

Radicalisation, Extremism & 'Islamism'

Realities and Myths in the 'War on Terror'

A report by *Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain*

Hizb ut-Tahrir (meaning The Party of Liberation) is a global Islamic political party that was established in 1953 under the leadership of its founder - the scholar, political thinker and judge in the Court of Appeals in al-Quds (Jerusalem), Taqiuddin an-Nabhani. Hizb ut-Tahrir's global leadership is currently headed by Ata' abu Rishta.

In the Muslim world, Hizb ut-Tahrir works at all levels of society to bring the Muslims back to living an Islamic way of life under the shade of the Khilafah (Caliphate) State following an exclusively political method.

Hizb ut-Tahrir adopts the methodology employed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) when he established the first Islamic State in Madinah. The Prophet Muhammad limited his struggle for the establishment of the Islamic State to intellectual and political work. He established this Islamic state without resorting to violence. He worked to mobilise public opinion in favour of Islam and endeavoured to sway the political and intellectual elites of the time. Despite the persecution and boycott of the Prophet Muhammad and the early Muslims, they never resorted to violence. Hence, its commitment not to be involved in any violent or militant activity is based on its faith and understanding of the revelation of God. No person can join Hizb ut-Tahrir until he or she adopts this political and intellectual methodology and approach.

The party is therefore proactive in disseminating the Islamic intellectual and political thoughts widely in Muslim societies so as to challenge the oppressive and declined situation that exists there. The party presents Islam as a comprehensive way of life that is capable of managing the affairs of state and society, as well as expressing its views on political events and analyses them from an Islamic perspective. It disseminates its thoughts through discussion with the masses, study circles, lectures, seminars, leaflet distribution, publishing books and magazines and via the Internet, actively encouraging people to attend our demonstrations, marches, conferences and vigils.

In the West, Hizb ut-Tahrir does not work to change the system of government, but works within the boundaries of the system to encourage the Muslim community to live by Islam in thought and deed, adhering to the rules of Islam and preserving a strong Islamic identity. It argues that this is the most productive and sound basis for Muslims to engage outside of their own communities.

The party also works to project a positive image of Islam to Western society and engages in dialogue with Western thinkers, policymakers and academics. Western governments, under the banner of the War on Terror, are currently working to present Islam as an 'evil ideology'. At the heart of their campaign is the effort to malign the Islamic ideology as an alternative to Western liberal capitalism in the Muslim world. Because of this propaganda aspect to the War on Terror, Hizb ut-Tahrir works to counter negative propaganda about Islam in the Western countries, and present Islam's beliefs and also its political ideas as an alternative for the Muslim world.

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Forward

It is often said that the first casualty in war is the truth. In the case of the global War on Terror it is its central premise that was the first lie - the claim that this is a war in defence of security.

It is impossible to imagine that any government would not develop some type of security response to the attacks such as those in New York in September 2001 or the bombs in London in July 2005. This is what happened in the case of terrorism related to Northern Ireland. There, we also saw, after many years, the development of a political response. But the launch of a 'war' upon a premise for which there is no agreed definition has made many in the world, Muslim and non-Muslim, uncomfortable.

The construct of the case for war started after the attacks in New York, arguing that those behind the perpetrators were in Afghanistan. Other similar international crises - for example the Lockerbie bombing of a Pan Am aircraft - led to diplomatic pressure to secure an extradition. In the case of the 9/11 attacks, what followed was the invasion and occupation of the country said to be hosting the perpetrators, retrospective excuses generated to add to the case for invasion and large scale illegal detention and torture in Bagram airbase, Guantanamo Bay and elsewhere. Other states started to claim their own 'terrorism' problems; most notably dictators in the Muslim world, Israel and authoritarian regimes such as those in Russia and Central Asia. The violations of basic norms and rights committed in these places in the name of the War on Terror were recognised as an excuse to undertake otherwise unacceptable actions. Surprisingly, however, similar scrutiny was not applied to the actions of the UK or US until much later.

In the US, the Patriot Act gave the administration unprecedented powers. In Britain draconian anti-terror laws were introduced and strengthened at every opportunity, even causing conflict between the judiciary and the government.

It was perhaps the illegal war in Iraq, unpopular amongst a sceptical domestic audience, exposed as being founded upon lies and more to do with regime change than security, that became the single biggest factor that made increasing numbers of people uncomfortable about what was being done in their name. The lies underpinning the Iraq occupation were compounded by humanitarian abuses, the continued support for tyrants every bit as bad as Saddam Hussein and the worsening security threat and community cohesion in the West due to the war.

In this report we expose how the narrative of the War on Terror has many inconsistencies and manipulates understandable security fears to attack political ideas that carry considerable support in the Muslim world. We do this by:

1. Exposing the statements of politicians that show it is not the violent means that is their only concern, but the legitimate political ends that an overwhelming majority in the Muslim world subscribe to. In keeping with its colonial history, Western governments have constructed a case for intervention to secure their economic and political interests in the Muslim world, with little regard for the consequences on the people in that part of the world.
2. Illustrating the way that language and arguments are manipulated to make the false claim that Islamic political ideas are the root cause of the problem.
3. Providing evidence from credible research which contradicts the Bush-Blair argument that Islam's political ideas inherently cause violence and insecurity.
4. Decoupling these myths of violence from the Caliphate and other Islamic political ideas and explaining exactly what these ideas represent.
5. Mapping a way forward, out of the mess and growing chaos created by the War on Terror.

It is difficult to deny that the War on Terror has greatly exacerbated the chaos and instability caused by the chronic political problems in the Muslim world. Furthermore, a declaration of war against political ideas held by over 70 per cent of people in the Muslim world will be perennial, ceaseless and destabilising.

There is an urgent need to engage in dialogue to explain Islam, the Caliphate and Shariah to people in Britain and the West, who hear these aspirations for the Muslim world continually demonised as part of the propaganda in the War on Terror. Given the current climate of suspicion and fear it is necessary that now more than ever people try to understand the legitimate political aspirations of many in the Muslim world, rather than simply falling for a reductionist Manichean dialectic, that paints everyone who seeks Islamic change in that region as extremists and supporters of terrorism.

We urge everyone to study our report and realise that there is an urgent need to discuss and understand these ideas, as well understand the political feeling in the Muslim world. There is a need to understand the Caliphate, not only the fact that it is not linked to violence as alleged by the leaders of the War on Terror, but also how it will be a powerful force for bringing stability to the Muslim world.

In the corridors of Washington and Westminster, Islam's political ideas are seen as a potential threat - not to security - but to the control, exploitation and interference that has continued for decades. Yet on the 'Muslim street' these ideas mean liberation from tyranny and oppression, a connection to their beliefs and history and the ability to shape their own political destiny.

Abdul Wahid
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 July 2007

Introduction

The 'War on Terror': Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace

A Monumental Change Draws Closer

It is not often the opportunity arises to witness monumental political changes on the scale of the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of Communism or the end of apartheid in South Africa. Yet these have occurred in our generation's lifetime. Now an even greater political change is creeping ever closer in the Muslim world. The dismantling of years of oppressive rule presided over by foreign hegemony is slowly but surely unravelling. For decades movements have called for the re-establishment of the Islamic political system, the Caliphate, such that it now represents the only credible alternative to the tyrannies and dictatorships that litter the Muslim world. False arguments and distortions have attempted to cast a shadow over the Islamic political system, but these attempts have been in vain. There is growing evidence of a widespread public opinion for the return to the rule of law under Islam. Despite the unwelcome attention of those wishing to maintain an appalling status quo in the Muslim world, an inescapable momentum has been established for the return of the Caliphate.

Certainly a global political movement such as Hizb ut-Tahrir, active in over 40 countries, touching all corners of the globe has a good finger on the pulse of Muslim public opinion and development of the call for political change in the Muslim world. Similarly, the US

State Department, the British Foreign Office and American and British intelligence agencies study intently developments in a world they have come to yield great influence over. Both measures of public opinion indicate the return of an Islamic state, or Caliphate. The National Intelligence Council of the CIA issued a planning report in December 2004 setting out options for a resurgent China and a potentially strong Caliphate by the year 2020.

Constructing New Enemies: Demonising the Caliphate & Islamic politics

Senior politicians, however, including George Bush are now 'warning' of the consequences of its re-establishment. Bush, in a speech to the American nation on the 8th of October 2005 stated:

"The militants believe that controlling one country will rally the Muslim masses, enabling them to overthrow all moderate governments in the region, and establish a radical Islamic empire that spans from Spain to Indonesia."

On December 5th 2005, the then US Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld in remarks pertaining to the future of Iraq at John Hopkins University said

"Iraq would serve as the base of a new Islamic Caliphate to extend throughout the Middle East and which would threaten the legitimate governments in

Europe, Africa, and Asia. This is their plan. They have said so. We make a terrible mistake if we fail to listen and learn".

Tony Blair after 7/7 also referred to the need to confront an "an evil ideology" that included "the establishment of effectively Taliban States and Shari'ah law in the Arab world en route to one Caliphate of all Muslim nations". Most recently General David Petraeus, when asked about his priorities in the 'surge' operation, in an interview with the Times published on June 20th 2007, said: "It is to disrupt al-Qaeda and its ability to conduct sensational attacks and to try to continue the cycle of violence, which they have been trying to do all along. In addition, they are attempting to establish a real al-Qaeda sanctuary in Iraq, a caliphate."

These arguments, amongst numerous other arguments, have been forwarded in an attempt to discredit and divert efforts towards the re-establishment of a Caliphate, particularly through seeking to associate it exclusively with terrorism. The effort has been extended to malign the goals of Islamic politics more generally, as Blair did after 7/7 by attempting to move the focus away from the acts of terror to an 'evil ideology'. Such attempts have failed to convince Muslims and are met with scepticism by the world more generally, given the US and Britain's track record in forwarding false claims in the War on Terror, such as over Iraq.

Our report deconstructs such false associations between the Caliphate and Islamic politics and violence in sections 2 and 3. But more importantly, it also argues that the anxiety expressed over the establishment of the Caliphate has nothing to do with terrorism or security. It is a perceived threat to their hegemony and primacy over a region of the world that former Director of the US State Department's Policy Planning Division, George Kennan, wrote after WWII in reference to the oil wealth of the Middle East: "that the United States had just acquired the greatest material prize in world history".

Rebirth of a Colonial Age

Indeed, current foreign policy towards the Muslim world, including the occupation of Iraq, invasion of Afghanistan, support for unrepresentative tyrants, and pressure towards Iran and Syria amongst other actions by the US and Britain, cannot be considered recent or isolated actions. They must be observed as part of a colonial tradition of occupation, intervention and regime change.

The former British Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon remarked in almost jubilant tones at the end of the Caliphate in 1924 that, "The situation now is that Turkey is dead and will never rise again, because we have destroyed its moral strength, the Caliphate and Islam". But he also warned that the chapter of Islamic rule was not completely closed when he stated "we must put an end to anything which brings about any Islamic unity between the sons of the Muslims". Curzon's remarks were recently echoed and reaffirmed by the then British Home Secretary Charles Clarke in a speech to the Heritage Foundation on October 6 2005 when he said:

"...there can be no negotiation about the re-creation of the Caliphate; there can be no negotiation about the imposition of Sharia (Islamic) law..." Muslims have been warned not to go down that path again.

The parallels with Iraq are equally pertinent. Almost ninety years ago, the British commander Lieutenant General Stanley Maude issued a proclamation to the people of Baghdad, whose city his

“ six years on, the battle for the hearts and minds of Muslims has been lost ”

forces had just occupied, saying: "Our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators. Your wealth has been stripped of you by unjust men... The people of Baghdad shall flourish under institutions which are in consonance with their sacred laws".

He went on to say, "...your lands have been subject to the tyranny of strangers, your palaces have fallen into ruins, your gardens have sunk in desolation, and your forefathers and yourselves have groaned in bondage." Within three years of the invasion, over ten thousand had died in an Iraqi uprising against the British, a conflict in which 'Bomber' Harris referred to dropping "a bomb in every village that speaks out of turn" and Winston Churchill encouraged the use of mustard gas admitting, "there is no doubt that we are a very cruel people". On the eve of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Lieutenant Colonel Tim Collins echoed Maude in a speech to British troops, saying "We go to liberate, not to conquer". The colossal loss of life and destruction in the aftermath has exposed this neo-colonial myth.

Replacing the Muslim World's Failed Political Architecture

Meyrav Wurmser, the Director of Middle East Studies at the Hudson Institute, characterised the Muslim world as having failing or failed autocracies, repression, weak and deteriorating economies and double-digit unemployment. The problems, Wurmser cited, are the regimes in the region - unpopular with their own populations and viewed as backed by Western powers. The alternative to this failed political architecture has increasingly centred on a greater role for Islam in the politics of the Muslim world. Elections in the Muslim world now invariably go to Islamic parties, despite constitutions and other obstacles to Islamic political representation, like the overt restrictions the Mubarak regime in Egypt placed on Islamic parties such as arrests and strict quotas.

