat and Islam is bad, appear to be increasingly convinced by this false argument. Indeed, to do otherwise might even be seen as irrational by some of them.

And if they see real examples of bad Muslim behaviour people believe the propaganda more.

By contrast if they see examples of good Muslim behaviour, based upon Islam, or understand what Islam really is, it might diminish some of the effect of the propaganda.

Those with little experience of Muslims in day-to-day life, often have the greatest fears, which are then reinforced and exploited by odious politicians.



THE BIGGEST QUESTIONS

But the bigger questions remain for non-Muslim societies.

When they let Muslims choose their values – under the policy of multiculturalism, Muslims chose Islamic values and identity; which shocked the establishment and shook their confidence in their own values.

And after they started a policy of radical secular assimilation, Muslims seem to have become more decisive in their choice of Islamic values, albeit with greater grievance at the way they are ordered to 'convert' to

western values, leave the country, or accept they will be cast into political oblivion – a sort of modern day inquisition.

Europe has to decide what kind of countries they want. At present the dominant view is to compel Muslims to adopt their core secular beliefs.

If this is to continue and Muslims are not to be afforded the same status as other citizens, with their distinct beliefs, views and behaviours not to be accommodated, the likely result would be more vilification of Islam and Muslims, and perhaps more of the anti-Muslim hate crime presented in the report.

The writer, David Hayes wrote in 2008 that the alternatives for Britain might be characterised as either 'Radical Secularism' or 'Radical Multiculturalism' saying that, regarding the latter: *"The closest historic parallel to the model may be that of the Ottoman empire where religious communities (Armenians, Jews, Greeks) had a high degree of internal autonomy"*.

Some may see it as ironic that a state whose values were built on Islam, the Caliphate, developed a model of tolerance and harmony by accommodating other religious communities that were its citizens. Such a tradition goes back to the teaching of the Messenger of Allah (saw), and reflects the confidence Islam has in its beliefs and values. By contrast secular Europe is slipping back into a narrow, more aggressive, identity – not only felt by Muslims, but by others, including the Roma gypsy community in France.

This may not be a matter that can be settled by empirical research. However, such research might just help show radical secularists the counter productive manner of their approach; which has created a more unfair, unjust and divided Europe, but at the same time strengthens the adherence of Muslims to their values.

America approves cyber-'censorship' for WikiLeaks after 'Cabelgate'



In January 2010, the American technology company Google announced it would withdraw from the Chinese market, citing continued governmental interference and alleged cyber attacks by the Chinese state against its operations. The news that Google had abandoned the most populous market in the world sent shockwaves across the globe and generated a backlash against China. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in response gave an impassioned speech in Washington pulling no punches. She stated: *"Countries that restrict free access to information, or violate the basic rights of internet users, risk walling themselves off from the progress of the next century. We stand for a single internet where all of humanity has equal access to knowledge and ideas. No nation, no group, no individual should stay buried in the rubble of oppression. I hope that refusal to support politically motivated censorship will become a trademark characteristic of American technology companies. And when their business dealings threaten to undermine this freedom, they need to consider what's right, not simply the prospect of quick profits."*

Today in the light of the WikiLeaks exposure of the real nature of American diplomacy, Clinton and the rest of the western establishment have been hoisted on their own petard. Lecturing China about Internet freedom in January, Clinton now wants to censor WikiLeaks in December. Vociferously condemning cyber attacks on Google, she

remained silent while similar attacks occurred on WikiLeaks. Attacking Internet restrictions by authoritarian governments at the start of year, she sees no shame in seeking to impose those very same restrictions on WikiLeaks today.

Indeed some in the American establishment have wanted to go even further in their attempts to shut down WikiLeaks. The incoming chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee believes WikiLeaks should be officially designated as a terrorist organisation. Rep. Peter King wants the Obama administration to *"determine whether WikiLeaks could be designated a foreign terrorist organization."*

For the United States the sanctity of diplomatic cables somehow trumps the sanctity of core beliefs.

WikiLeaks appears to meet the legal criteria "of a U.S.-designated terrorist organization", King wrote in a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. He added: *"WikiLeaks presents a clear and present danger to the national security of the United States"*. King also wrote separately to Attorney General Eric Holder, asking him to *"criminally charge"* WikiLeaks front man Julian Assange under the Espionage Act *"for conspiracy to disclose classified information"*. If the State Department adds WikiLeaks to their terror list, one effect would be to prohibit U.S. banks from processing payments to the group (it therefore didn't take long for companies like PayPal and MasterCard to stop providing transactional services to WikiLeaks). Another would be to trigger punitive measures included in the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, which make it a federal felony to provide *"material support or resources"* to a terrorist organisation.

King is not alone however, Connecticut Sen. Joe Lieberman, chairman of the Senate Homeland Security Committee said in a statement: *"I also urge the Obama administration – both on its own and in*

cooperation with other responsible governments around the world--to use all legal means necessary to shut down WikiLeaks. WikiLeaks' activities represent a shared threat to collective international security."

This attempt to stop WikiLeaks at all costs clearly highlights the democratic façade that America and the west promotes. The west believes they live on a higher moral ground than everyone else, that unlike China they are not seeking to suppress information or censor criticism or stifle thinking. But this is an artificial distinction; all governments seek to censor and restrict certain information to their public and will target oppressively those

who they believe constitute any form of threat to the state. All states will force their media, civil society and corporations to act in a certain way when they believe vital national interests are at stake. For Muslims a sense of déjà vu was also apparent. Muslims were attacked relentlessly by the west for objecting to the Danish cartoons on grounds of freedom of speech, yet for the United States the sanctity of diplomatic cables somehow trumps the sanctity of core beliefs. The West criticised the Muslim world's condemnation of the Danish cartoonists, yet American politicians have passed their own secular fatwa on Julian Assange without adverse comment.

It is chilling to see such brazen hypocrisy from the western establishment, for them internet freedom seems to be about allowing commerce, pornography and the ability to criticise regimes they don't like. When the same internet exposes their own corrupt actions in Afghanistan, Iraq and the rest of the world, they run to implement the same authoritarian measures the regime in Beijing would be so proud of.



The Afghanistan War 10 years on

QUESTION:

The Afghan war has lasted nearly ten years (longer than WW1 and WWII combined), yet America remains sunken in a quagmire. Obama promised to make the Afghan war a priority and accused the Bush administration of neglecting the real war. Since his coming to power and the development of her strategy against terrorism in Afghanistan, America seems to contradict herself in this strategy. She increases troop numbers there, but then says that this increase will be withdrawn in the summer of 2011, which is to the detriment of that strategy. Many officials including, Gen Petraeus, claim such a strategy is not effective. Moreover, there are news reports of a conflict between the State Department and the military.

What is the interest of America in Afghanistan despite falling into this quagmire? Is there any real difference between the view of the previous Republican administration and the current Democratic administration? Is Obama serious in his plan to withdraw from Afghanistan, which he has put in place, despite the disagreement between him and the military commanders? Is there a role for

the neighbouring countries, especially in the light of Europe's "boredom" with this war and her plans for withdrawal? What is expected in this regards?

ANSWER:

1. Let's start with some American political analysts' views of this region, which is part of the historical region of Eurasia, extending from East Asia through Central Asia and its surrounding regions and embracing Europe itself. In the words of Zbigniew Brzezinski, former US National Security Advisor to Carter:

"Eurasia is home to most of the world's politically assertive and dynamic states. All the historical pretenders to global power originated in Eurasia. The world's most populous aspirants to regional hegemony, China and India, are in Eurasia, as are all the potential political or economic challengers to American primacy. After the United States, the next six largest economies and military spenders are there, as are all but one of the world's overt nuclear powers, and all but one of the covert ones. Eurasia accounts for 75 percent of the world's population, 60 percent of its GNP, and 75 percent of its energy

resources. Collectively, Eurasia's potential power overshadows even America's. A power that dominated Eurasia would exercise decisive influence over two of the world's three most economically productive regions, Western Europe and East Asia... almost automatically control the Middle East and Africa. What happens over the distribution of power on the Eurasian landmass will be of decisive importance to America's global primacy and historical legacy." [A Geo Strategy for Eurasia, Foreign Affairs, September/October 1997]. George Friedman said in his book, *"The US has had the ultimate aim of preventing the emergence of any major power in Eurasia. The paradox however is as follows – the goals of these interventions was never to achieve something – whatever the political rhetoric might have said – but to prevent something. The United States wanted to prevent stability in areas where another power might emerge. Its goal was not to stabilize but to destabilize, and this explains how the United States responded to the Islamic earthquake. It wanted to prevent a large, powerful Islamic state from emerging. Rhetoric aside, the United States has no overriding interest in peace in Eurasia. The United States also has*

no interest in winning the war outright... the purpose of these conflicts is simply to block a power or destabilize the region, not to impose order." [The Next 100 Years – A forecast for the 21st Century, January, 2009].

2. The region that forms the pivotal part of Eurasia is Central Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Western Iran. Hence, it is no surprise to discover successive US governments irrespective of their ideological inclinations (Neo-conservatism or Realism) focused on using Afghanistan and Pakistan to project US power and anchor American hegemony in the region. Indeed, the memory of using Afghanistan and Pakistan to defeat the Soviet Union is fresh in the minds of US politicians. In a recent interview Brzezinski admitted that Afghanistan in the 1980s was superpowers' battling over Eurasia [Russia Today, September 26 2010].

So by invading Afghanistan after the dubious events of September 11 2001, America is endeavouring to secure its strategic goals, which are to:-

- a. Prevent Russian and Chinese domination of Eurasia;
- b. Prevent the emergence of the Khilafah State;
- c. Control the hydrocarbon resources of the Caspian Sea and the Middle East;
- d. Control the security of and the transit of hydrocarbons from the Caspian Sea and the Middle East.

There is no dispute between Republicans and Democrats or between Neo-conservatives and Realists about the following goals: the invasion of Afghanistan, America's long-lasting military presence in the country or America's exploitation of Afghanistan to destabilise neighbouring countries - particularly the former Soviet Union states. The dispute, however, is concentrated on operational goals i.e. America's ability to achieve these strategic goals in the near term. Central to this is the size of America's military footprint and the nature of the occupation. During Bush's reign, his administration was completely preoccupied by the events in Iraq, and this allowed the Taliban to regroup and resurge. It was not until Obama's ascendancy to Presidency that Obama began to review the operational strategy in Afghanistan and explore mechanisms to subdue

the Pushtun resistance.

After successive reviews, Obama settled on the following operational goals:-

- a. Increase the capacity of the Afghan government to establish its writ over the country. This means building the Afghan security forces, police and army, appointing competent and loyal governors and minimizing corruption in the Afghan government.
 - b. Destroy al-Qaida and those elements amongst the Pushtun opposed to US occupation.
 - c. Encourage moderate Taliban fighters to defect and join the Central Government.
 - d. Enlist the help of Iran, India, Russia, China and other states to participate with the US in solving Afghanistan's problem in a regional context.
3. Again these operational goals, when compared to what the Bush administration had articulated, only differ in the minuscule of details. Nonetheless, the greatest variations between Obama and Bush occurred over the methods of delivering these operational goals i.e. what should be the size of the American military footprint in Afghanistan and how deep should Pakistan's involvement be in the war. The Bush administration was of the opinion that the operational goals could be achieved by restricting the size of America's



military footprint and gradually nudging Pakistan to get deeply involved in the tribal areas. Obama on the other hand, espoused a greater military footprint i.e. more US soldiers on the ground in Afghanistan and coercing Pakistan to play an active role in pursuing the war in the tribal areas. Additionally, Obama made a pledge to the American electorate to reduce the size of US forces in Afghanistan by 2012.

On December 1st 2009, Obama announced, *"The 30,000 additional troops that I am announcing tonight will deploy in the first part of 2010 – the fastest pace possible – so that they can target the insurgency and secure key population centres... Taken together, these additional American and international troops will allow us to accelerate handing over responsibility to Afghan forces, and allow us to begin the transfer of our forces out of Afghanistan in July of 2011"* [Voice of America News Online]. The 30,000 extra US troops arriving in the summer of 2010 took the total to 100,000 US servicemen. The total number of foreign forces in Afghanistan at present is 150,000. This figure includes the 100,000 American soldiers. As of September 2009, contractors providing security, transportation, and logistical services numbered 104,100 in Afghanistan according to the military [DOD: Obama's Afghan Surge Will Rely Heavily on Private Contractors, Justin Elliott December 15, 2009]. Therefore, the total number of forces under the command of the US is about 250,000 personnel. On the Pakistani side of the Afghan border in the tribal areas, the number of Pakistan troops number 140,000 [Kayani spells out terms for regional stability, Dawn Online, February 02, 2010]. This means that the total number of troops fighting the Taliban is around 390,000.

4. The withdrawal date has dogged relations within Obama's administration, as well as between Obama and his military. Simply put, the military establishment along with several senior politicians hold the view that the operational goals set out by Obama cannot be achieved with 250,000 soldiers and aggressive timelines. The most high profile victim of tensions between Obama and the military was General McChrystal who was relieved by Obama of his command. When relieving him Obama said that McChrystal's scornful remarks about administration

officials represent conduct that *“undermines the civilian control of the military that is at the core of our democratic system.”* [Obama relieves McChrystal of command, MSNBC.com Jun 23 2010]. Even after the McChrystal’s dismissal the Pentagon continues to doubt Obama’s Afghan withdrawal date. Defence Secretary Robert Gates gave reassurances to Gen Petraeus, McChrystal’s replacement. Gates emphasised that the drawdown plan was *“conditions-based,”* and said that whilst



Petraeus agrees with the president’s overall strategy, *“when he gets on the ground, he will assess the situation for himself. And at some point, he will make recommendations to the president. And that’s what any military commander should do. And the president will welcome those recommendations. But at the end of the day, the president will decide whether changes are to be made in the strategy”* [CBS News online June 24 2010]. In August another US General James Conway, head of the US Marine Corps questioned the withdrawal date. He said, *“In some ways we think right now it’s probably giving our enemy sustenance. We think that he may be saying to himself, in fact we’ve intercepted communications that say, ‘Hey, we only have to hold out for so long,’ ” ... “I honestly think it will be a few years before conditions on the ground are such that turnover will be possible for us.”* [US General: Afghan deadline ‘giving enemy sustenance’, BBC News Online, August 24 2010].

5. But the most revealing exposition of schisms between Obama and the military surfaced in Bob Woodward’s book *“Obama’s*

Wars.” According to Woodward’s meeting-by-meeting, memo-by-memo account of the 2009 Afghan strategy review, the president avoided talk of victory as he described his objectives.

“This needs to be a plan about how we’re going to hand it off and get out of Afghanistan”, Obama is quoted as telling White House aides as he laid out his reasons for adding 30,000 troops in a short-term escalation. *“Everything we’re doing has to be focused on how we’re going to get to the point where we can reduce our footprint. It’s in our national security interest. There cannot be any wiggle room.”* The president concluded from the start that, *“I have two years with the public on this”* and pressed advisers for ways to avoid a big escalation, the book says. *“I want an exit strategy,”* he implored at one meeting. Privately, he told Vice President Joe Biden to push his alternative strategy opposing a big troop build-up in meetings, and while Mr. Obama ultimately rejected it, he set a withdrawal timetable because, *“I can’t lose the whole Democratic Party.”* [Obama Wars, Bob Woodward]

6. It is obvious from these quotes that Obama’s primary concern is to bring some of the US servicemen home in time for the US General elections in 2012. Meanwhile, the US army is adamant that the deadline is extended and is deeply opposed to Obama’s withdrawal plan. The Pentagon views it as extremely dangerous to the accomplishment of the operational goals. It must also be underscored that Obama does not intend to withdraw all of the US troops i.e. 100,000 soldiers. According to the Afghanistan study group, which recently produced a paper entitled *A New Way Forward: A Five-Point Approach.* In this paper the authors recommend *‘a decrease to 68,000 troops by October 2011, and 30,000 by July 2012. This step would save the U.S. \$60 billion to \$80 billion per year and reduce local resentment at our large and intrusive military presence.’* Other studies advocate a troop reduction of 50,000. For instance in the essay, *“How the Afghan War Can Still Be Won,”* O’Hanlon, the author believes that Obama will *“run for re-election with more than 50,000 US troops still in Afghanistan”* [Foreign Affairs 2010]. This means that America will still maintain a sizable military

presence in Afghanistan to pursue its strategic goals at a later date.