As our report will go on to highlight in section 3, opinion surveys too are overwhelmingly pointing to support for the return of Islamic rule. The Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan undertook a comprehensive survey of the key Middle Eastern countries in a 2005 report, finding that two thirds of respondents in central Arab countries felt that Shariah should be the sole source for legislation (a key requirement for an Islamic State) and the remaining third felt that Shariah should be a source of law. A recent study by the University of Maryland published in April 2007 also confirmed this trend towards Shariah, with the report stating: "Large majorities in most countries support the goals of requiring a strict application of sharia, keeping out Western values, and even unifying all Islamic countries into a single Islamic state." Interestingly, in addition to greater than 70 per cent support for Shariah and a unifying Caliphate the respondents overwhelmingly rejected that the change would come via violence: "Large majorities in all countries oppose attacks against civilians for political purposes and see them as contrary to Islam. Attacks on civilians are seen as hardly ever effective. Politically motivated attacks against civilian infrastructure are also rejected as not justified".

Responding to Changes in the Muslim World

Of great interest will be how Western governments respond to these political changes as they evolve in the Muslim world. Despite posturing for domestic acceptance citing WMD, and then regime change, Tony Blair finally admitted that the war in Iraq was all about changing values. That values are not changing in the Muslim world brings new challenges to Western thinking not least of which is the widespread opposition in the UK to the aggressive imposition of values which are poorly defined and for which there is little trust in the politicians supposedly leading the charge.



Despite the unwelcome attention of those wishing to maintain an appalling status quo in the Muslim world, an inescapable momentum has been established for the return of the Caliphate

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(University of Maryland, 2007)



The key point to note is that the Blair narrative of simply changing a few unpopular governments and setting out a vision for effectively sidelining Islam via 'religious tolerance' within a secular framework completely lacks credibility in the Muslim world. The other plank of this policy which attempts to equate the Caliphate and the desire for political change with terrorism, lacks intellectual credibility when measured against the public opinion that poll after poll are indicating. In fact the war mongering is on the other foot. The long war which Bush/Blair have attempted to set up will be a perpetual war if they think that they can so easily change the core beliefs and aspirations of more than 70 per cent of the Muslim world. Yet Muslims are still tarnished as the aggressors when it is only a tiny element that have used violence against civilians; a violence which has been nothing like the shock and awe tactics of Bush/Blair and is also without the support of Muslim public opinion.

The 'Battle for Hearts and Minds'

The West's Cold War experience and defeat of communism has shaped much of the rhetoric and policy regarding the Muslim world, particularly the success credited to the cultural dimension of the Cold War. The US think tank the RAND Corporation, for example, in its most recent report about the Muslim world, 'Building Moderate Muslim Networks', describes how, "the propaganda and cultural-infiltration efforts of the United States and Britain during the early years of the Cold War hold valuable lessons for the Global War on Terrorism". The perceived success of these "cultural-infiltration efforts" has fostered the belief that a battle for hearts and minds must be fought alongside the War on Terror to bring Muslims on side.

Under the banner of this cultural war, a suite of McCarthyite labels such as 'extremist', 'radical', 'fanatic' and 'militant' have become common currency. Their definitions are dangerously loose and ever-broadening and manipulate the fact that there is no consensus on the definition of terrorism to brand Muslims as more violence prone. This use of language is extensively explored in Section 1 of our report.

In 2002, Lieutenant Colonel Jack R. MacClanahan Jr of the United States Army wrote a paper for the US Army War College about 'Winning Hearts and Minds in the Muslim World.' At that time, a mere six months after the onset of the global War on Terrorism, he wrote that: "The US may win the military fight on terrorism but is thus far losing the public opinion fight in Muslim countries."

Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair also remarked after the attacks that rocked London in July 2005: "It is not a clash of civilisations -- all civilized people, Muslim or other, feel revulsion at it. But it is a global struggle. It is a battle of ideas and hearts and minds, both within Islam and outside."

Even the Conservative leader David Cameron jumped on the band wagon in November 2006, saying, "We must remember that we are engaged in a battle for the hearts and minds of all Muslims in our country."

More recently in January 2007, Blair's successor as Prime Minister, Gordon Brown said in regards to the Iraq war and 'terrorism': "But you will not win against extreme terrorist activities and particularly the propaganda activities, unless you have this battle of hearts and minds that is won. And that makes me think of the same cultural war that had to be fought against communism from the 1940s and 50s onwards, is in a sense the model for what we've got to do here."

Brown acknowledged the need for propaganda when, on 1st July 2007, he said:

"And that's why the cultural effort - almost similar to what happened in the Cold War in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, when we had to mount a propaganda effort, if you like, to explain to people that our values represented the best of commitments to individual dignity, to liberty and to human life being taken seriously. And I think that's what we are going to have to talk about in the next few years".

However, the Cold War propaganda effort was not only about explaining Western values but also about denigrating the Soviet Union and creating an

atmosphere of suspicion and threat. The Cold War was, as much as for anything else, used as an excuse by Western governments to further their interests around the world.

However, six years on, the battle for the hearts and minds of Muslims has been lost. Very few believe that the War on Terror, or any related domestic or foreign policy, is premised on a sincere or legitimate desire to maintain Britain's security. The killing, torture and abuse of people in the name of spreading democracy and liberalism to a part of the world plagued by instability and tyranny has overshadowed any attempts at intellectual persuasion. Western states have today lost their moral authority. In 1989, when the Berlin Wall collapsed, Western states had not needed to fire a shot in anger and were considered shiny beacons by the oppressed citizens of Eastern Europe. Today, in the aftermath of Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib, torture, 'extraordinary rendition' (or illegal kidnapping and torture), secret detention facilities, the genocide of 650,000 civilians in Iraq, the wanton use of white phosphorous and depleted uranium and the reversal of Habeas Corpus through draconian security legislation, Western nations are considered more a part of the problem than part of the solution. The West's foreign policy has illustrated not just the unacceptable face of Western imperialism but the true face of Western states with the indomitable pursuit of profits, raw materials and cheap labour driving the inhumane policies of debt and political support for dictators and tyrants around the world.

A recent Zogby/University of Maryland poll of citizens in six Middle Eastern states found that finding oil (76%), protecting Israel (68%), domination of the region (63%) and weakening the Muslim world (59%) were cited as the main objectives of America in the Middle East by respondents, compared to only 6% who agreed with President Bush and former Prime Minister Blair's view that their objectives are to merely spread human rights and democracy. This distrust is not confined to the Muslim world but is found globally from Caracas to Beijing with people in all continents looking at new models of governance and rule.

Indeed, the policies of Western governments in the War on Terror have been so brutal and unprincipled that they have struggled to win over their own populations. Ironically, the real battle for hearts and minds is with ordinary people in the West, who have been repeatedly lied to by their political leaders. As discredited politicians each try to convince their people that Iraq and Afghanistan simply need more troops or more time, the general public becomes ever wearier with failed policies. Furthermore, although the Iraq war proved that the justifications for the War on Terror were riddled with fallacies and inaccuracies, there has been no effective explanation to the public for why Western countries have been plunged into these conflicts by their leaders.

Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace

What Charles Beard described as Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace, the title of Gore Vidal's most recent book is an oxymoron that will never work, except as a lie to keep civilian populations from realising the reality of shameful corporate-driven government policies. There will be neither a widespread values change nor peace from carpet bombing, Guantanamo or Fallujah. Values driven more by corporate greed and strategic positioning will never win out over creedal principles and the yearning for a return to a civilisation which led the world in tolerance and personal and societal development within a strong and consistent rule of law. The Caliphate may soon become the defining debate of our age; the emerging prospect of its arrival must be met with a willingness to understand a system that would undoubtedly usher in a new era of stability for the Muslim world.

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Section 1

Challenging the Narrative: Radicalisation, Extremism & 'Islamism'

The Muslim community in Britain has been under a continuous spotlight since the events of 7/7. The bombings triggered a wide-ranging debate that sought to understand the processes at work within the Muslim community, map its changes, scrutinise the influences it is subject to and identify events in its recent history that may explain why Muslim British citizens would want to turn on Britain.

This post 7/7 debate has blamed a number of different factors for contributing to this heightened terror threat, but has been offset by sensationalist claims and alarmist comments that have only acted to obscure an accurate picture and to entrench stereotypes in an already polarised debate. It has sought to discredit legitimate Islamic political ideas by suggesting they increase the Muslim community's susceptibility to using violence. To date, the debate has lacked an honest, dispassionate assessment of the forces at play within the Muslim community, the impact of which has been dangerous characterisations of Islam and the Muslim community, misinformed public fear and misguided government policy.

In this section, we argue that:

- The language used in the security debate has become politicised to counter dissenting voices and falsely brand the Muslim community as more violence prone

- The view that there is a process leading to violence because of the association of Islam and politics is wrong and is built on a false characterisation of the relationship between Islam and politics
- There has, over many years, been a process of a general politicisation of the Muslim community and subsequent Islamicisation of Muslim politics in Britain rather than 'radicalisation'

Part I

The Use, Misuse and Abuse of Language in the Politics of Terrorism

The language used post 7/7 has fostered the belief that the Muslim community is changing in a way that is de facto problematic and that the growing influence of Islam has been detrimental and is to be treated with suspicion. It has created the false premise that such changes made 7/7 inevitable and, as a result, are studied as if they are the cause of violence and terrorism. This has spawned a phenomenon in which ideas themselves are treated as the key suspect in what are essentially security matters.

The Political Manipulation of Terminology

The predominant narrative has described a community increasingly

'radicalised', subject to 'extremism' and under the growing influence of 'Islamism'. These terms suffer from an inherent ambiguity that allows them to be used in a number of different ways often with only a tenuous connection with their dictionary meanings. As a result, the political climate post 7/7 has most influenced the use of these terms and allowed them to become dangerously broad in the behaviours they capture and label. For example, John Esposito in his forthcoming book 'Who Speaks for Islam?' defines a 'political radical' as someone who believes "the 9/11 attacks were completely morally justified", whilst a report by the Policy Exchange titled 'Living Apart Together' equates 'radical' Islam with a desire for an Islam-based society, an idea that actually carries mainstream support amongst Muslims.

Historically, however varied their application, these terms have been consistently used to discredit political ideals and goals through associating them with violence or irrationality. There has been little responsibility to ensure the phenomena they are used to describe actually fit the terms, but instead they have been used to declare as beyond the pale, legitimate non-violent political ideas and goals.

For example, the suggestion that 'extremist' and 'radical' appropriately describe the views taking root within the Muslim community demonstrates a

failure to understand ideas that rest outside of the prevailing political assumptions. Calls for Shariah, Islamic education, dress, and other social and political beliefs that break with the accepted secular liberal order and are increasingly used to characterise the demands of extremists and radicals, as highlighted in the conclusions of the Policy Exchange report. But although different to the west's secular tradition, they articulate orthodox and longstanding, not marginal, Islamic beliefs. These ideas may be unfamiliar to a secular west but instead of considering them alternative approaches, they are often considered problematic and, as a result, are addressed through a security framework and new security legislation rather than through engagement. This reflects a failure to understand Islam and therefore to position its ideas within a secular political system. The depiction has a profound impact on assessing the Muslim community and subsequently suggesting their vulnerability to the use of violence.

The Failure to Understand the Relationship Between Islam and Politics

At the heart of much of the problem with the current debate has been how Western commentators have chosen to understand Islam's relationship with politics and the role this has played in subsequently supporting the belief that a threatening radicalising undercurrent is alive in the Muslim community. As Islam plays a greater role in the politics of both the Muslim community in Britain and the wider Muslim world, Western commentators have chosen to describe this as abnormal and a manipulation of Islam.

The term 'Islamism' has been used to encapsulate this view. The Policy Exchange report referred to earlier describes 'Islam' as "a religion practiced by Muslims worldwide" but 'Islamism' as "a political ideology that aims to create a state and society in strict conformity with religious doctrine." A report titled 'The West, Islam and Islamism' by the think-tank Civitas, describes how the Latin suffix 'ism' refers to the politicisation of its prefix, in this case 'Islam'. The term is therefore used to imply that the use of Islam in politics is a 'politicisa-

tion' of Islam, as opposed to Islam being inherently political, and an aberration because it employs Islam beyond its natural role as a personalised religion.

Confronting the Myths: 'Islamism' and 'Political Islam'

To such distinctions, a report by the International Crisis Group, entitled 'Understanding Islamism', challenges the failure of commentators to understand the relationship between Islam and politics. It refers to the:

"...dichotomy, often taken for granted by Western leaders, between on the one hand, Islam qua religion and its adherents - 'ordinary decent Muslims' for whom 'Islam' is a matter of personal piety, not political commitment - and, on the other hand, 'Islamism' or 'political Islam' - by implication an affair of a minority of agitators exploiting the faith of their fellow-Muslims for political ends, stirring up resentment, constituting a problem for Western interests and 'friendly' Muslim states alike. This dichotomy is misleading for several reasons..."

The distinction is born out of an imposition of a secular framework on Islam. An honest assessment of orthodox Islamic literature demonstrates this distinction is false and that Islam naturally forms the basis of political life as it does moral and spiritual. Islamic history too is dominated by the role of Islam in politics, with the Caliphate - the Islamic political system - ending only at the beginning of the twentieth century in 1924 after thirteen centuries, dominating some 94 per cent of Islamic history. Even since its demise, political debates in the Muslim world have strongly featured Islam in all but a few decades. The ICG's report goes on to describe how:

"...the conception of 'political Islam' inherent in this dichotomy is unhistorical as well as self-serving. The term 'political Islam' is an American coinage which came into circulation in the wake of the Iranian revolution. It implied or presupposed that an 'apolitical Islam' had been the norm until Khomeini turned things upside down. In fact, Islam had been a highly politicised religion for generations before 1979. It

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"...the conception of 'political Islam' inherent in this dichotomy is unhistorical as well as self-serving... In fact, Islam had been a highly politicised religion for generations before 1979. It only appeared to have become apolitical in the historically specific and short-lived heyday of secular Arab nationalism between 1945 and 1970" (International Crisis Group)

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only appeared to have become apolitical in the historically specific and short-lived heyday of secular Arab nationalism between 1945 and 1970".