7. In conclusion, Obama’s insistence on bringing the US troops home on July 11 2011 has undermined America’s ability to meet its operational goals. With only 100,000 US troops, tight withdrawal deadlines and Europe unwilling to contribute further soldiers, on October 19 through *“the International Contact Group on Afghanistan”,* America sponsored a conference in Rome, including some 46 countries and international organizations, among them the OIC! Even Iran has attended for the first time, Holbrooke the late US representative at that time, said that Iran has a role to play in Afghanistan... The Pentagon is now intensely focused on coercing Pakistan to deploy a greater number of soldiers in the tribal areas and engage the militants residing there. America needs to tame the ferocity of the Pushtun resistance and co-opt some of the Afghan Taliban into the Afghan government, so as to make the nature of the occupation more palatable to the Afghans and minimise the threat to her military presence. But the Pakistani army, fearful of India and overwhelmed by the flood crisis, is reluctant to redeploy extra soldiers.

America has increased her drone attacks on the tribal areas, in a way that is provocative even for her agents in Pakistan. She did not confine her assault to the tribal’s but included Pakistani soldiers as well, which was such an embarrassment to the authority that it forced her to close the border with Afghanistan through which NATO supplies go, though only temporarily to absorb the anger of the people – only to re-open it again a short while later.

Even with thousands of American soldiers sent to Afghanistan, even with the complicity of the rulers of Pakistan with the US, and with the increase in drone attacks, and even with US attempts to strike a chord with the moderate and non-moderate Taliban, America still remains sunk in a quagmire in Afghanistan. America realises that she will not be able to save her dignity in Afghanistan, or even achieve a dignified exit, unless she can gain some of the Afghan resistance, i.e. an imitation of the Sahwat Plan of Iraq within Afghanistan. It seems that they have not yet succeeded in this matter so America is heading backwards, from bad to worse.

Capitalism Has No Plan B

In spite of regular cyclical economic downturns every five to ten years or so, western economies have a renowned reputation for unrivalled economic growth and development ever since the Great Depression in the 1920s. After all, the average western household possesses a house, a car, all nature of modern appliances and per capital income ranging in the tens of thousands of dollars and is the envy of the world. No one could lecture the west on how to do economics.

Developing countries employed western economists as consultants to turn round their failing economies by emulating western economic models. Top academics and economists from the developing world travelled thousands of miles to study at the best universities in America and Europe captivated by what the west had apparently achieved in terms of economic development.

However, the 2008 western financial crisis that precipitated the worst economic recession in over half a century has shaken the very foundation of capitalism. Adherent capitalists began to question capitalism itself. Even the renowned Financial Times newspaper, not one to apologise for capitalism's wrongs, began a series called The Future of Capitalism (<http://www.ft.com/indepth/capitalism-future>)

Though it was not the first time the western financial system had suffered banking failures, the 2008 financial crisis shook the western world by its speed, scale and

contagion. Multi-million dollar international banking corporations spanning the globe and employing tens of thousands melted into insignificance overnight. The so-called 'assets' or capital of these corporations held little more than paper value. Corporations were said to be illiquid when they were in fact bankrupt as the real value of their assets became exposed for what they were really worth – of negligible value.

The international nature of corporations, money and capital markets meant the crisis spread like wildfire across the globe searching out particularly weak and insolvent companies like a hunter pursues its prey.

Western Governments became the lenders of last resort providing unlimited guarantees to their financial system – in effect nationalising the whole financial sector to prevent it collapsing, with it bringing down the whole western capitalist experiment. Trillions of dollars of Government and central bank funds were pumped into stalled capital markets to entice banks to lend. Capital markets lost their *raison d'être* while axioms describing perfectly competitive capital markets were shattered.

One of the deepest recessions in post war history followed as the real economy, which had been driven by cheap debt supplied by the odious financial sector, stalled. Anaemic growth plagues America, while European economies implement austerity faltering from one crisis to the next.

FAILED ECONOMIES

Among western nations Britain is leading the charge towards austerity with swingeing cuts in public expenditure despite a weak economy and high unemployment. The recent Comprehensive Spending Review has identified £81 billion in cuts despite real risks that the economy may slide back into recession as around an expected half a million public sector jobs are lost. While unemployment stands at around 2.5m there are nearly 6m Britons on out-of-work benefits. The manufacturing sector, where real wealth is created is in terminal decline, while the inherently flawed financial services sector, which is widely blamed for the crisis, is being relied upon to generate employment and economic growth. Little wonder that public sector workers are striking while students are rioting aggrieved at the impact of the impending cuts.

The riots are not restricted to the UK; France has seen widespread strikes and civil unrest on the streets to oppose the Government's plans to raise the retirement age from 60 to 62. France is also increasing the retirement age in spite of high youth unemployment especially among second and third generation immigrants from France's former colonies in North Africa.

France is not alone in facing huge pension liabilities, which are not even reflected in the public sector debt burden. Declining birth rates and ageing populations across western Europe mean there just are not enough

taxpayers to provide pension benefits for an increasing number of elderly who are seeing their benefits cut when they are at their most vulnerable and in need.



Then there are so-called peripheral European economies, which are near bankrupt and resorting to international bailouts. Ireland has followed Greece calling in the IMF to rescue its economy after the European Union bailout failed to stem the decline. Ireland went bankrupt providing unlimited guarantees to its banks during the financial crisis. Portugal, Spain and Italy are all in a particularly poor economic state as is reflected by the premium on their Government debt due to increasing risk of sovereign default.

A year on, the US, the most free-market of all western nations, is still reeling from the financial crisis. In spite of all manner of Government interventions unemployment remains stubbornly high at about 1 in 10 adult Americans (with some commentators estimating true unemployment at closer to 20%) while foreclosures or home repossessions continue to blight families. Former Golden States like California lay bankrupt and Federal funded state and welfare programmes are being cut when people need them most during a major economic slump.

FAILED POLICIES

Western economic policymakers have run out of ideas. The full arsenal of capitalist economic policy tools has been employed to resuscitate economic growth. Interest rates have been near zero per cent in the US and Europe for well over a year. Several large fiscal stimulus packages have been deployed including tax cuts and increased public spending. Indeed bank rescues combined with fiscal stimulus has been the perfect storm or the proverbial straw that broke the camels

back in terms of taking public expenditure over the tipping point and into sovereign default territory.

Capitalist policymakers have even resorted to printing money or quantitative easing (QE) to kick-start economic growth. Trillions of dollars, Euros and Pounds Sterling have materialised at the click of a button augmenting central bank reserve deposits which perversely have been used to buy suspect Government debt.

With monetary then fiscal policy failing to revive the economies of Europe and the US, western policymakers have turned to exchange rate devaluation. The use of currency wars or competitive devaluation to boost exports and inhibit imports has emerged as the latest economic policy tool in the west's drive to revive their failing economies.

Both QE and exchange rate devaluation run the risk of harbouring inflation and deliberately undermining the value of currencies which is tantamount to economic suicide in a world where money is itself fiat currencies which depends on the mere decree of Governments to grant it value.

FAILED IDEOLOGY

Capitalism's fixation with economic growth stems from its viewpoint that human wants or desires are unlimited or never-ending while goods and services are scarce and therefore an ever increasing production of goods and services is necessary to achieve ever-higher satisfaction of wants. As more and more wants or desires are satisfied through the production of ever greater amounts of goods and services people by definition are said to be better off and therefore happier.

The flawed view that there is perpetual scarcity fails to take into account that basic human needs – food, clothing, shelter – can be sufficiently accommodated with ease given the world's endowment of resources. The economic problem is therefore not scarcity but the distribution of resources. This is proved by the fact that ever-greater amounts of production has not come close to ending poverty in the world let alone in developed countries. Indeed in spite of annual increases in worldwide GDP the vast majority of the world's population barely scrape a

living while a wealthy minority commands, controls and exploits the majority of the world's resources.

Capitalist economists also recognise only materialist needs and neglect spiritual and moral values. Indeed, spiritual and moral activities that do not contribute to economic growth are considered useless at best and at worst counterproductive because they are seen to stifle the materialist motivation.

To quote the father of capitalist economics, Adam Smith:

"It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our necessities but of their advantages"
"<http://www.adamsmith.org/adam-smith-quotes/>"

Fundamentally it's this ideology of Adam Smith that drives the continuous need for economic growth – at all cost. Debt financed growth produced a largely superfluous financial sector. The collapse of the financial sector has not led to a reassessment of the capitalist model but has shifted debt from banks and corporations to Governments (taxpayers) and institutions such as the EU and IMF in an attempt to maintain growth.

CONCLUSION

Fiscal austerity has replaced near wholesale socialisation of financial assets. Liberalisation of economies in the 1980s led to financial deregulation and privatisation of nationalised industries. In contrast Keynesian economics was the vogue in the 1970s but was replaced by more laissez-faire policies due to inefficient and unproductive state industries. Western economies are returning to public spending restraint and small government, incentivising the private sector to play a bigger role in the economy after a decade in which the public sector is said to have grown too big.

Fiscal austerity or public sector proliferation, Keynesian's demand management or Friedman's supply side economics, deregulation and privatisation or regulation and nationalisation – whatever the fad of the current decade – capitalism has no Plan B.

Al-Walaa [Loyalty] to the Law of Allah and al-Baraa' [to be free] from Secular rule



When the Prophet ﷺ sent Mu'ath to Yemen, he asked him:

"How will you judge if a case is brought to you?" Mu'ath replied "I would judge by the Book of Allah" to which the Prophet ﷺ asked "And if you do not find (an answer) in the book of Allah?" Mu'ath said "Then by the sunnah of the Messenger of Allah" ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ then asked "and if you do not find (an answer) in the sunnah or the Book of Allah" to which Mu'ath replied he would exert his own opinion (meaning ijihad based upon the Qur'an and Sunnah),
[Abu Dawud/Ahmad]

This hadith, and a similar narration regarding the sending of Abu Musa and Mu'ath to Yemen in which they replied they would make analogy from one issue to another if they could not find a direct answer in the Qur'an and Sunnah, demonstrate the basis for ruling in Islam. As mentioned in the book *Awn al-Ma'bood* by Shams al-Haqq Azimabadi, the reply of Mu'ath that he would 'exert his opinion' - means accordingly a full effort in finding the issue by qiyaas (analogy) upon the Qur'an or Sunnah (therefore not meaning

using best judgement depending on personal experience and intellect).

A Muslim is obliged to live their life in all its aspects according to Islam, with all rules being derived ultimately from the Qur'an and Sunnah. This is in direct contradiction to secular law based upon legislation with no reference to the laws of Allah, so a Muslim is obliged to declare his freedom from and enmity against secularism whilst his allegiance is to the Shari'ah.

THE (IL)LOGIC OF SECULAR LAW

Looking at secular law from a rational perspective alone any ordinary person can recognise the inherent problems that emerge from a law based loosely on the maxim to "leave to God what is due to God, and leave to Caesar what is due to Caesar".

The basis of all secular law, whether derived from a democratic system or a dictatorial one, is that man legislates according to what he believes is best, or his desires. The only difference between the democratic and dictatorial system is that in a democratic system the legislation is theoretically more representative of the popular masses opinions and desires than that of a dictatorial system

in which the interests represented may be narrower.

Without discussing the theory behind popular democracy, and whether it is ever realistically attainable or essentially a mirage utopia, rule by majority opinion can only ever ultimately lead to contradictions and despair for the populations subjected to it. Since people have varying opinions, desires, wants and needs, even by implementing (an illusory) majority rule, there will always be an oppressed minority (recognised by the existence of so-called "minority rights" within democratic systems). Evidence enough is the history of the plight of the black man in America, the indigenous peoples of Australia, apart from the plight of other "minorities" across the World.

As, the political philosopher Immanuel Kant once said: "...democracy is, properly speaking, necessarily a despotism, because it establishes an executive power in which 'all' decide for or even against one who does not agree; that is, 'all,' who are not quite all, decide, and this is a contradiction of the general will with itself and with freedom."

Apart from the obvious oppression and prejudice that has emerged in modern

democracies against minority populations, the varying opinions over time also demonstrates the invalidity of rule by man-made law. What is considered legal today was illegal yesterday, and vice versa.

Legislation by man makes the rules and laws effectively subordinate to the whim of the present, which can themselves be influenced by the media and marketing industries. The change of opinion in issues covering areas such as abortion, sexuality, race, the status of women, crime and punishment, has led to many corresponding changes in legislation, with no foundation for determining what is essentially right and wrong.

Such an arbitrary way of ruling and running life's affairs cannot be considered ideal by any means, and almost all serious proponents of secular democracy claim that the system is, in their view, merely better than other choices.

ISLAM AND SECULAR LAW

The basis of legislation in Islam is not man; whether that is an individual representing a set of narrow interests or a legislating body that theoretically represents "majority opinion". Rather, Allah is the only One with the right of legislation, as mentioned in the Qur'an:

"Indeed, the Judgement is only for Allah" [TMQ Yusuf, 67] And also-
"Or have they partners with Allah, who have instituted for them a Deen which Allah has not ordained" [TMQ al-Shura, 21]

Consequently, it is obligatory for all Muslims to follow the commandments of Allah and His Messenger in all spheres of life, whether they are in the position of ruling or being ruled.

"And so judge between them by what Allah has revealed and follow not their vain desires" [TMQ al-Ma'idah, 49] And also-
"But no by your Lord they can have no faith until they make you judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions and accept them with full submission" [TMQ al-Nisa, 65]

The explanation of the beginning of this ayat as mentioned in Tafseer al-Wajeez interprets that the use of the oath as being explained by the issue is not as they claim (when they say that) they believe and while they go against his judgement (meaning they cannot have that belief that they claim).

It is also mentioned in the Qur'an:

"And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed such are the kafiroon" i.e. disbelievers [TMQ al-Ma'idah, 44]

This part of the ayat comes after narrating about the prior revelation of the Torah for Bani Israa'il, and Ismael Qadi in his book *Ahkam al-Qur'an* stated that: *'And whoever did like what they (the Jews) did and devised a law, and by it contradicted the law of Allah and made it a Deen and acted according to it, then they are a part of the mentioned threat (that is, that they are from the disbelievers), whether they were Rulers or other than the Rulers (meaning those who were ruled and agreed with their rulers even though they devised laws contrary to Allah's law)'*

Imam Qurtubi mentioned that ibn Abbas said in relation to this ayat *'That whoever does not rule by whatever Allah has revealed then he has done an action that is the same as the actions of the disbelievers.'*

If one reads over these ayaat of the Qur'an and those similar to them, and their explanations as understood by the companions of the Prophet, those who came after from the salaf and the classical books of tafsir, it is clear that there has never been any discussion over the principle that it is necessary to rule by Allah's law in entirety. This is because the concept of the Shari'ah being the basis for law has always been among those accepted fundamentals that do not require any argument. Rather, the discussion between the scholars has always been around the status of the ruler who governs and judges by other than the law of Allah – does he remain a Muslim or has he removed himself from the Deen of Islam by his actions (this particular discussion is not relevant here, but the point is to understand around what points the classical debates were revolving and the scope of discussion they encompassed).