Labelling Views that Challenge the Interests of Western Governments, 'Extremist'

Maintaining a false distinction between Islam and Islamic politics has served political purposes by attempting to isolate elements of Muslim society that are assumed to threaten western interests. The ICG report describes how "the concept of 'political Islam' and its definition as a problem only occurred when Islamic politics began to articulate anti-Western or, more specifically, anti-American attitudes" and that "'Islam' was only seen to be political when it was seen to be a threat." Likewise, the much laboured distinction between 'moderates' and 'Islamists' that follows from this distinction "usually boils down to distinguishing between those with whom Western governments feel they can 'do business' (the moderates) and those with whom they cannot or will not. This tends to get translated into the distinction between those who are susceptible to co-optation and those who take their beliefs in earnest".

Furthermore, a Gallup poll taken in November 2006 of nine Muslim countries, featured in John Esposito's book referred to earlier, found that the importance of religion and attendance of religious service was near identical between so-called 'moderates' and 'political radicals', if not slightly more so in the case of moderates.

Part II

Politicisation not 'Radicalisation'

How Best to Describe Changes in the Muslim Community?

The insistence of some commentators to maintain a distinction between Islam and politics has provided false evidence of Muslims becoming 'radical': as Muslims move from benign religious practice to using Islam in their politics, according to these terms, they move from Islam to Islamism. This trend is described as one towards radicalisation

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but is essentially academic. It is born out of a distinction that lacks credibility in the phenomena it is describing. A trend towards using Islam in politics is consistent with Islamic orthodoxy and not an aberration. The terms construct false milestones on a path to 'radicalisation'. It has acted to inflate the belief that Muslims are becoming more radical.

The question that needs to be asked is whether such terms are appropriate in describing events and changes taking place in the Muslim community, or if they are tenuous extrapolations that loosely use events to conjure up a false picture of the processes at work. These terms are sufficiently vague and are liable to expand in their meaning to provide false evidence that orthodox Islamic changes in the Muslim community represent threatening undercurrents. It is important to pierce through the terms to understand the underlying events, not to understand them through the prism of the current language.

A Brief History of Political Change Amongst Britain's Muslims

The Muslim community in Britain is changing and has been for a while, but when this process started, why and what it represents is widely contested. Importantly, we must ask if it is accurate to use 'radicalisation' to describe those changes.

For some, the process started during the furore that surrounded the publication of the Satanic Verses. The subsequent response from Britain's Muslim community and mosque elders, from book burning to large-scale demonstrations, demonstrated, it is argued, the first signs of a mobilised Muslim mass in defence of religion. This mobilisation represented a departure from a predominant Asian identity with which Muslims had associated during the waves of immigration of the 60s/70s, to a religious distinction and increasingly assertive

religious identity. In the period that followed, a litany of crises in the Muslim world were marked by the first Gulf War in Iraq, the persecution of Muslims in Bosnia, Somalia, the impact of sanctions on Iraq, a number of confrontations between the West and the Muslim world, to current hostilities in Afghanistan and Iraq following the onset of the War on Terror. These all impacted Muslim thinking in Britain, but how?

These events have acted to awaken a consciousness in the Muslim community, triggering concerns about Muslims from either their countries of origin or those to whom they have a sense of religious affiliation. However, the trigger has not - as some have alleged - been organisations falsely sensationalising these events, but images of western interference, injustice and double standards in the Muslim world and the failure of leaderships in both the West and the Muslim world to act against these perceived injustices. The proliferation of information through the globalisation of the media has been instrumental in bringing these events to the attention of both Muslim and non-Muslim audiences and with it alternative and uncensored news streams that have challenged state sponsored and traditional media reporting.

An Awakening Political Consciousness

This heightened sense of concern has not determined the nature of the subsequent response from the Muslim community. In fact, responses have been in a multitude of different directions not all of which have been religious or Islamic.

Overall, it led to an increasingly politically active Muslim community. For some, it involved involvement with more conventional British politics such as with the Labour party, the Left or organisations fighting for social justice,

particularly amongst university educated Muslims. This was not only for pragmatic reasons but also through assimilating more generally into the ideology of these organisations, as it saw a widening of the campaigns with which they associated as not restricted to the Muslim world, taking up causes in Latin America or the Third World more generally.

Likewise, some assessed the issues as having a particular Muslim bearing. With talk of a green menace replacing the Soviet threat, a clash of civilisations and the depiction of Muslims and Islam being the common denominator of most of the key global crises following the fall of the Berlin wall, a number of Muslims mobilised around defending Muslim interests, Islamic values or responding to injustices specifically perpetrated against Muslims.

In the first instance therefore, the change in the Muslim community was a growing *politicisation*, both religious and non-religious.

“ responding to or understanding processes at work within the Muslim community in the UK will continue to require a more astute understanding of the processes at work within the Muslim world more generally. ”

An Islamic Revival

Over time, this politicisation has moved to take on a more Islamic form and represents what one may describe as a subsequent 'Islamicisation' of Muslim politics. Flirtations with various political experiments, movements and associations has changed over time either because of a failure of these movements to respond adequately to the perceived problems or because the sense of the problem as having a particular Muslim or Islamic bearing has developed. This increasing 'Islamicisation' of Muslim politics or Islamic political practice can be perceived through levels of religious

“ it is essential that Western commentators and policymakers revisit their attitude towards Islam and politics. ”

practice, affiliation with and membership of Islamic organisations, from local mosque associations to global Islamic political parties, to more vocal demands, all of which now stand at record levels amongst second and third generation Muslims in the UK.

On the whole, therefore, the processes have responded to a heightened sense of political injustice through first 'politicisation' and subsequent 'Islamicisation' of the Muslim community. Politicians and some commentators have instead preferred to use 'radicalisation' to describe these changes and trend towards Islam, in an attempt to malign them at the outset.

Revisiting Thinking on 'Radicalisation'

The trend towards greater Islamic political practice is consistent with Islamic orthodoxy and a long-standing historical Islamic political experience that has lasted centuries. It represents a legitimate non-violent political approach that may contrast with secular politics, but cannot be equated with a violent threat for merely being so. Radicalisation, extremism and other similar terms, amongst them militant, fundamentalist and fanatic, denigrate Islamic political change through mere labelling, but more importantly fail to explain events accurately. This would have only been of academic interest if it hadn't resulted in the growing polarisation between communities in Britain through proliferating ignorance about Islam and the Muslim community.

In taking this debate forward, it is essential that Western commentators and policymakers revisit their attitude towards Islam and politics. If they continue to insist they are separate and structure policies on this assumption, they will simply encourage what will be perceived as more extreme measures towards the Muslim community because Muslims simply consider themselves moving to a more orthodox not extreme form of Islam. If on the other hand they acknowledge this relationship is intrinsic

to Islam, honest and forthright engagement becomes a possibility and presents an opportunity for a more constructive relationship.

Taking Account of Globalisation and Impact of Western Policies in the Muslim world

More broadly, a discussion on Muslims in the UK should be understood in the context of the Muslim world. The changes experienced within the UK mirror changes occurring more generally in the Muslim world that predated the Salman Rushdie affair, particularly the move away from secular, nationalistic politics to Islamically based political activity. The advent of globalisation particularly through the movement of information and human populations has made it less possible to understand trends purely in the boundaries of national borders; globalisation has brought changes occurring in the Muslim world to the shores of Britain's Muslim community and it is unlikely to be divorceable as the world continues to shrink. As a result, responding to or understanding processes at work within the Muslim community in the UK will continue to require a more astute understanding of the processes at work within the Muslim world more generally.

To this end, it is naïve to ignore the impact of Britain's engagement in the Muslim world on attitudes of Muslims in this country, information about which can no longer be tightly controlled given the rise of alternative international news agencies, such as those which broadcast from the Muslim world, or the huge networks of information made possible through the internet.

It is important to note also that Western policies in the Muslim world have had a similar impact in terms of politicisation on many non-Muslims in the Arab world. We highlight later in the report how polls conducted of non-Muslim opinion in the Muslim world also show heightened politicisation and opposition to Western policies in the Muslim world.

Section 2

'Unspinning' the Accusations of Violence against Islam

As discussed in the previous section, some commentators have asserted that the trend towards greater Islamic practice combined with political concerns over events in the Muslim world has made the Muslim community more vulnerable to the use of violence to counteract perceived injustices.

The Policy Exchange report describes how "Islamism is not only a security problem..." implying that it is at least that. Tony Blair's recent announcement to make Islamic studies 'strategically important' to the British national interest, arguing it will help prevent 'violent' extremism, demonstrates that the study of Islam by the Muslim community is thought to be associated with an increased threat from violence. As a result, the logic requires this Islamicisation of Muslim politics to be treated with suspicion and, at some level, stymied and prevented from growing in influence.

It is important to reiterate that while in a secular framework politicisation may be supported, a growing awareness of Islam and its use in politics is seen by some to stand at odds with secular, irreligious politics. In this sense the trend is unconventional and outside the prevailing political culture in the West which has led some to describe it with terms that undermine their credibility. The terms 'radical' and 'extremist' misrepresent the changes in the Muslim community, and misrepresent the phenomena of Islamicisation, but have a powerful impact in the manner in which the

argument is extended to include the possibility of violence.

In this section, we argue that:

- The trend towards greater Islamic political practice, far from being a precursor for violence, often provides people with an alternative.
- Politically motivated violence is a wider issue most often occurring as a response to political oppression and injustice rather than because of ideology or theology. Hence, the association of Islam with political violence is misleading.
- There is little support for violence as a means of change as demonstrated by recent polls of Muslim opinion, which also show increasingly levels of support for Islamic politics.
- It is important to separate goals from means so as to not to link widely held legitimate political ideas with violence.

Part I

Decoupling Political Violence from Islam

Violence is Driven by Political not Theological Factors

Violence cannot be treated as an extension of the trend towards greater Islamic political practice within the Muslim community. The history of

political violence demonstrates that it is cross-cultural, cross religion and ideology and is driven by a number of factors often born out of a sense of political injustice, occupation or invasion. An academic study by Professor Robert Pape, an Associate Professor at Chicago University, published in his book 'Dying to Win: The Logic of Suicide Terrorism', demonstrates that the advent of suicide bombers is not unique to Muslims but is rather a generic cross-human phenomena driven by a number of political factors rather than theological beliefs.

The study included the first complete database of every suicide attack around the world from 1980 to early 2004 and conducted in native-language sources - Arabic, Hebrew, Russian, and Tamil, and others - that allowed it to gather information not only from newspapers, but also from products of the perpetrating organisations. The study found that:

- The world leader in suicide attacks was the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka - a Marxist, secular group.
 - Two thirds of Muslim 'suicide bombers' have been from countries where US forces have or are still maintaining military forces.
 - The presence of US forces is creating suicide attackers in Iraq which was a country that had never previously had a suicide attack in its history prior to the 2003 invasion.
-

Political injustice provides oxygen for the proponents of such attacks to justify such actions. It is therefore crucial that acts of political violence are analysed as a separate phenomena based upon the individuals who choose to engage in them, their justifications and the role that local and foreign political injustice has in providing oxygen to justify such acts.

Foreign Policy and Political Injustice

Regarding the July 2005 bombings in London, as is now common knowledge, the British government was forewarned that its involvement in the catastrophic US invasion of Iraq had increased Britain's vulnerability to the threat of a retaliation attack. The leaked report from the UK's Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC), which predated the attacks, warned:

"Events in Iraq are continuing to act as motivation and a focus of a range of terrorist related activity in the UK".

In April 2005, a report drawn up by the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) entitled "International Terrorism: Impact of Iraq" was even more explicit, stating:

"We judge that the conflict in Iraq has exacerbated the threat from international terrorism and will continue to have an impact in the long term. It has reinforced the determination of terrorists who were already committed to attacking the West and motivated others who were not."

Amongst numerous other voices, a report in July 2005 by the foreign affairs think-tank Chatham House, also effectively expressed the view that the invasion of Iraq had made the world a more dangerous place. In their view, there was "no doubt" that the invasion of Iraq had: "given a boost to the al-Qaida network" in "propaganda, recruitment and fundraising". Also that "riding pillion with a powerful ally has proved costly in terms of British and US military lives, Iraqi lives, military expenditure and the damage caused to the counter-terrorism campaign."

It is essential to understand and acknowledge therefore the role that foreign policy has played in exacerbat-

ing the sense of political injustice and in driving individuals to undertake acts of political violence against those they perceive as aggressors, whether the rhetoric of legitimisation is religious or otherwise, following the conclusions of Professor Pape's study. This is particularly important given the Muslim world is a region already at the mercy of despotic rulers and tyrants. Rather than blame a whole community or its leanings towards Islamic politics generally, it is important to understand the political nature of the factors that drive such acts as opposed to solely attributing them to Islamic theology or ideas, which does not take account of the history of political violence across cultures, religions and ideologies.