BELIEF IN SECULARISM, AND THE SEPARATION OF DEEN AND DAWLA

It is clear that any believing Muslim cannot adopt any way of life, or code of law, other than that derived from Islam according to the principles of ijtihaad. Secular law, whether brought into being via democratic or dictatorial, authoritarian regimes, contradicts the fundamentals of our aqeedah and the command of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ to obey only Allah, to the extent that it is narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"O people, Allah does not accept the prayer of an Imam who rules by other what Allah has revealed"** (al-Hakim)

Many contemporary scholars from all schools of thought have made clear statements that separating the Deen from the state is completely haraam, and it is sufficient to mention the words of just four, Mohammed al-Ameen al-Shinqiiti the Mauritanian scholar and mufassir of the Qur'an, Mustapha Sabri who was formally Sheikh al-Islam in the Uthmani Khilafah, Imam Kawthari who was a staunch Hanafi sufi scholar, and Ahmed Shaker the Egyptian muhaddith, May Allah have mercy upon them all.

As for the system of law which contradicts the legislation of the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, the appointment/ ruling by it is Kufr in the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth – meaning it is an act of clear disbelief (Shinqiiti)

The separation of Deen from the Dawla is apostasy from Islam (Mustapha Sabry)

The attempt to separate the Deen from the Dawla is clear disbelief
The issue with respect to the man-made laws is clear as the clarity of the sun, it is obviously Kufr Buwah (Ahmed Shaker)

In conclusion, it is clear that the believer must have Walaa' to the laws and rules of Islam, to believe in them and wish for their implementation and execution, and to have Baraa' from secularism, to disbelieve in and disassociate from the laws and rules of other than Islam, and to hate the idea and call for the separation of Deen from Dawla.



THE AFTERMATH OF NATURAL DISASTERS

Natural disasters number many, of which the top deadliest disasters in the last 100 years, written in stone in the gospels of history are: Haiyuan Earthquake (1920), The Great Kanto Earthquake (1923), China Floods (1931), Ashgabat Earthquake (1948), Bhola Cyclone (1970), Tangshan Earthquake (1976), Ethiopian Famine (1984) and more recently, Bangladesh Cyclone (1991), Asian Tsunami (2004), Cyclone Nargis (2008), Haiti Earthquake (2010) and the Pakistan Floods (2010).

Such disasters have been known for taking ruthless casualties and causing collateral damage of massive proportions. Both the Asian Tsunami and the Haiti earthquake took approximately a quarter of a million lives. Climatologists also comment that human activity in the last 50 years have contributed to changing climates and weather pattern that may have contributed to changes in natural activities such as earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, landslides and sustainable development.

In the 2007 report, The IPCC (Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change) comprising of 100's of leading climate scientists concluded that the industrial era has contributed to the increased quantities of greenhouse gases such that there has been an approximate increase of 0.8oC since the 1950's. It has also been suggested that this rise in the earth's surface temperature has resulted in the melting of Ice caps, the rising sea levels and turbulent weather.

Assessing the aftermath of natural disasters – namely the rescue operation of individuals and the country, can give insight of underlined motives and opportunism. Who is saving whom? Who is benefiting whom? A study of the Asian Tsunami can help understand the fate of Pakistan.

THE ASIAN TSUNAMI

On the 26th of December 2004, a massive earthquake with an epicentre off Sumatra, Indonesia and a magnitude of 9.1 (Richter scale) wreaked havoc. It took over 230,000 lives and left 250 million homeless in over fourteen countries – the hardest hit being Indonesia, followed by Sri Lanka. The plight of people prompted a worldwide humanitarian effort, raising more than \$13 billion.

Backed by media and worldwide attention, politicians were able to rally support and insight emotion to raise substantial sums of money for their countries humanitarian efforts. However, what must be examined is the politics behind handouts – particularly from the IMF, World Bank and US AID.

Naomi Klein in her book 'The Shock Doctrine' discusses the rise of 'disaster capitalism' which seeks to 'cash in on chaos'. She refers to such people as shock doctors. On the issue of the Asian Tsunami and its impact on Sri Lanka, Seth Mydans comments: "The tsunami that cleared the shoreline like a bulldozer has presented developers with an undreamed-of opportunity, and they have moved quickly to

seize it" (International Herald Tribune, 2005). Naomi Klein describes how many fishing communities who lived in and around the beach front were displaced through the creation of a buffer zone for the purpose of reconstruction works. For example, the 'Arugam Bay Resource Development Plan' was a blueprint rubber stamped by the Government to build a high-end "boutique tourism destination" with five-star chalets and accommodation. Though a record \$13 billion was raised from international aid (including US AID), only a small percentage of the money reached its intended victims. The remainder was used under the name of 'reconstruction' to boost tourism. Therefore the one million displaced and homeless, not only lost their jobs, but their right of abode near the beachfronts. This was taken over by Western companies who had more important jobs to be getting on with than humanitarian efforts.

The example of the Asian tsunami, also raise the question of how donations and borrowed money comes with strings attached. How has the Pakistan flood crisis impacted the economy in Pakistan?

PAKISTAN FLOODS & THE ECONOMY

Richard Holbrooke, the late US envoy to South East Asia told journalists: "The international community is not going to be able to raise tens of billions of dollars, you (Pakistan) have to figure out a way to raise the money."

Pakistan also has plans to introduce a temporary 10% income tax surcharge to meet the cost of reconstruction. The government currently has a debt totalling \$50 billion of which \$2 billion constitutes foreign debt. The interest payments will total \$893 million. Under the Zardari regime, foreign debt has increased by \$12 billion in two years.

The flash floods affected more than 2.5 million people. International aid has been minimal in comparison to the amount western nations have spent on the Iraq war. Therefore, a different approach has been adopted, which is to in effect enslave Pakistan, thus preventing any means of independence. This is not dissimilar to starving a country until it is forced to get out its begging bowl and accept foreign loans coupled with extortionate interest payments. Pakistan being of such strategic importance

to corrupt the sincere minds of the Muslims of Pakistan.

Baroness Valerie Amos, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator is on her second visit to Pakistan this month (December 2010). The United Nations and its partners have launched a revised Pakistan Floods Emergency Response Plan, pledging billions over a 12-month period. The appeal has 483 projects to be carried out by 15 United Nations bodies, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and 156 national and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In other words, these organisations are here to stay, taking with them casualties. This involvement by NGOs and UN bodies will have huge consequences on destabilising Pakistan politically through aid packages with strings attached.

desire to solve such a problem befalling the Ummah based on Islam. Instead he has resorted to accepting hand-outs with conditions attached, thus attempting to drag the Ummah deeper into an abyss. He has failed to take care of the most basic needs of the people of Pakistan for food, shelter and clothing and is guilty of neglect and collusion.

A far cry from the chivalry and courage of the Khaleefah's of the past, which rose to the challenge of leading during such testing times. The examples of 'Umar bin al-Khattab during the drought in Madinah, demonstrate the effective management of funds during such crisis. 'Umar was able to raise funds from other provinces, to ensure the people of Madinah had the basic necessities. As Khaleefah of the Muslims, he knew he would be severely accounted by Allah (swt). 'Umar was able to achieve this due to an effective funds collection and distribution system within the Khilafah. Such a system of funds ensured that the Khilafah did not weaken its position as a self-sufficient state. This self sufficiency was possible due to the following characteristics:

1. A single currency linking all provinces.
2. Funds from different provinces are under the discretion of the Khilafah to redistribute based on need and priority.
3. Diwan for emergencies (natural disasters) include revenues from Kharaj and booty and from public property. If funds are short, then more funds are raised from Muslims.
4. Borrowing from foreign countries or institutions and paying off interest or taking loans with strings attached is forbidden in Islam. Therefore, the Khilafah will not be in a position of subservience to another nation.

5. The State protects its public property assets such as oil, gas and minerals. This is a source of huge income, should the state require its revenue to support the citizens through natural disasters. In such a manner, the Khilafah is able to withstand the pressures of globalisation and colonisation, thus remaining in a strong position of self-sufficiency during and following a natural disaster.



and possessing minerals and resources to achieve self-sufficiency in areas such as Baluchistan, has allowed itself to become a target for internal self destruction through the hands of self centred rulers like Zardari.

Alongside economic invasion as witnessed in Sri Lanka, the UN efforts in Pakistan also intend to establish cultural centres by which

THE KHILAFAH & NATURAL DISASTERS

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, **“The son of Adam has no better right than that he would have a house wherein he may live, a piece of clothing whereby he may hide his nakedness and a piece of bread and some water.”** [Tirmidhi]

It is clear that Zardari has neither the will or

A Promise is a Comfort to a Fool



There is an epidemic of obesity in the western world today. The reasons that so many individuals are becoming overweight are complex and multifaceted. Many of the world's best medical minds are currently grappling with this problem. However, we can be certain that CEOs within the fast food industry are not. We would not expect KFC, McDonalds and Pizza Hut to draft a joint strategy document on how to bring an end to obesity within the next 15 years. Their very *raison d'être* is to make money out of selling fattening foods. We would not expect them to pledge themselves out of existence. Similarly, we would be surprised to hear that Cadbury, Mars and Nestle had framed an agreement to bring an end to childhood tooth decay.

So, are we surprised that the world's most exploitative governments had pledged to end poverty within 15 years? On one level perhaps we should be; based on reasons analogous to those just mentioned. However, on a deeper level, that takes into account the complexities of world politics, perhaps it is understandable.

In September 2010 world leaders converged on New York for a UN Summit that adopted a document called; Keeping the Promise. This

was a reaffirmation. They committed themselves to meeting the goals by 2015 that were first laid down in New York ten years earlier. In 2000, they met to issue a declaration, promising to halve the proportion of people suffering from extreme poverty and hunger by 2015. They also pledged to halve the proportion of people without safe drinking water and sanitation; move toward universal and full primary schooling for children; reduce child mortality by two-thirds and maternal mortality by three-quarters; and combat HIV/Aids, malaria, and other diseases. These pledges were dubbed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

These are noble notions. However the 'business' of these influential nations is to expand their business. That means increasing their influence in the world; be it political, or economical, or both. The wealth of numerous powerful nations has been acquired at the expense of poorer nations. Historically, the poor have paid the price in loss of resources, both human and material, to exploitative empires. Many of the signatories to the pledge had built their nations on poverty creation, rather than poverty cessation. So why would US and UK promise to potentially put them out of existence? The short answer

is public relations. A pledge is merely a hollow empty meaningless piece of paper.

There is great benefit in being seen to sign up for a pledge that is altruistic good and pure. There is less benefit in following through on the promise. This is similar to the manner in which fast food organisations would promote their healthy lifestyle credentials. McDonalds sponsor sports events such as the FIFA World Cup. But nobody believes David Villa Sánchez scored those five goals for Spain in South Africa fuelled by a diet of Big Macs and a sugar sweetened soft drink that rhymes with stroke. Similarly, very few believe that these governments are going to maintain their trophy winning status by eradicating poverty. However, there are some who do believe, or at least want to believe, that some good will come of the MDGs. This is understandable. We are all rational thinking humans. Who from among us would not find the notions of: stamping out disease, eradicating hunger, educating children and improving maternal health appealing?

So will they fulfil their promise by 2015? We cannot answer questions about future fulfilments. But we can reflect upon what exactly has been achieved in last 10 years.

There is an old Jamaican phrase 'a promise is a comfort to a fool'. So, it is to Jamaica that we can turn to provide predictions on this promise. Jamaica recorded the largest decline in the world in the detection and treatment of tuberculosis; down from 79% (1997) to 41% (2006). There has been a significant increase in HIV infection of the same period. Primary school enrolment, which was at 97% in 1991,

literally let their milk run into the mud and send their cows off to be made into hamburgers (Although not McDonald's hamburgers; they use US beef).

Jamaica is one of the world's most indebted countries, with interest payments on debts up to 40% of GDP, but it is too "rich" to be considered for debt relief. In such desperate

context. Jamaica is in Uncle Sam's backyard. Since the implementation of the Monroe Doctrine the US has pledged to fervently protect its interests within the areas west of the Atlantic Ocean. The political perception is that The Americas are America's. So Jamaica is actually a good test case for assessing the success of the US's contributions to the MDGs.



has now fallen to 87%. IMF policies forced on Jamaica as "conditionalities" attached to aid loans virtually destroyed Jamaica's key agriculture sectors (bananas, dairy, potatoes, etc) by opening them up to competition with heavily subsidised US products and the cheap labour markets of Latin America.

This led to increased unemployment and dependency on other countries for basic foods. Food prices in the market place are high. The IMF advised imposing VAT on almost everything, including hard dough bread, a staple for Jamaica's poor. Another Jamaican favourite, banana chips, are now made with imported bananas. How would all this affect the dignity of the Jamaican farmers? Restoration of dignity was not one of the MDGs. Jamaican dairy farmers had to

circumstances, Jamaica had to go to the IMF this year. Jamaica borrowed a further \$1.3bn from the IMF in February 2010. Jamaicans should look north to make sense of their banking problems. The American author Mark Twain explained: "A banker is a fellow who lends you his umbrella when the sun is shining, but wants it back the minute it begins to rain". Jamaica is the birth place of the fastest track runner on Earth. It is also where we should turn to evaluate the 10-year track record of the MDGs.

It may be that Jamaica is an isolated extreme example. There may be scores of success stories. It is only through our bias, one-sided, subjective, opinionated comment that we are purposely ignoring them. In our defence, we argue this point because of the geopolitical

So where are the success stories? According to a recent Gallup survey (September 2010) an estimated 1 billion adults struggled to afford food in 2009, when asked a direct question on purchasing food. The survey shows that in 22 countries, more than half didn't have enough money to buy food at times. In most of these countries, the percentage of those that could not afford food increased by 10 percent between the years 2008 and 2009 (e.g. Cameroon, Ecuador, Philippines and Uganda). Things are just getting worse. In Nigeria, the number of people living on less than \$1.25 a day in 1990 was 49 percent which elevated to 77 percent of the population in 2008. In northern Nigeria, about 220 children under the age of five years die for every 1,000 born, or roughly one in four, according to a new report by

UNICEF. Incidentally, in southern Nigeria, the number is nearly three times lower, about 80 per 1,000 births. So are they keeping their promise?

To be fair, the original 2000 document was not intended as a comprehensive ground plan. The Bush and Obama administrations, in particular, never really committed funds and contributions, or even the sentiments of the millennium goals. Obama offered no new aid money to meet the MDGs, despite promising this as a candidate running for the oval office. So, we assume some people voted for him based on this promise. A promise is a comfort to a fool.

Many are asking what will happen if the goals are not reached by 2015? Are they merely going to say 'sorry about that'? Who is going to punish them for not attaining these goals? The United Nations, actually, acknowledges that only two of the targets, might actually be met: cutting in half the number of people who lack safe drinking water and halving the number of people who live on \$1.25 or less daily. So if they predict a success rate of 2 out of 8, why renew a promise that they intend to break?