Islamic Politics is an Alternative to Violence as a Means of Change

The phenomenon of Muslims using violence on Western soil is a relatively recent phenomenon and brought to the fore by 9/11. Non-violent calls for a political vision of a Muslim world governed by an Islamic political system - or Caliphate - have been heard ever since the Caliphate was formally abolished at the beginning of the twentieth century. These calls and this vision therefore predate this modern phenomenon by more than fifty years. Talk of establishing an Islamic political system has continued to feature across the spectrum of political debate in the Muslim world even after its demise.

For numerous organisations, the goal of returning Islam to state and society features at the root of their political activity. The means they employ differ, as does their vision of the Islamic political system's exact workings. Some opt for a gradual reform of the political system using existing structures and mechanisms. Others encourage individual reform, whilst others, like the Islamic political party Hizb ut-Tahrir, opt to operate through a different model of political activity. Most such organisations are non-violent, have not endorsed attacks such as those in New York or London, and do not advocate violence as a methodology for change. Indeed, amongst those Islamic organisations that seek to establish a Shariah-based government the overwhelming majority

do not advocate violence and have refused to endorse the attacks on civilians in Western capitals.

Regarding the use of violence more generally, the ICG report on Islamism makes a clear distinction between Islamic political activity and violence. The report concludes that while hostility to Western policy is widespread this does not necessarily translate into support for violence:

"Suspicion of, if not opposition to, the behaviour of al-Qaeda and its imitators is widespread within Islamist circles and all but unanimous among political Islamists...at the same time, hostility to Western and especially U.S. policy is very widespread but does not translate into support for, let alone participation in, al-Qaeda's global jihad except for a tiny minority."

Islamic Political Activism is an Alternative to Violent Expression

Islamic political organisations have played an influential role in directing Muslim concerns towards non-violent political activity. Some organisations have chosen the democratic process, while others have advocated non-violent political expression outside of existing political structures.

For example, Hizb ut-Tahrir has been at the forefront of working for a Caliphate in the Muslim world since 1953 through urging Muslims to engage in a non-violent political struggle against the rulers of the Muslim world. Its literature and behaviour prepare its members only with the political means for change. In fact, globally, it remains a fact that large numbers of people who joined Hizb ut-Tahrir left armed militancy after being convinced of Hizb ut-Tahrir's political methodology on the basis of Islamic evidences. In Uzbekistan, for example, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, a group that has advocated armed struggle, witnessed a large turnover from its ranks to Hizb ut-Tahrir. The commitment of Hizb ut-Tahrir not to be involved in any violent activity is based on its faith and understanding of the revelation of God, which makes its involvement in any terrorist or violent activity impossible, either in theory and practice. No person

“ Rather than blame a whole community or its leanings towards Islamic politics generally, it is important to understand the political nature of the factors that drive such acts as opposed to solely attributing them to Islamic theology or ideas, which does not take account of the history of political violence across cultures, religions and ideologies

The findings of a number of recent polls conducted across the Muslim world refute the assertion that there is a necessary association between Islamic political ideas and violence as a means of change or the argument that Islamic political ideas inevitably lead to violence

“Large majorities in most countries support the goals of requiring a strict application of sharia, keeping out Western values, and even unifying all Islamic countries into a single Islamic state”

(PIPA, University of Maryland, April 2007)

The vast majority of respondents across Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Syria and Lebanon believed that Shariah should be a source of legislation, with a strong majority in many of the countries stating that it should be the only source

can join Hizb ut-Tahrir until he or she adopts this political and intellectual methodology and approach.

Part II
Poll Evidence Refutes the Alleged Link between Islam's Political Tenets and Violence as a Means of Change

The findings of a number of recent polls conducted across the Muslim world refute the assertion that there is a necessary association between Islamic political ideas and violence as a means of change or the argument that Islamic political ideas inevitably lead to violence. The evidence from these polls shows that whilst support of Islamic political ideas - including a greater role for Shariah in the governance of their countries - has steadily grown amongst Muslim populations, support for violence and its use in political change has dropped. We are therefore presented with an inverse relationship between strengthening Islamic politics and the use of violence, rather than the direct relationship some Western commentators and politicians propagate.

Of these polls, we will consider the findings of three of the most comprehensively conducted surveys carried out by leading pollsters.

Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA), University of Maryland, April 2007

The recently issued report by the University of Maryland entitled 'Muslim Public Opinion on US Policy, Attacks on Civilians and al Qaeda' is one of the most recent and revealing polls of opinion in the Muslim world. The report found strong support for establishing a single Islamic state, keeping out Western values, rejection of the notion of inevitable violence between the Muslim world and the West, and the rejection of attacks on civilians in the West or elsewhere.

Some of the report's key references which illustrate these points are summarised below:

- "Most respondents express strong support for expanding the role of

Islam in their countries - consistent with the goals of al Qaeda - but also express an openness to outside cultural influences. Large majorities in most countries support the goals of requiring a strict application of sharia, keeping out Western values, and even unifying all Islamic countries into a single Islamic state."

- "On the other hand, majorities in all countries regard the increasing inter-connection of the world through trade and communication as positive"
- "Majorities or pluralities also reject the idea that violent conflict between Muslim and Western culture is inevitable and say that it is possible to find common ground."
- "Large majorities in all countries opposes attacks against civilians for political purposes and see them as contrary to Islam. Attacks on civilians are seen as hardly ever effective. Politically motivated attacks against civilian infrastructure are also rejected as not justified"
- "Consistent with the opposition to attacks on civilians in principle, and in contrast to the significant support for attacks on US troops, majorities in all countries disapprove of attacks on civilians in the United States as well as civilians in Europe. Nearly as many disapprove of attacks on Americans working for US companies in Islamic countries."

Centre for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan, February 2005

The Centre for Strategic Studies (CSS) at the University of Jordan published a survey entitled "Revisiting the Arab Street" in February 2005 in which they interviewed numerous population samples (national representative sample, university students, media elites and business elites) in Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Palestine and Lebanon. The report was based on interviews conducted between March and June of 2004.

In addition to findings that showed support for a greater role of the Shariah and Islamic scholars in the politics and governance of their countries, the findings also suggested that hostility

towards the West was largely down to political reasons, such as the foreign policy of the US and Britain towards the Muslim world, rather than religious or theological arguments. Some of the report's findings were:

- The vast majority of respondents across Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Syria and Lebanon believed that Shariah should be a source of legislation, with a strong majority in many of the countries stating that it should be the only source.
- Strong adherence to the precepts of Islam was not found to necessarily equate with hostility or negativity toward the West. The tension between the Arab world and the West is not perceived in either religious or cultural terms.
- Arabs believe that their societal values stand in sharp contrast to the West. They associate Western societies with liberalism, individual liberty, democracy and technological progress, but also with increased levels of societal problems. In contrast, they see their societies as maintaining stronger values of tradition and family, and as being less plagued with social problems. The exception to this is that Arabs believe financial and administrative corruption is more prevalent in Arab societies than in the West.
- Arab reactions to Western, and most specifically US, foreign policy in the region were identified as being the single most important factor influencing Arab attitudes. When asked if the anti-American attitude was a result of American values or American policy in the Muslim world, 90 per cent of Egyptians, 79 per cent of Moroccans, 76 per cent of Jordanians and 80 per cent of Lebanese said that it was because of American policy. Most believed that America and Britain were selfish and insincere in their foreign policy and that America attempts to dominate countries, violates human rights and rather than approach countries with dignity and respect tries to impose its policies on other countries. As the survey cites, these findings were not specific to the Arab world but were similar to findings in South Korea, Russia and Brazil.

PEW Global Attitudes Project

A number of Pew Global Attitudes surveys undertaken over the past few years also support the findings of the above mentioned reports with regards to the increasing support for the role of Islam in politics and governance and a strong decline in support for violence.

A Pew Global Attitudes Survey carried out in February 2005 entitled 'Iraqi Vote Mirrors Desire for Democracy in the Muslim World' states:

- "...while Muslims are generally receptive to democracy and supportive of basic freedoms, they also believe that Islam should have a prominent role in politics. Pew surveys found majorities of Muslims in nine of the 14 countries surveyed favored a "very large" or "fairly large" role for Islam in political life. In Pakistan, 86% of Muslim respondents expressed that view, as did large majorities of Muslims in Indonesia (82%) and Jordan (73%). In Turkey, however, far fewer Muslims (41%) think that Islam should play a major role in the nation's political life."
- "Other surveys have shown that Muslims take a nuanced view of religion and politics. Shibley Telhami, a professor at the University of Maryland, polled in six predominantly Muslim countries last June - including Egypt and Saudi Arabia - and found that while most respondents favored a stronger role for the clergy in politics, few expressed admiration for religious leaders."

It is important to highlight here that Pew have evaluated a desire for democracy by assessing support for ideals such as allowing open criticism of government, greater participation in the political process and media reporting without censorship. These all relate to empowering the citizenry with greater powers of accountability notably absent in the Muslim world, but such rights are not exclusive to democracy. Within Islamic literature there are detailed discussions on the mechanisms for political participation and accountability

A Pew Global Attitudes Survey published in July 2005 entitled 'Islamic

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The Centre for Strategic Studies...found that of those polled, most disagreed with the US definition of terrorism and saw violence and the groups that engage in it as legitimate if they were part of a strategy to counter the perceived occupation policies of the US and Israel... Even 74 per cent of Lebanese Christians viewed Hezbollah as a resistance organisation

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Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics' states:

- "The balance of opinion in predominantly Muslim countries is that Islam is playing a greater role in politics - and most welcome that development. Turkey is a clear exception; the public there is divided about whether a greater role for Islam in the political life of that country is desirable."
- "The importance of Islam in the political life of many countries where it is the predominant religion is underscored by the large percentages in these countries saying that they think of themselves first as a Muslim, rather than as a citizen of their particular country."
- "Large majorities of Muslims in most predominantly Muslim countries surveyed think that it is very important that Islam play a more important and influential role in the world than that religion now does. In Morocco, 84% of Muslims subscribe to this view, as do 73% in Jordan, 70% in Pakistan and 64% in Indonesia. Even in Lebanon and Turkey, where fewer among the Muslim population place high importance on a larger global role for Islam, pluralities in both countries do so."

A Pew Global Attitudes Survey published in June 2006 entitled 'The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each Other' highlights that the supposed conflict between modernisers and fundamentalists the west eagerly promote, is a narrative that has very low traction in the Muslim world. The report states:

- "In most Western countries, the prevailing view among non-Muslims is that there is a conflict between being a devout Muslim and living in a

modern society. But Muslims generally disagree - including Muslims who live in major European countries."

- "In a similar vein, the Pew Global Attitudes survey asked people in five predominantly Muslim countries whether or not they believe there is a struggle between groups who want to modernize their country and Islamic fundamentalists. The responses are mixed. In Turkey, 58% say there is a struggle between modernizers and Islamic fundamentalists, and nearly as many Indonesians (50%) agree. But solid majorities in Jordan and Egypt see no such struggle; in Pakistan, a relatively large number (50%) declined to offer an opinion."

Attitudes Towards Terrorism and Legitimate Resistance

The Centre for Strategic Studies poll cited earlier found that of those polled, most disagreed with the US definition of terrorism and saw violence and the groups that engage in it as legitimate if they were part of a strategy to counter the perceived occupation policies of the US and Israel. Actions against these nations are largely seen as legitimate resistance and acts committed by Israel and America are viewed as true acts of terrorism. Most considered attacks against US troops in Iraq or against Israeli settlements as not being terrorist acts. Most viewed organisations like Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah as legitimate resistance organisations. Even 74 per cent of Lebanese Christians viewed Hezbollah as a resistance organisation.

The War on Terror has manipulated the fact that there is no consensus on the definition of terrorism. The issue has been debated nationally and internationally, including attempts at the United Nations, but an agreed definition

remains elusive. Britain and the US have taken advantage of this ambiguity to brand resistance to their military occupation by indigenous populations in Iraq and Afghanistan as terrorism, even though the right to resist foreign military occupation has broad support, historical precedent and is part of the Geneva Convention (Protocol 1, Additional to the Geneva Conventions, 1977, Part IV, Section 1, Chapter 1, Article 49, Point 4).

Attitudes Towards Violence Directed at Civilians: Comparing the US with Iran

The Muslim world finds itself having to repeatedly clarify its position on violence because of the climate created by the War on Terror; whilst non-Muslim societies are spared such scrutiny. A recent poll, however, compares American and Iranian public opinion regarding attacks on civilians and demonstrates how the obsession with Muslim opinion has allowed dangerous attitudes in Western societies to go overlooked.

The poll, published in January 2007 by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) of the University of Maryland, compares attitudes among Iranians and Americans on a host of political issues. Participants in both countries were asked whether bombing and other attacks intentionally aimed at civilians was often, sometimes, rarely or never justified.

In response 80 per cent of the Iranian participants said that violence targeting civilians is never justified, while only 46 per cent of Americans expressed similar opposition to such attacks. 11 per cent of Iranians supported violent, deliberate attacks on civilians, with 3 per cent saying that such violence is often justified and 8 per cent arguing that it is sometimes justified. In sharp contrast, twenty four per cent of American participants supported violent, deliberate attacks on civilians, with 5 per cent saying deliberate attacks on civilians were often justified and 19 per cent said they were sometimes justified. The poll appears to suggest that there is a much greater willingness among Americans to countenance the use of violence against civilians to achieve political goals.