As suggested earlier, the real reason for these major powers subscribing to this endeavour are for the long term, perceived benefits, not to the meek and destitute. It is for, themselves. This sentiment was summed up in the speech of the British deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, representing Britain at a UN summit in New York, when he said; it was in the country's "enlightened self-interest". Forget the enlightened part. This is not a liberal democratic philanthropic gesture, in the Lloyd George tradition; it is a basic capitalistic, opportunistic, pragmatic strategy to look after Britain's self interest. He went on to say; "If the rest of the world is poor, susceptible to extremism, susceptible to conflict ... it affects us". "It affects the safety of British families on British streets, it affects the people who come to live, or seek refuge in the United Kingdom, it deprives us of economic opportunities". Nick Clegg said the money would help to stop areas "steeped in conflict" producing "80 per cent of all asylum seekers to Britain". This is where we take issue with the word 'enlightened'. If he were really that enlightened he would have figured out that most of the regions that are "steeped in conflict" are in this state largely

as a result of British and American foreign policies.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The United Nations Millennium Development Goals:

1. To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
2. To achieve universal primary education;
3. To promote gender equality and empower women;
4. To reduce child mortality;
5. To improve maternal health;
6. To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases;
7. To ensure environmental sustainability; and
8. To develop a global partnership for development.

On that point, war is one of the key causes of poverty-creation. One has only to look to the Palestinian territories for an illustration of this. Not to mention, the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, in which, hunger was either exacerbated by conflict, or where it is the direct result of war. So called policies of waging war on poverty are incompatible with waging war on Muslims. Be these economic wars or physical wars. With regards to 'ensuring environmental sustainability' (MDG No. 7) war here also has a significant impact. The human costs of the horrors of the battlefield are obvious. But what of the environmental costs; with scarred trees, burned fields, bomb craters and poisoned water systems.

The US military carried out a massive herbicidal programme in Vietnam for almost a decade. 72 million litres of chemical spray were used to defoliate the forests. Can all of the MDGs repair this damage? People exposed to the spray suffered; headaches, vomiting, diarrhoea, weakness and chest complaints. Agent Orange's carcinogenic dioxin irrigated the soil, washing into the sea,

and entering the food chain. Children born since the war have consumed high levels of dioxin; and many fathered by men exposed to the spray (many of whom are now dead or suffering from cancers) have spina bifida and other congenital abnormalities. Similarly, chemicals, depleted-uranium, etc were dropped on the Iraqi people throughout the 1990s. A revolt in southern Iraq was crushed by draining the marshes on which the rebels lived and depended. So can the MDGs on health and the environment repair these disasters?

On health goals, after 10-years, they have not even come close. Maternal mortality is falling, but not fast enough. More people with HIV/Aids are getting inexpensive anti-retroviral drugs and their life expectancy has increased, but universal access is still far off, and the disease is still spreading. Progress has been made in reducing malaria and measles, and the rate of child mortality has fallen partly as a result, but the goal of a two-thirds reduction in malaria is unlikely to be met; based on the rate of improvement. Modern healthcare is dominated by the pernicious influence of the pharmaceutical and diagnostics industry. These sectors are more interested in treating important western 'diseases' such as erectile dysfunction, acid reflux from the stomach, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorders. These are the areas which generate the big money in the west rather than diseases of the developing world like malaria and dengue.

It is the overarching political and economic systems that have created the world's maldistributions of wealth. It is only by dismantling the whole global economic system, or at least those of the world's most powerful nations that any form of useful goals can be achieved regarding poverty, hunger and education. Are these nations going to pledge to put themselves out of business by 2015? Are they going to pledge to stop exploiting the resources of other nations? Are they going to pledge to stop waging wars merely to protect their own economic interests? If not, then we should not be so naive as to believe that they sincerely want to fulfil the MDGs promises.

Islam and 'Human Rights'

In December 2010, China was heavily condemned for its failure to allow democracy activist Liu Xiaobo to attend to collect the Nobel Peace Prize. The western media, contrasting its spectacular economic growth through its adoption of state capitalism with its slow progress on political reforms and 'human rights', examined China's record on 'human rights' and found it wanting. Similar judgements are often made Muslim countries and, increasingly, about Islam itself.

There is little dispute that oppression exists in China, just as it is widespread in the Muslim world. The track record of repression, state violence and abuse is common across many Muslim countries, all of which are increasingly paying the penalty for their state-sponsored brutality. The question about Islam's compatibility with human rights has no relation to the actions of regimes in Muslim countries. Some of these states employ Islamic language to cover their actions, and even argue their autocracy is Islamic. Yet there is little Muslims recognise as Islamic in their actions. Therefore, the relationship between Islam and 'human rights' needs to be examined separately.

ARE THESE RIGHTS 'UNIVERSAL' OR 'WESTERN'?

What are these 'rights' against which Islam is usually measured? Who or what is responsible for their definition? The term 'Universal Human Rights' is a bold assertion that suggests these rights are so basic, universal and self-evident that they can be associated with the very basic value of being human.

The fact that some of these rights are seen as a global norm and the lens, through which all other values, cultures and belief systems have come to be measured, must be distinguished from true universality.

The truth is that many of these late twentieth century 'human rights' have their origins in a belief system that emerged from Europe's particular history and culture (and those of its migrant 'pilgrim fathers' who settled in North America). That many of these rights have become a global benchmark says more for the force that has established them as such, than for the intellectual coherence or universality of the rights themselves.

The principle document through which these human rights have come to be articulated is the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Much of this document is so broad and generic that many communities across the world, including Muslim, find within it aspects that resonate with their own beliefs and political concerns.

But clear lines of tension have evidently arisen with Islam, such that traditional Islamic beliefs are now considered contrary to these rights. Consequently proponents of the UDHR and human rights more generally now deem adherence to these beliefs and practices problematic and attempts have subsequently emerged to reform or re-read the Islamic beliefs and rules in a way that is more compatible with these 'modern' rights. Religious freedom, women's rights, corporal and capital punishment are amongst the principle lines of conflict for western commentators.

But before considering these conflict points, it is important to note that the context and origin of the rights expressed in the UDHR reveal a very particular not universal character.

Historically, the forerunners to this document were the Virginia Declaration of Rights in 1776 and 'déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen' of 1789, both of which were recognised at key moments in western European and American history. The assumed importance of the UN's declaration is partly based on the historical context associated with its publication, this being the end of the second major war of the 20th century and the defeat of Nazi Germany.

Earlier attempts to articulate a set of 'human rights' in the west also aimed to safeguard rights in part to deal with the excesses of colonialism, capitalism and imperialism and the injustice they had unleashed at historical junctures. The intellectual heritage of these rights also follows a western course, as they are closely associated with secularism, liberty as described by liberal thinkers and democracy. In sum, these rights are the output from a western historical, political and intellectual experience.

GENDER EQUALITY – EUROPE PLAYING CATCH UP

The notion of gender equality, for example, has a meaning peculiar to the treatment of women in western history. Considering women and men equally human may have been significant for a continent that considered women sub-human or 'evil witches'. But this cannot be said for Islam for

example, which had long elevated the status and rights afforded to women to provide centuries of social and familial cohesion.

The 'different' responsibilities articulated by Islam, simplistically judged unequal by the west, have been at the heart of a balanced community, affording women economic and political rights in a system that has a different arrangement between rights, responsibilities, family and society to the simplistic standardisation the west now finds frustratingly unachievable. Much more can be said, but it is worth asking that if the arrangement Islam promotes between men and women for social tranquillity is so obviously wrong, why is it that amongst the largest number of embracers of Islam in recent years have been western, middle class, educated women, all of whom are best placed to benefit from the west's 'advances' in equality?

[<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/fait/article7135026.ece>]

PROTECTING DIFFERENT RELIGIONS: ISLAM OR SECULAR EUROPE?

Religious freedom too has a particular relevance in the context of religious and sectarian persecution that was rampant in Europe during the Middle Ages. In this context, the emergence of a political consensus to separate religion from state served to diffuse religious tensions whilst allowing communities to continue to adhere to their beliefs albeit in a personal capacity. Again Islam and the experience of Muslims is quite different, and whilst there have been notable conflicts in Islam's long history, its history is not characterised by centuries of internal religious wars whether with Muslims or with other religious communities.