Whether it is the bombing and subsequent occupation of Iraq in 2003, or the years of sanctions that preceded it, Americans seem to have become accustomed to their government employing extreme violence in the name of lofty political goals, and may partly contribute to explaining these statistics.

Part III Ends Do not Justify Means, but Means do not Invalidate Ends

It is important to separate goals from means so as to not to tarnish legitimate political grievances and goals with violence. The polls referred to previously reflect the fact that whilst Muslims may share concerns about political injustices, occupation and invasion of the Muslim world, they have on the whole rejected the use of violence as a means to achieve their political goals.

Despite this, some Western commentators and politicians have continued to insist that the goals of Islamic politics are inherently linked to violence. In the aftermath of 7/7 Tony Blair sought to discredit Islamic political goals as a natural extension of terror itself - referring to their "inherent" violence - and attempted to intimately connect the violence of 7/7 with a set of political goals that demanded a Middle East free from Western occupation, the formation of a Shariah-based political system - the Caliphate - and an end to the occupation of Palestine. Zeyno Baran, of the Hudson Institute, first suggested that the Islamic political party Hizb ut-Tahrir was a 'conveyor belt' to terrorism, but since then the argument has been used more generally to tarnish those who engage with Islamic political parties or politics.

Applying the Arguments used Against Islamic Politics to the West's Own Historical Experience

A) The Enlightenment

For those who insist on a supposed link between means and goals, despite all the evidence to the contrary, it is necessary to pose a broader question. Is it sound to discredit a set of political goals because of the means employed by some to achieve them? If this logic held true,

some of the most celebrated historical events in the West should be recast as triumphs for political violence. The founding pillars of the 'enlightenment' should be held responsible for motivating violent upheaval on the continent of Europe and North America and thus should remain under the shadow of - and scarred by - the means of terror.

More acutely, if the juxtaposition of means and goals promoted by the likes of Blair is credible, the ideas of the enlightenment must be deemed inherently violent, for they represented the ideals of the violent and bloody struggles that were the French and American revolutions.

John Locke, one of the most prominent figures in the Enlightenment, advanced the case that a violent uprising against tyranny was necessary and just, only to correct the imbalance in natural affairs created by that oppression. As he explained in 'Two Treatises of Government', by indulging in tyranny, despots were "liable to be destroyed by the injured person and the rest of mankind, that will join with him in the execution of Justice, as any other wild beast, or noxious brute with whom Mankind can have neither society nor security".

Thomas Paine, the thinker whose writings assisted America's struggle for independence, articulated the case for an American revolution in his highly influential pamphlet 'Common Sense' in a similar vein. "We view our enemies in the characters of Highwaymen and Housebreakers, and having no defence for ourselves in the civil law; are obliged to punish them by the military one, and apply the sword, in the very case, where you have before now, applied the halter".

Thomas Jefferson also acknowledged that violence would feature in the path to America's independence, his words suggesting that although 'unfortunate' the focus should be on the bigger picture: "It is unfortunate that the efforts of mankind to recover the freedom of which they have been so long deprived, will be accompanied with violence, with errors, and even with crimes. But while we weep over the means, we must pray for the end."

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B) National Liberation Struggles

Equally, national liberation struggles that used violence as a means should render the goal of independence from foreign control violent and immoral. However this is a far cry from the glowing endorsements they selectively received from Western powers. On the Afghan effort to force out the Soviets, former US President Ronald Reagan commented,

"Self-determination, the right to freely choose one's own destiny, has been the central point of the Afghan struggle... We are proud to have supported their brave struggle to regain their freedom, and our support for this noble cause will continue as long as it is needed".

The struggle of the ANC against apartheid represented a noble cause. However, Nelson Mandela admitted in 1963 that "without violence there would be no way open to the African people to succeed in their struggle" although he "planned it as a result of a calm and sober assessment of the political situation". None of this rendered the fight against racism in South Africa wrong and Mandela eventually left prison, rebranded as a freedom fighter, to take his place on the stage of international politics.

C) Contemporary Social and Political Situations

The use of violence to achieve a political end is still a point of debate in Western circles. Opinions range from those who believe it is never justified to those who believe that some situations necessitate

“ the goals of Islamic politics, particularly the demand for a Caliphate cannot be summarily dismissed by claiming that acts of violence are the sole means of achieving it. The Caliphate, for example, has a long track record of ruling quite diverse communities, ethnicities, regions and religions with success, bringing stability to previously war-ravaged territories, engaging populations and earning strong loyalties from the communities and religions it governed ”

it. Gary Younge, a columnist for the Guardian, wrote regarding the rioting in Parisian suburbs last year that "in certain conditions rioting is not just justified but may also be necessary, and effective" because "when all non-violent, democratic means of achieving a just end are unavailable, redundant or exhausted, rioting is justifiable". Thomas Paine's view that "having no defence for ourselves in the civil law; are obliged to punish them by the military one" also moves to justify the use of violence when no alternative is available.

The Oxford academic Timothy Garton-Ash argues that, "We may want to uphold the universal principle 'no violence', but we all know that these are, in political fact and in moral content, very different things, and some violent political actions are - shall we say - less unjustified than others". Other variations debate whether the maxim 'the end justifies the means' can pragmatically justify the use of political violence to overcome an obstacle that obstructs critical human progress, as Jefferson's earlier remarks on the American revolution may lead one to conclude.

“ Though Paine was referring to the suffering of Americans under British colonialism, Muslims in Fallujah, Baghdad, Najaf, Ramallah or Gaza could think that he was writing about them. Had the conveyor belt existed at that time then no doubt international experts and law-enforcement agencies would have labelled his theories as such ”

Islamic Political Goals Cannot be Discredited Through False Associations

The purpose here is not to justify the use of violence as a tool for political change. Rather, it is to demonstrate that the goals of Islamic politics, particularly the demand for a Caliphate cannot be summarily dismissed by claiming that acts of violence are the sole means of achieving it. The Caliphate, for example, has a long track record of ruling quite diverse communities, ethnicities, regions and religions with success, bringing stability to previously war-ravaged territories, engaging populations and earning strong loyalties from the communities and religions it governed.

Historic Parallels: Demonsifying Political Objectives and Ideas

It has long been the case that the dissemination of any ideas of political change can be tarnished with the same brush, whether or not their advocates employ violence. Many political movements of the twentieth century and many going even further back were accused of being a conveyor belt towards terrorism just by disseminating ideas that conflicted with the status quo.

The American Independence struggle itself was characterised in this way. Thomas Paine's pamphlet 'Common Sense', published in January 1776, was labelled seditious. The British government viewed Paine as a traitor for the crime of calling for a declaration of independence based, not upon the privileges of land or birth, but upon thoughts:

"Can we but leave posterity with a settled form of government, an independent constitution of its own; the purchase at any price will be cheap."

Paine goes on further to suggest "we have it in our power to begin the world over again. We are not insulting the world with our fleets and armies, nor ravaging the globe for plunder. Beneath the shade of our own vines are we attacked; in our own houses, and on our own lands, is the violence committed against us."

Though Paine was referring to the suffering of Americans under British colonialism, Muslims in Fallujah, Baghdad, Najaf, Ramallah or Gaza could think that he was writing about them. Had the conveyor belt existed at that time then no doubt international experts and law-enforcement agencies would have labelled his theories as such.

Section 3

The Caliphate, Islamic Governance & the Myth of Violence

Many commentators on the War on Terror have failed to notice statements by senior politicians that effectively declare that a Caliphate and Shariah law in the Muslim world are unacceptable objectives. On September 5th, 2006 President George W. Bush said, when referring to people that share the ideology of al-Qaida:

"They hope to establish a violent political utopia across the Middle East, which they call caliphate, where all would be ruled according to their hateful ideology".

President Bush's comments were preceded by Tony Blair in the immediate aftermath of the attacks in London on 7/7. At a press conference on 16th July 2005, he said that Britain must confront "an evil ideology", defining this as "their barbaric ideas." which included, "the establishment of effectively Taliban States and Shari'ah law in the Arab world en route to one Caliphate of all Muslim nations." Tony Blair sought to shift the focus away from the terrorists' methods to bring into focus the need to challenge a set of political goals that centred on the formation of a new Caliphate in the Muslim world, saying this was "a battle not just about the terrorist methods but their views"

In October 2005, the then British Home Secretary, Charles Clarke, made a speech to the right wing neo-conserva-

tive US think-tank the Heritage Foundation saying:

"What drives these people on is ideas. And, unlike the liberation movements of the post-World War II era, these are not political ideas like national independence from colonial rule, or equality for all citizens without regard for race or creed, or freedom of expression without totalitarian repression. Such ambitions are, at least in principle, negotiable and in many cases have actually been negotiated. However, there can be no negotiation about the re-creation of the Caliphate; there can be no negotiation about the imposition of Sharia law".

Such pronouncements have attempted to discredit one of the central goals of current Islamic political activity in the Muslim world: the establishment of an independent Islamic political system in the Muslim world, or Caliphate. Just as with Islamic politics more generally, a host of arguments have been forwarded to suggest that the Caliphate would be an unwelcome prospect and that its emergence should be opposed. Included in this are attempts to link its reality with violence as some of the above statements attempt to do.

In this section, we address failures in the Western discourse of the Caliphate, the role of the Caliphate in Islamic orthodoxy, the Caliphate as a distinct and alternative political system, and discuss

how the Caliphate will be a stabilising force for the Muslim world.

Part I

Maligning a Popular & Orthodox Call

The propaganda of the War on Terror has taken a political vision that centred on the formation of a new Caliphate and attempted to scar it with the horrors of terrorism. The construct has sought to construe the Caliphate as some violent throwback that would usher in a new dark age, characterised by sectarian conflict, persecuted minorities and fear because, the argument is, these are the hallmarks of the terrorists' campaign to create it. Blair's post 7/7 thrust aimed to weld terrorism onto the goal for a Shariah-based political system, a construct that the US administration was equally eager to brandish: President Bush also referred to confronting a "violent political vision" which represented "the establishment by terrorism, subversion and insurgency of a totalitarian empire that denies all political and religious freedom". The attempt has been to cast the Caliphate as an al-Qaida preserve giving its mere mention an "almost instinctive fearful impact" in the words of Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Jimmy Carter's national security adviser.

Remarks from senior US and British officials demonstrate the Caliphate is

“ the Islamic political system has its own independent configuration and a distinct constellation of political principles and ideas

"The Imams (scholars of the four schools of thought- Shafi'i, Hanafi, Maliki, Hanbali)- may Allah have mercy on them- agree that the Imamah (Leadership) is an obligation, and that the Muslims must appoint an Imam who would implement the deen's rites, and give the oppressed justice against the oppressors"
(Al-Jaziri)

It can only be a stabilising force for the region to replace unrepresentative, unaccountable rulers with a political system that is neither, and which draws on strong ideological commonalities with its people. The Caliphate represents an alternative political vision for the Muslim world and a political system that draws on a strong historical record, arguably the home of a leading civilisation for many centuries ”

also finding its way into the language of the Iraq conflict. American officials have referred to it as part of a pretext for continuing US involvement in Iraq. For Eric Edelman, US Under Secretary of Defence for Policy, "Iraq's future will either embolden terrorists and expand their reach and ability to re-establish a Caliphate, or it will deal them a crippling blow. For us, failure in Iraq is just not an option".

Challenging the Campaign to Malign the Caliphate

Attempting to discredit a political vision for the Muslim world that challenges their own by using the language of terrorism fundamentally misconstrues Islamic politics and acts to malign anyone associated with it. The strategy appears largely in vain however - an independent Shariah-based system now features in the vision of most of the largest and best supported organisations in the Muslim world that are neither violent nor part of al-Qaida, as highlighted earlier in the report.

While recent polls go some way to suggest a depth of feeling for Islam playing a greater role in the governance of the Muslim world this has not been mapped across in the current discussion in the West about Islam. Unfortunately, this means discussion on Islam suffers from pernicious attempts to frame Islamic political aspirations in a new light, without a credible political element and inherently linked to violence.

Efforts to malign the Caliphate must be challenged with an understanding of exactly what it would represent. Equating it with, and making it inseparable from, the violence that has struck certain Western capitals is a false association that lacks historical, political and intellectual credibility particularly in the Muslim world. It can only be a stabilising force for the region to replace unrepresentative, unaccountable rulers with a political system that is neither, and which draws on strong ideological commonalities with its people. The Caliphate represents an alternative political vision for the Muslim world and a political system that draws on a strong historical record, arguably the home of a leading civilisation for many centuries.

Reframing a Discussion on the Caliphate

A discussion on the Caliphate must lie in a broader context: there is a need for alternatives to the failing political leaderships in the Muslim world. Autocratic, authoritarian regimes litter the Muslim world and represent the single biggest obstacle to progress. Consent is notoriously absent from the processes that legitimated presidents, kings and premiers. Staged elections have never changed this fact, conducted as they are in a climate of fear and intimidation preventing public expression of any organised opposition. Ruling elites owe their status to acts of foreign installation and often represent striking departures from the demographics of the lands they govern. Joseph Lieberman, former Vice Presidential candidate for the US Democrat Party, once described the Caliphate as a 'new evil empire'. But if it is of an evil empire that we should fear, then surely the Muslim world's current reality is it: entrenched primitive and thoroughly repressive political structures aggregated to represent one of the most poorly governed regions in the world.

Successive UN Arab Human Development Reports make similar observations regarding the failing political architecture in the Arab world, the crisis in governance, authoritarian and totalitarian government, the lack of transparency and accountability, repression, corruption, and a broad crisis of legitimacy that faces Arab governments. But repressive governments have long characterised the region and significantly pre-date the report's findings.

It is in mapping a way out of this malaise that the Caliphate is presented as an alternative political model for the Muslim world. For the authors of the AHDR, the template is a Western model, democracy, liberty, and the institutions and assumptions that underpin the Western liberal political philosophy are its benchmarks for reforming Arab governments. To address the plight of Muslims living under repressive regimes, however, the emergence of a Caliphate is forwarded as an alternative to a culturally adjusted secular liberal democratic solution.

“ even a cursory look at the position of classical Islamic Scholars throughout the ages demonstrates that the Islamic political system has always been regarded as a vital matter for the Muslim community (Ummah) and its existence to be protected, even a pre-requisite for enacting numerous Islamic rulings ”

Failings in the Current Discourse on the Caliphate

The current consideration of the Caliphate as an alternative political model to Western liberalism, however, suffers in too many ways, and is compounded by errors in Western discourse on Islam in general and Islamic political thinking in particular. 'Orientalist' writers who draw on sociologist Max Weber's reading of Islam, for example, regard it as a pre-modern political system that collapsed because of the challenges of modernity. They consider it a closed system, total in nature; unable to address Europe's innovations in industry and political thought, and that it is the principle impediment to progress unless Islam is able to reform; a primitive political system whose literature on government is concerned only with the piety of ruler and subject.

Apart from their particular critique of Islam, these - among many other - Western writings are premised on the belief that the liberal political model is built on a series of values deemed universal, and currently provides the most economically efficient and ethically desirable form of governance. This assumption creates the problematic framework in which the Caliphate is studied because the approach typically follows the route of comparison, one that takes as its norm the Western state and its form of politics, and measures against provisions in the liberal political model.

Where such comparisons fall short is the failure to acknowledge that the Islamic political system has its own independent configuration and a distinct constellation of political principles and ideas. While overlooking this distinct and different configuration of politics, comparisons that impose one system as the norm act only to highlight differences between the two systems without, importantly, questioning the

original configurations of both. In this case, it merely highlights the lack of liberal ideas in Islamic politics - which says no more than that they are different - but does not question whether liberalism should be taken as the norm; the approach is relative and offers no universal merit to the discourse. Measuring through a filtered prism obscures an objective picture of the Islamic political system and misconstrues a thoroughly distinct assemblage of political ideas. The Islamic political system must be understood according to its original texts and meanings, not in relation to the Western state.

Increasing demands amongst Muslims populations for the rule of law, transparent, accountable and representative government, and an independent and efficient judiciary are often interpreted by Western commentators as a call for democracy. These provisions are not the monopoly of liberal political philosophy, however; the Islamic political system addresses each of these but through a model that understands society, the individual, the goal of government and the role of the state differently. The Islamic political system - rather than inherently deficient - is characterised by its own relationship between ruler and subject, authority and sovereignty, law, property and power.

The Caliphate's Position in Orthodox Islam

Amongst the attempts to malign the Caliphate have been those which have argued the Caliphate is not an instrumental part of Islam, but rather a historical institution whose usefulness in the twenty-first century has been invented by the imagination and idealism of twentieth century political Islamists. Such arguments have attempted to foster the belief that the Caliphate is in fact an aberration of Islam itself and its call largely a modern phenomena born out of a reaction to colonialism.

However, even a cursory look at the position of classical Islamic Scholars throughout the ages demonstrates that the Islamic political system has always been regarded as a vital matter for the Muslim community (Ummah) and its existence to be protected, even a pre-requisite for enacting numerous Islamic rulings.

According to the Mufasssir (exegete) Al-Qurtubi, when referring to verse 30 Chapter 2 of the Quran, "This Ayah (verse) is a source in the selection of an Imaam, and a Khaleef (Caliph), he is listened to and he is obeyed, for the word is united through him, and the Ahkam (laws) of the Caliph are implemented through him, and there is no difference regarding the obligation of that between the Ummah, nor between the Imams except what is narrated about al-Asam, the Mu'tazzili." He also said: "The Khilafah (Caliphate) is the pillar upon which other pillars rest."

For Imam an-Nawawi: "(The scholars) consented that it is an obligation upon the Muslims to select a Khalif". According to the Imam al-Ghazali, when writing of the potential consequences of losing the Caliphate, "The judges will be suspended, the Wilayaat (provinces) will be nullified, ... the decrees of those in authority will not be executed and all the people will be on the verge of Haraam (committing unlawful acts)". For the reputed Jurist on Islamic governance Imam al-Mawardi: "The contract of the Imamah (leadership) for whoever is standing with it, is an obligation by Ijmaa'a (consensus)".

One of the founders of the four major schools of Sunni thought, Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal, said; "The Fitna (mischief and tribulations) occurs when there is no Imaam established over the affairs of the people". Al-Jaziri, an expert on the Fiqh of the four great schools of thought said regarding the four Imams: "The Imams (scholars of the four schools of thought- Shafi'i, Hanafi, Maliki, Hanbali)- may Allah have mercy on them- agree that the Imamah (Leadership) is an obligation, and that the Muslims must appoint an Imam who would implement the deen's rites, and give the oppressed justice against the oppressors".

“...based on public opinion surveys and recent elections in the Arab world, the advent of democracy there seems likely to produce new Islamist governments that would be much less willing to cooperate with the United States than are the current authoritarian rulers”

(F. Gregory Gause III, associate professor of political science at the University of Vermont)

"It is difficult to anticipate the exact effect the 'abolition' of the Caliphate will have on the minds of the Muslims of India. But so much I can safely affirm - that it will prove a disaster to both Islam and civilisation. The suppression of the time honoured institution, which was throughout the Moslem world regarded as the symbol of Islamic Unity, will cause the disintegration of Islam as a moral force. It had knit together over 250 million of the followers of the faith belonging to the Sunni communion by one common ideal."

(Syed Ameer Ali, Aligarh Muslim University and Muslim League, Times newspaper, 5th March 1924)

The subject of the Caliphate has also been addressed in numerous, detailed works throughout Islamic history and by some of the most eminent jurists. Amongst such writings are those that detail only aspects, such as Mohammed al-Shaybani's works on international relations (*Kitab as-Siyar*), Qadi Abu Yusuf's works on taxation (*Kitab al-Kharaj*), and Imaam Abu Ubayd al-Qaasim bin Salaam's works on state funds (*al-Amwaaal*), through to more comprehensive works that address the system as a whole, such as Imam Mawardi's treatise on Islamic rule (*al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah*) and works by Imam Aamidi (*al-Imamah*). The twentieth century's most elaborate works on the Caliphate are arguably those by Taqi ud-Din an-Nabhani (d. 1977), in his *Nidham al-Hukm fil Islam* (the Ruling System in Islam) and Shaksiyyah Islamiyyah volume 2 (the Islamic Personality), who also went on to publish a draft constitution for an Islamic state, with detailed explanations of each article, in his book *Nidham al-Islam* (the System of Islam) in the 1950s.

For the Shi'a too, who have broadly been historically quietist in a political sense since the onset of the *ghaybah* (occultation of the twelfth Imam), calls for Islamic governance have gained prominence following the decline of Islam in the political sphere. The formulation of the concept '*Wilayat al-Faqih*' - the governance of the jurist - amongst Shi'a scholars is now extensively taught in the schools of Qom, in Iran. In the words of one Shi'a marjah, "The ratio of Qur'anic verses concerned with the affairs of society to those concerned with ritual worship is greater than a hundred to one. Of the approximately fifty sections of the corpus of hadith containing all the ordinances of Islam, not more than three or four sections relate to matters of ritual worship and the duties of man toward his Creator and Sustainer. A few more are concerned with questions of ethics, and all the rest are concerned with social, economic, legal, and political questions - in short, the gestation of society". Also, that, "after the death of the Most Noble Messenger, none of the Muslims doubted the necessity for government. No one said: 'We no longer need a government'. No one was heard to say anything of the kind. There was unanimous agreement concerning the necessity for government.

There was disagreement only as to which person should assume responsibility for government and head the state.

Government, therefore, was established after the Prophet, both in the time of the caliphs and in that of the Commander of the Faithful; an apparatus of government came into existence with administrative and executive organs."

Part II

The Significance of the Caliphate at the Time of its Demise

The words of Lord Curzon, the British Foreign Minister at the time of the Caliphate's end, appear to have best caught the Caliphate's significance when he announced to the House of Commons:

"We must put an end to anything which brings about any Islamic unity between the sons of the Muslims. As we have already succeeded in finishing off the Caliphate, so we must ensure that there will never arise again unity for the Muslims, whether it be intellectual or cultural unity"

The fall of the Caliphate in 1924 was an event of monumental significance for Muslims as it represented the end of a 1350 year-old institution that had existed since the time of the Prophet Muhammad himself. Albert Hourani describes how its loss had a "deep effect on the way in which politically conscious Arabs thought of themselves". In the immediate aftermath, individuals and movements from all quarters of the Islamic political spectrum emerged, advocating the restoration of some form of Shariah-based political system. Demands were not restricted to Turkey, though it was the last home of the Caliphate and then subject to harsh, anti-religious Kemalist policies.

In Egypt, even prominent reformists led calls for its immediate re-establishment. For example, in the magazine '*al-Manar*' Rashid Rida wrote: "All Muslims will remain in a state of sin until they select another caliph and pledge allegiance to him" and by 1928 a populist Islamic movement had emerged which held Islamic government as a central goal. Hassan al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood said:

"When asked what is it that you call, reply that it is Islam, the message of Muhammad, the religion that contains within it a government".

In its dying days, attempts to salvage it were directed from as far away as India by such likes as the Khilafat Movement, a movement which left a significant and lasting impact on Muslim political thought throughout the subcontinent, forming the ideological underpinnings of later demands for a separate Muslim homeland - Pakistan. According to Syed Ameer Ali, of the Aligarh Muslim University and Muslim League, in the Times newspaper on the 5th March 1924:

"It is difficult to anticipate the exact effect the 'abolition' of the Caliphate will have on the minds of the Muslims of India. But so much I can safely affirm - that it will prove a disaster to both Islam and civilisation. The suppression of the time honoured institution, which was throughout the Moslem world regarded as the symbol of Islamic Unity, will cause the disintegration of Islam as a moral force. It had knit together over 250 million of the followers of the faith belonging to the Sunni communion by one common ideal."

Even those who had conspired to destroy it, such as Hussein of Mecca who fought the Ottomans with British support, tried to assume its title knowing the regard it held in the Muslim world. Other political leaders also tried to take advantage. King Fouad I of Egypt, for example, "set his sights on the lofty religious position that had been vacated in Istanbul after Turkey abolished the Caliphate in 1924" according to Egypt's al-Ahram newspaper in 1925. This is not to mention conferences held in Cairo in 1926 and throughout India during the early 1920s that addressed various questions of support for the Caliphate.

After the Caliphate: Debating Governance in the Muslim world

Since the furore that followed the demise of the Caliphate, the question of Islam in politics and Shariah-based government has arguably confronted every Islamic movement in the Muslim world, regardless of how they resolved

to answer that question. Undoubtedly, some argued there must be no such thing. The reformer Ali Abdul Razaq for example challenged the likes of Rashid Rida by demanding a separation of religion from state, saying of the Caliphate "In reality, the religion of Islam is innocent of the Caliphate which Muslims have come to know".

Clearly, a branch of the post-Caliphate debate did not reference Islam, driven by other ideological drifts. But after failed experiments with nationalism - Arab or otherwise - communism, socialism during the 50s and 60s, secularism and bitter experiences with regimes that forcibly kept religion out of sight, not just out of government, organisations seeking to introduce Shariah and Islam into the political system are now arguably the biggest force in the Muslim world.

Any opening in the authoritarian architecture of the Muslim world is now likely to yield Islamic government. F. Gregory Gause III, associate professor of political science at the University of Vermont and director of its Middle East studies program, points to the increasing paradox of democratising the Middle East for US policymakers in Foreign Affairs in October 2005:

"...based on public opinion surveys and recent elections in the Arab world, the advent of democracy there seems likely to produce new Islamist governments that would be much less willing to cooperate with the United States than are the current authoritarian rulers"

Lord Curzon's warnings that "we must put an end to anything which brings about any Islamic unity between the sons of the Muslims" were appended by his remarks about the end of the Caliphate: "The situation now is that Turkey is dead and will never rise again, because we have destroyed its moral strength, the Caliphate and Islam". The fact that less than eight decades after the British government announced its death, demands for the Caliphate's re-establishment clearly challenges Lord Curzon's forecasts bringing his warnings to the fore. The growing prospect of the Caliphate's re-emergence is likely to become one of the defining debates of our time and must therefore be met with

“ The Caliphate ... engages voices of dissent through the political system by providing extensive channels for accounting all parts of the states' apparatus as well as a consultative assembly made-up of elected representatives with significant powers.

Accountability lays firstly in the general right - and sometimes obligation when the excess is flagrant - of every citizen to take the state to task, secondly in institutions that guarantee the process of accountability continuously takes place, and thirdly in a general requirement for political parties

Unlike monarchies and authoritarian governments who place a monarch or premier beyond the constitution with the sole right to interpret or alter it, no individual in the Islamic state's apparatus, from clerk to Caliph, is above the law

Older orientalist writing may sometimes have distorted Islam, but Islam was not recreated in the image of secularism. Whether praising or condemning Islam, orientalists made the political nature of Islam the theme of discussion ”

a willingness to understand a system that would undoubtedly mark a new era for the Muslim world.