History also points to religious tolerance, non-Muslim communities seeking sanctuary under Islam and flourishing communities such as those in Spain.

RIGHTS FOR ALL CITIZENS

This is because in Islam, the Shari'ah works to protect the life, honour, blood, property, belief, race and mind of all citizens.

The state, in Islam, known as the Khilafah (Caliphate), also enshrines the concept of

citizenship, and rejects discrimination of treatment on the basis of belief, let-alone insulting other beliefs in the name of celebrating an abstract freedom. The latter also points to the specificity of religious freedom to the west where, almost exclusively, insulting or mocking religion is considered a right. For most non-western communities, this is extremely odd and cannot be understood outside of the west's very specific historical context and experience with religion.

WHICH COMES FIRST: RIGHTS OR INTERESTS?

The issues of corporal and capital punishments remains contentious even with western states, as some continue to institute corporal punishment and the death penalty in their penal codes, despite signing-up to the UDHR and taking every opportunity to chastise others who fail to uphold other aspects of the UDHR.

The west's own limited commitment to these rights has not gone amiss amongst non-western populations over the past few years. Despite attempts at moral superiority, the use of torture and denial of legal rights in the aftermath of 9/11 have emerged as a very bloody stain. So has the west's support for regimes that utterly fail on measures of its own human rights requirements.

It would appear these universal human 'rights' are consistently secondary to 'interests', and so while there is a declared commitment to securing these rights, this actual commitment can be seen to quickly fall away when more vital economic or political interests are at stake. These rights are therefore a function of more fundamental considerations and not rights in the real, intellectual sense of the word: they are neither guaranteed nor sufficiently prioritised, despite being described as a fundamental part of being 'human'.

ISLAM'S DISTINCT VIEW

Islam has its own view on rights, the basis of which has already been briefly mentioned: the protection of life, honour, blood, property, belief, race and the mind.

These acquire the quality of constancy

because they are considered fundamental, more so than interests – something that is a true quality of 'rights'.

The value, nature and priority of the rights does not suffer from the specific historical context that undermine the west's attempts at projecting its experience as the template for change and progress for the rest of the world.

So when Islam declared torture prohibited, it did so unequivocally at all times and places. Furthermore, when murder was made a capital offence in Islam, the Quran mentions that Qisas was to save life:

"And there is life for you Qisas (the law of retaliation), O men of understanding, that you may ward off (evil)." [TMQ Al-Baqara:179]

It is also important to note that whereas in Europe, intellectuals argued that individuals were sovereign and consequently individual liberty trumped all, Islam recognised the collective as having rights that too needed to be protected, not jeopardised through the actions of a few individuals.

This was eloquently explained in a famous saying of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in his, Hadith As-Safeena, **"The example of the one who stands for the Deen of Allah and the one who has left it are like the people in a boat, some of whom occupy the upper deck and some occupy the lower deck. Whenever those in the lower deck need water, they have to go to the upper deck to retrieve it. So some of them said, 'why don't we make a hole in our deck so we do not harm the people of the upper deck?' If the people do not stop them, they will all fall and be failures, but if they stop them they will all be saved"** [Bukhari]

In sum, Islam has its own distinct view on rights, but so does it on the values and commitment to these rights, which are not subject to serious alterations when they simply become unpopular or threaten state economic interests.

NEWSBITES

FBI PAYS AGENT PROVOCATEUR \$177,000 TO ENTRAP MUSLIMS

In exchange for paying informant Craig Monteilh \$177,000 to infiltrate Muslim communities, the FBI's agent provocateur tactics have been brutally exposed. Monteilh, a convicted forger of bank notes, was hired by the FBI to spy on Muslims in Southern California and he admitted to trying to "entrap" them into terrorism. Monteilh wound up being arrested after suggesting to masjid members he befriended, to partake with him in "Jihadi operations" against US citizens. Although he was reported to the authorities by members of the masjid, the police took over three weeks before acting. Jerry Markon of The Washington Post wrote: "Compounding the damage, Monteilh has gone public, revealing secret FBI methods and charging that his 'handlers' trained him to entrap Muslims as he infiltrated their mosques, homes and businesses. He is now suing the FBI."

A July 25 article on an ABC News blog reported that, following a directive from President Bush in 2004, the FBI was ordered to boost its human intelligence capabilities by recruiting "informants". According to a recently unclassified document, the FBI plans to "overhaul its database system, so it can manage records and verify the accuracy of information from more than 15,000 informants". Steven Martinez, of the FBI's Los Angeles office, admitted that in certain circumstances, FBI agents may "conduct an activity that might somehow involve surveillance in and about a mosque."



WIKILEAKS: CONFIRMS FOREIGN POLICY, NOT ISLAM THE CAUSE FOR VIOLENCE

The United States London embassy reported that Cameron and "an eager group from his frontbench" met a

congressional delegation led by the Republican senator John McCain in 2008. US officials reported, "Mr. Cameron noted that most of the approximately 1 million UK citizens of Pakistani origin (mostly Punjabi's and Kashmiri's) living in the U.K. were not pro-Taliban but had been

radicalised by the Iraq war and were militant over Kashmir."



WIKILEAKS: CONFIRMING THE TREACHERY OF THE REGIMES BLIGHTING THE MUSLIM WORLD

In a discussion with the US, Saudi King 'Abdullah said, "We (the U.S. and Saudi Arabia) spilled blood together" in Kuwait and Iraq, the King continued, "and Saudi Arabia valued this tremendously". Friendship can be a difficult issue that requires work, 'Abdullah said, but the U.S. and Saudi Arabia have done it for 70 years over three generations. "Our disagreements don't cut to the bone"

Perhaps the most staggering example of this relationship was from Yemen's President 'Ali 'Abdullah Saleh, who assured the US that missile strikes conducted in his own country by the US in Yemen would be claimed as a Yemeni army assault, and he would "continue saying the bomb are ours, not yours". One of the leaked cables showed in one attack 41 local residents, including 14 women, 21 children were killed.

WIKILEAKS: SYCOPHANCY, IDIocy AND INCOMPETENCE (AS IF THE CORRUPTION IS NOT ENOUGH)

Chief of the Defence Staff, Sir Jock Stirrup stated that although (President) Zardari has "made helpful political noises, he's clearly a numbskull", furthermore Permanent Under-Secretary for Security Affairs, Sir Peter Ricketts characterised Zardari as having "not much sense of how to govern a country... I fear he talks and talks but not much happens".



WIKILEAKS: SAUDI PRINCES ENGAGE IN SEX, DRUGS AND PROSTITUTION PARTIES

United States diplomats described a world of "sex, drugs and alcohol" in parties organised and frequented by Saudi royalty. The US Jeddah consulate referred to an underground Halloween party in which alcohol and prostitutes were readily available. "Alcohol, though strictly prohibited by Saudi law and custom, was plentiful at the party's well-stocked bar," explained the cable. Secret, underground parties protected by Saudi royalty and accessible only to the wealthy were described as "thriving and throbbing" in the dispatch.

UK HIGHER EDUCATION CUTS

With the UK government deciding to dramatically cut funding to universities and pass the cuts onto students who will pay £9,000 per year for tuition, parts of London have been turned into a mini-Kabul with all law and order dissolving amid scenes of riots and rampage. Anti-student fee protesters have frequently clashed with police, and even attacked the private car of Prince Charles.

Comment has focused upon the right to non-violent protest in the democratic tradition which has spilled into violence, rather than the wholesale ideological change in education away from public support of universities. In future many of the poorest will not be able to attend university without committing to tens of thousands of pounds of interest bearing government loans (which effectively excludes Muslims due to this riba policy). The politicians have cynically left election promises and are dramatically changing the education environment against the wishes of the electorate.

This is another nail in the democratic coffin – a system that renders the politicians immune from real scrutiny by the mass public.