Part III

The Caliphate will Bring Stability the Muslim World

Contrary to the prophecies of doom Washington and London are so eager to forward, the Caliphate will be a stabilising force for the Muslim world. Few doubt that it will threaten foreign interests in the lands it governs if those interests resemble current behaviour towards the Muslim world. That may partly explain why the West is so eager to malign it. But asserting independence does not render a state unstable. Indeed, part of the Caliphate's appeal for Muslims is that it will stand up to foreign aggression and wrestle back what they believe is rightfully theirs. The Caliphate will bring stability to the Muslim world in numerous ways.

The Caliphate is an Accountable, Representative Political System

Firstly, the Caliphate is a political system whose head is only legitimised through popular consent. It will, therefore, be most unlike the regimes that currently litter the Muslim world, which are both unrepresentative and unaccountable, and inherently fragile and unstable as a result. With no means of recourse within these regimes and no channels to express dissent or criticism, peoples' concerns have become threatening political undercurrents, even threats of rebellion and overthrow, a reality exasperated by the widespread use of brutality by security services to deal with opposition. The Caliphate, in striking contrast, engages voices of dissent through the political system by providing extensive channels for accounting all parts of the states' apparatus as well as a consultative assembly made-up of elected representatives with significant powers.

The concept that 'the authority lies with the Ummah' is a core principle of the Islamic ruling system. The Shariah places the original authority for managing the affairs of the people in the hands of the people themselves, but

“ With this natural wealth, it is clear that the Muslim world could become economically independent and challenge pernicious economic policies it has had to suffer at the hands of inept leaderships and the developed world ”

requires them to appoint a head of state to do so on their behalf and so the head of state is legitimate only through popular consent. The process of direct elections or an election by a representative assembly consisting of individuals elected to their respective positions can be utilised to evaluate popular consent. Men and women over the age of fifteen are granted the right to vote and the process can be supported with the use of any complimentary technologies, whether internet, mobile or postal voting, provided their merit in improving efficiency is proven. Once elected, the head of state is bound to an agreement with the people through the bayah contract. It stipulates a number of conditions for his leadership of the state, including the condition that he manages the affairs of the people on their behalf, to do so exclusively according to the Islamic sources of legislation, and the non-violation of the criterion of leadership. Authority is at no point transferred to the head of state through the bayah contract and remains permanently with the people. Thus, if the head of state violates any of the terms of the bayah contract, the people can demand, through the independent judiciary, that he vacate his post.

Following on from the discussion on authority in Islamic political discourse, is the ability to ensure the head of state will not violate the terms of the bayah to which he is contracted by the people; in short, architecture for effective accountability (muhasabah). The Islamic political system enshrines mechanisms for binding the Caliph to his agreement and protecting citizens from state violations and oppression (dhulm), and provides direct and transparent channels for accounting the executive, any state official, policy, conduct, administration

and all other facets of governance. The issue of accountability features very prominently in the Shariah. Ruling is regarded as a form of guardianship (riayah) and a trust (amanah), and the causing of oppression (dhulm) by the head of state a grave crime - the corpus of Islamic texts refers to each of these in an unequivocally serious manner. Accountability lays firstly in the general right - and sometimes obligation when the excess is flagrant - of every citizen to take the state to task, secondly in institutions that guarantee the process of accountability continuously takes place, and thirdly in a general requirement for political parties.

Additionally, an independent judiciary monitors the Caliph's legal adoptions with the power to demand revocation. The principle institution dedicated to the task of accounting the state is a special component of the state's independent judiciary: the 'Court of Unjust Acts' (Mahkamat al-Mudhaalim). It is presided over by only the most eminent and qualified judges in the state and granted extensive powers by the Shariah. It has the power to remove any official of state regardless of their role or rank, including, most importantly, the head of state if he persists in pursuing a path that lies outside of the terms of the contract with the people. Citizens who have a complaint against the state register it with the Court, which has wide-ranging powers of investigation that extend to all organs of the state's machinery. Importantly however, the Court does not rely on a plaintiff to register a complaint before problems are investigated because it is tasked with the permanent and continuous responsibility of scrutinising state conduct. In addition to the Court of the Unjust Acts, the 'People's Assembly' (Majlis al-Ummah) is another important institution that forms part of the Caliphate's accountability architecture. It is a representative assembly whose members are elected directly by citizens and can be from any ethnicity, creed or gender. The assembly provides extensive consultation (shura) on issues of state and public policy but, importantly, it has the power to scrutinise practically all matters related to the state; it can oblige the Caliph in key areas such as in the removal of state officials, regional budgetary control and matters of public

interest through consultation; and can scrutinise every cannon issued by the Caliph and, in some cases, reject them, once again binding the Caliph.

The Caliphate, however, does not rely on institutions alone to provide inherent checks and balances but depends upon the politicisation of its citizenry as its fundamental layer. Holding the rulers to account is a duty - an obligation even - upon every Muslim, and citizens are encouraged to do so in a direct and open manner. Examples from the Caliphs that immediately followed the Prophet Muhammad - whose consensus (ijma) is a source of Islamic law - demonstrate that they proactively encouraged forthright accountability. This obligation is not restricted to the individual, but stipulates a requirement for the permanent existence of political parties tasked with 'enjoining the good and forbidding the wrong', a political activity designed to challenge error and incompetence. These civil bodies undertake activities without interference from the state and, as the Islamic political system has no concept of a 'ruling party', neither do they have any association with the state; their purpose is principally to highlight inadequacies in state conduct and in the condition of society. While various schools within Western political theory have long struggled with the question of justifying 'political obligation' - whether the utilitarians, social contract theorists or others - Islamic obligations such as 'enjoining the good and forbidding the wrong' take on a unique dimension for the Muslim citizen: they are considered good in their own right and an act of worship, not measured by their expediency or purely by the effect they yield.

From institutions, through political parties to individuals, the mechanisms for accountability in the Caliphate provide the backbone to what is a considerably rule-based society. The Caliph is not beyond the law nor protected by special exemption that provides him immunity from prosecution; if he commits a crime he will be punished, if he transgresses the terms of the bayah he will be eligible for removal. Unlike monarchies and authoritarian governments who place a monarch or premier beyond the constitution with the sole right to interpret or

“ The Caliphate was the only institution able to provide credible leadership on Islamic issues and which can hold a convincing Islamic debate that denounces weak or erroneous understandings that threaten both Western and Muslim populations ”

alter it, no individual in the Islamic state's apparatus, from clerk to Caliph, is above the law.

The Caliphate is Built on Values Consistent With the People of the Muslim World

Secondly, the Caliphate system is consistent with - not alien to - the values of the people in the Muslim world. While the Caliphate is a representative body and authority rests with the people who exercise it through electing a head of state, the law originates exclusively from the sources of Shariah. This provides it deep roots and a better chance at working in partnership with its populations because it engages them on a common point of reference and for common goals. But it also means the Caliphate acts as a guarantor for values considered most at threat since its demise by Muslim peoples. The secular, autocratic, even atheistic regimes that emerged in the Caliphate's wake significantly curtailed Islamic practice and engineered new readings of Islamic values and history. They often imposed views that broke with orthodoxy to demand loyalty to divisive and failed ideologies from Arabism to communism, or combinations of both. The import of foreign value systems too is often associated with the threat of eroding deeply held Islamic values. Values deemed 'Western', for example, are tarnished by perceptions, rightly or wrongly, of Western moral and sexual decadence. A political system that credibly protects and promotes Islamic values is key to securing public confidence and partnership.

The Caliphate will Address Poverty as a One of its Highest Priorities

Thirdly, the Caliphate will aggressively address the problem of poverty in the Muslim world that exists despite the Muslim world possessing colossal reserves of natural resources. With this natural wealth, it is clear that the

Muslim world could become economically independent and challenge pernicious economic policies it has had to suffer at the hands of inept leaderships and the developed world. In the Islamic economic system, ownership of natural resources belongs to the people and therefore revenues generated from their sale would be used to develop vital infrastructure and facilitate economic growth. This is derived from the words of the Prophet Muhammad: "The people are partners in three things: water, pastures and fire [energy]."

Today, foreign aid has stifled economic growth in many states through the imposition of conditions that include mass privatisation, as well as other liberal secular reform. The Islamic economic system has a defined framework and set of guidelines that govern economic policy, which are not subject to pernicious materialistic influences. The huge resource and wealth in the Muslim world is clearly better used if invested in education, health and infrastructure than to service interest payments on foreign debt. Unlike capitalist economics, which does not make a distinction between basic and luxurious needs when distributing wealth, the Islamic economy not only makes a distinction but also sets priorities in solving the needs of the people by ensuring all the basic needs of the people are met. The Prophet Muhammad said: "The son of Adam has no better right than that he would have a house wherein he may live and a piece of cloth whereby he may cover his nakedness and a piece of bread and some water."

If this were central to economic thinking, millions would not be suffering from malnutrition or starvation. The free market does not distinguish between the needs of the people and neither does it ensure that the basic needs of people are satisfied, rather it leaves these to the forces of the market. To date, the problem of world poverty has not been adequately resolved and is

“ There is a tendency for Western writers to equate and impose upon the Muslim world the political paradigms emanating from their Christian history ”

likely to be one of the major causes of conflict and instability in the twenty first century.

The Caliphate will Provide Credible Leadership for the Muslim World

Fourthly, the loss of the Caliphate brought with it an unprecedented loss of authority and leadership on Islamic issues. The resulting vacuum allowed individuals to become global figure-heads for merely speaking the rhetoric of anti-colonialism and standing-up to perceived aggressors. Conferences like those held in the Jordanian capital Amman in July 2005 which gathered scholars from around the Muslim world to denounce what they labelled extremist thought carry little weight or credibility, organised under the auspices of a Jordanian monarchy created on the ashes of the Caliphate and which to this day celebrates the Arab revolt, considered by most a treacherous collusion with British colonisers. The same is true for declarations made by the OIC whose conferences are characterised by useless gestures and by ostentatious hospitality that isolates them from the suffering of their own people. This crisis in leadership after the Caliphate dangerously allowed its functions to be dismembered and claimed by virtually anyone who was willing to take them on, from tax collection, to defending Muslim territory (including deciding when and how), to defining the relationship between Islam and other peoples.

The Caliphate was the only institution able to provide credible leadership on Islamic issues and which can hold a convincing Islamic debate that denounces weak or erroneous understandings that threaten both Western and Muslim populations. The post-Caliphate period generated deficits of legitimacy and of accountability that still exist today with little potential for resolution.

Part IV

The Caliphate is an Islamic System of Governance

Islam is the antithesis to secularism; it is a political phenomenon that draws its life from the spiritual and moral. George Bernard Shaw once, writing quite some time before the sharp polarisation of thinking post 9/11, made a challenging prediction about Islam:

“I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today.”

The world has changed drastically since these words were written. The communist bloc has collapsed; the West has assumed an unrivalled ascendancy and a new challenger to that ascendancy has been named: Islam. Now that Islam is in the spotlight Shaw's prediction for Islam to be 'acceptable' to Europe and the West has never looked more misplaced, when factions in the political arena do not even consider it an option for the Muslim world.

The political aspects of Islam that attracted some older writers, such as Shaw, are often abstracted from the discussion about Islam and placed in the category of mere 'militant' offshoots or anti-Western cultural interpretations of Islam. With politics conveniently excised from the modern Western definition, Islam might be viewed as an irrelevance to societal discussions, were it not for the surging tide of political expression voiced by Muslims throughout the world. This level of support in the Arab and Muslim world has not prevented others from continuing to argue that these political aspirations are in some way illegitimate or even just misplaced in the scheme of human development. Blair's speech to the Los Angeles World Affairs Council in 2006 boldly stated:

“It's about modernisation within Islam and out of it. It's about whether our value system can be shown to be sufficiently robust, true, principled and appealing that it beats theirs.”

The continual call for the need for Islam to modernise or undergo a reformation is an implicit accusation that its political values are part of an unreconstructed pre-enlightenment interpretation of a religion, resistant to a transition into modernity.

Older orientalist writing may sometimes have distorted Islam, but Islam was not recreated in the image of secularism. Whether praising or condemning Islam, orientalists made the political nature of Islam the theme of discussion. The political perception of Islam is clear, for example, in Shaw's writing: Islam 'is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age', and about Muhammad he said:

“I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness.”

Some idea of the Prophet Muhammad's statesmanship in addressing the problems of his own day can be gained from observing the terms of the treaty he made with the tribes who came under his political authority in the early days of the Islamic state that he established. One of the articles of this treaty states: “The Jews of the tribe of Auf, who are a party to this agreement and are the supporters of the Muslims, shall adhere to their religion and the Muslims to theirs. Excepting religious matters, the Muslims and Jews shall be regarded as belonging to a single party.”

Reconciling Religion with State

To admit the possibility of a state of conflict with a religion as a whole is problematic for the West in a way that conflict with another ideology, such as communism, never was. This is because secularism's claim to success is that it allows full religious expression in the realm of both individual and social activity without conceding any political authority to religion. The outcome of this in the West is that Catholics and Protestants, after religious wars had plagued Europe for centuries, generally came to accept this secular arrangement and live in peace with each other. The

collapse of the former communist block, which had crudely tried, and failed, to obliterate religion entirely, further added to the sense of moral ascendancy in the West on account of Western liberal secular democracy. The West therefore perceived their strength to lie in neither affirming nor denying religious faith: to do so would be an unpalatable contradiction. For this reason there is a motive to deny that a popular religion, with over a billion adherents, could pose a sustainable ideological and political challenge to Western political philosophy.

At this point it may be worthwhile making a distinction between Islam and the religion that secular Europe has had most experience with; Christianity. There is a tendency for Western writers to equate and impose upon the Muslim world the political paradigms emanating from their Christian history. The inadequacy of the comparison can be illustrated if we consider the religious texts that define the dynamic between the temporal and sacral for each. The first is the Biblical verse to "...render unto Caesar what is Caesars and unto God what is God's". The second is the Quranic injunction:

"Oh you who believe, obey Allah and obey the messenger and those in authority amongst yourselves".

At first sight both could appear passive and non-committal as regards politics. On closer inspection, while the former has come to be seen by a majority of Christians today as ample justification for accepting the secular creed of adhering to spiritual matters and leaving politics to the temporal authorities of the day, the latter is widely understood by Muslims as demonstrating the subordination of the temporal authorities to the divine authority of Allah and the Prophet Muhammad.

For Muslims the temporal authority is subsumed and dependent upon obedience to Allah. It works in two ways: first the Muslim is obliged to obey the divine authority, second the Muslim is obliged to obey the temporal authority, third the order of the obedience as well as the omission of the word 'obey' for the temporal authority means it owes its legitimacy to obedience to the divine

“ [Islam’s] political appeal ... goes far deeper than its antidote to the ills of Western neo-colonialism. It is a way of life that successfully harmonised between the spiritual and temporal spheres of human social activity ”

authority. The temporal authority is also 'from amongst you' meaning amongst those who believe and not any authority, such as that of the biblical Roman army of occupation, and this authority has a specific character in that it must implement the Islamic systems of life. Islam is a whole body of thoughts, ideas, rulings and more and its political element cannot be separated from it just as its moral element cannot be eliminated from it either. Just as Muslims are told "he is not of us who has no compassion for our little ones and does not honour our old ones" Muslims are also told to "Rule by what Allah revealed". The moral and spiritual basis of Islam forms an integral whole with its political viewpoint.

This understanding formed the basis of Muslim political life since the establishment of the ruling system by the Prophet Muhammad in the city-state of Medina in the year 622CE until the destruction of the state in 1924. While the racial or tribal identity of its leaders, and the titles attributed to them (Khalifah, Sultan or Amir) changed many times and was sometimes the subject of passionate disagreement, the political philosophy and the general structure of the state's apparatus was not a point of variance.

Spiritual Basis to Islamic Polity

Should the political nature of Islam arouse fear, and could Islam even be a source of hope? To answer such a question it is necessary to accept from the aspirations of Muslims, thirteen centuries of history and a wealth of religious texts, that Islam is political in nature. From this starting point Western thinkers can make their own studies and draw the conclusions that they believe to be valid.

Muslims, who do not share the same past as their Western counterparts are puzzled that it is the spiritual basis to Islamic polity, more than Islamic polity itself, which is the cause for secular concern. Islam's political philosophy and its detailed systems of ruling and economy are a major theme of writing today, but what of Islam's spiritual and moral bases? The following injunctions of the Prophet Muhammad are worthy of consideration:

"You should be humble so that no-one boasts over his neighbour nor anyone oppresses his neighbour"

"Allah is not merciful to he who is not merciful to people"

"Charity is due upon every limb of a human being on each day that the sun rises. To act justly between two people is charity. To help a man with his riding beast, or to load his provisions on it or lift them up for him is charity. A good word is charity. Every step going to prayer is charity. Removing from the road what causes harm is charity."

The sentiments expressed in these religious texts can be found in other religions, but what distinguished Islam from them is the existence of a detailed system of governance that preserved these values for the good of mixed communities comprising both Muslims and non-Muslims from many different races. Islam was not, as Daniel Pipes once declared, a mere "host" to "one of the world's great civilisations"; it was the basis of a civilisation, that was rigid enough to maintain its character over thirteen centuries and flexible enough to maintain its relevance, as G B Shaw said, to the "changing phase of existence" in "every age". Its political appeal to Muslims today goes far deeper than its antidote to the ills of Western neo-colonialism. It is a way of life that successfully harmonised between the spiritual and temporal spheres of human social activity where the West historically failed. Our pasts are indeed foreign to each other. In order to avoid perpetual suspicion and stereotyping it is essential that the people in the West better understand the fears and hopes of the Muslim world, and their historical and ideological basis.

Section 4

Mapping a Way Forward

In the preceding sections, this report has sought to address the failure by numerous commentators and politicians to understand Islam, attitudes and changes in the Muslim community and support for Islamic political ideals. These failures have underpinned talk of a way forward and have subsequently resulted in measures that have only widened the growing chasm between the Muslim world and the West. These measures have extended from anarchic and draconian security measures; changes to the way Islam is taught, promoting fringe groups who promote ideas that lack credibility and support, through to calls for a reformation of Islam itself.

It is important that Western commentators challenge how they continue to understand events in the Muslim community and wider Muslim world if they are to understand why numerous Western-sponsored measures have gained little traction or acted only to exacerbate the divide.

To conclude this report, we address some of these key campaigns and provide insight into their continued failures. Simultaneously, we outline why indigenous processes, institutions and values in the Muslim world are best placed to lift the Muslim world out of its intellectual, technological and political malaise. To this end, we argue in this section that:

- Attempts at reforming Islam itself, have been discredited and gained little

traction amongst Muslims. Islamic Orthodoxy, not modernism, has won the opinion in the Muslim world

- Western Colonialism not Islam has been at the heart of the political instability and crises of the Muslim world. The onset of colonisation also disrupted indigenous efforts at modernising the Muslim world
- Islam played a historic role in preventing political excess, tyranny and totalitarianism in the Muslim world and its absence has allowed these to go unchecked
- The Muslim world should be allowed to determine its own political future, not the West

Part I

The Failure of Calls for a 'Moderate', Reformed Islam

Refusing to Dialogue with Orthodox Islam

If many media commentators and politicians are to be believed then we are engaged in a struggle to the death with Islamic fascists and nihilists who hate Western societies for their freedoms and who will not be satisfied until they have destroyed Western civilisation. Others claim that Islamic radicals want to drag Muslim societies back to medieval times by returning them to the imagined purity of a seventh century Islamic

society. We are told that there is nothing to discuss with these 'extremists'.

Traditional Muslim thinkers, scholars and leaders have found the Western press and politicians eager to label them homophobic, anti-Semitic, misogynists and supporters of terrorists and suicide bombers. Whether or not this is a deliberate policy is a debatable point, but the net result is to intimidate and frighten traditional Muslims from speaking publicly.

Some Western intellectuals argue that there is no place for Muslim orthodoxy and traditions in today's world, because it intellectually underpins the behaviour of Muslims fighting in Iraq, Palestine and Chechnya; it keeps Muslims from accepting their place in modernity. Commentators such as Melanie Phillips and Michael Gove frequently assert that non-violent Islamists should be viewed as individuals who are engaged in metaphysical struggle with the West because they hate the values and culture of Western civilisation.

The group of people deemed acceptable to engage with has become smaller and smaller excluding even those organisations previously promoted by the government. Media criticism has been heaped on Foreign Office officials who attempted to engage in political dialogue with Islamists. Martin Bright's Policy Exchange pamphlet, 'When Progressives Treat with Reactionaries', is as Bright acknowledged "dedicated to a Foreign Office whistleblower whose courageous



What those who call for the reformation of Islam for the whole Muslim world are attempting is without precedent.



actions have allowed me to expose Whitehall's love affair with Islamism". The British Government is now openly telling Muslim organisations in the UK that if they don't become 'progressive and spiritual', address the 'false grievances' of the Muslim community and take a 'pro-active' role in the fight against extremism they will no longer receive government funding. This has left only a handful of marginal groups that commentators and politicians have been willing to engage with, but who carry little credibility or support in the Muslim community and reflect opinions largely rejected by the Muslim community.

Calls for a Reformation of Islam have not Convinced Muslims

Such premises and assumptions lead many Western thinkers to conclude that a reformation of Islam itself is required, so that Muslims will eventually leave their outdated traditions and values. On the eve of the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, it was reported that the then US Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Wolfowitz said that "We need an Islamic reformation", and later in the same statement he mentioned that he thought "there is real hope for one". Daniel Pipes of the Philadelphia based Middle East Forum who President Bush appointed him to the board of directors of the US Institute of Peace in June 2003, stated in July 2004 that the "ultimate goal" of the War on Terrorism had to be Islam's modernisation, or as he put it, "religion-building".

There have been changes amongst some Muslims in their interpretation of Islam over the last fourteen centuries. For example, when Muslims came into contact with people with differing traditions and philosophies such as the Greeks, Persians or Indians, some Muslims tried to integrate the best of the local philosophies and traditions into their understanding of Islam. But throughout the centuries, the majority of Muslims have maintained an attachment to a common set of reference points - the Qur'an and the traditions of

the Prophet Muhammad - and were in close agreement on most doctrinal and legal issues. The five most influential schools of Islamic thought (madhahib) - Hanafi, Shafi, Hanbali, Maliki and Jafari - named after their founding scholars, were established on this approach and defined much of the body of Islamic interpretations and opinion over many centuries, and still do so today. Although some have termed this attachment 'traditionalism', ultimately it has been this approach that has won the argument in the sphere of Muslim public opinion.

Drawing False Battle Lines

What those who call for the reformation of Islam for the whole Muslim world are attempting is without precedent. One of the most influential contemporary advocates of the radical idea to reform Islam has been the Middle East expert Bernard Lewis. His fifty years of study and scholarship led him to the conclusion that the West-which used to be known as Christendom-is now in the last stages of a centuries-old struggle for dominance and prestige with Islamic civilisation. It was Bernard Lewis who coined the phrase the 'Clash of Civilisations' in a September 1990 Atlantic Monthly article on 'The Roots of Muslim Rage' in which he painted Islam as engaged in a fourteen century long war against Christianity. This was three years before Samuel Huntington published his famous article on the 'Clash of Civilizations' in Foreign Affairs. Ian Buruma summarised Lewis' argument in an article in the New Yorker as the following:

"...The clash between Christendom and Islam has been going on since the Muslims conquered Syria, North Africa, and Spain. Muslims, at the height of their glory, in tenth-century Cairo, thirteenth-century Tehran, or sixteenth-century Istanbul, thought of themselves as far superior to the Christians and Jews among them, who were tolerated as second-class citizens. Since then, however, as Lewis puts it, 'the Muslim has suffered successive

stages of defeat'. Turks reached Vienna in 1683 but got no farther. When the rampant West expanded its empires, European ideas penetrated, dominated, and dislocated the Muslim world. It was deeply humiliating for Muslims to be humbled by inferior Christians and Jews ("Crusaders" and "Zionists" in modern parlance). Traditional ways, which had produced so much glory in the past, were eroded and often destroyed by ill-considered experiments with Marxism, fascism, and national socialism. Out of political and cultural failure came this Muslim rage, directed against the West, the historical source of humiliation, and out of this rage came the violent attempts to establish a new caliphate through religious revolution."

In relation to the attacks of September 11th 2001 on the US, Lewis said: "I have no doubt that September 11th was the opening salvo of the final battle..." It is clear that Lewis has been influential in shaping how George W Bush's administration views the Muslim world. He is close to Vice President Dick Cheney; has been invited to speak at the White House; his best-selling book entitled 'What Went Wrong?', which examines the decline of Muslim civilisation, has been regarded in that circle as a kind of handbook in the war against Islamic terrorism.

Turkey - A False Model

The example of a moderate Muslim country for Lewis and his neo-con followers is Turkey. In the 1920s Mustafa Kemal demolished the Ottoman Caliphate and replaced it with his vision of a modern secular Western society. Religious schools were closed, the wearing of the Hijab was forbidden in government offices and universities, many religious scholars were imprisoned or killed and the Arabic language was replaced with Turkish. Mustafa Kemal was not a believer in "government of the people, by the people, for the people..." but was more influenced by fascism of the 1920s and followed a style of ruling characterised in his own

“ It follows that Turkey is not really a moderate Muslim society in the way that Lewis, Bush and Wolfowitz understand the term 'moderate'. Rather it represents the failure to replace by force a culture that was home grown and present for several centuries with a foreign one

This state of affairs cannot be put at the door of Islamic orthodoxy, since Islamic institutions and traditions have been marginalised for most of the last century in the Muslim world. Rather the last century has been one in which most Muslim countries have first been colonised and then inherited political, economic and social institutions that the colonialists left them ”

words as "government for the people - despite the people". From his position of authority, he dictated his views on the society since he was convinced he knew what was best for it.

More than eighty years on it is still questionable whether Kemal has been successful in his forcible secularisation of a Muslim society. Undoubtedly, in Turkey there are groups of people who are European in their behaviour, attitudes and values and do not see themselves as Muslim other than in their names; but they represent a small minority of that society. In the same cities where there are very secular Muslims, there are also many more traditional and conservative Islamic communities, and in much of rural Turkey, the values and attitudes of people have not changed much in the last two hundred years. Today, the political party that enjoys the clear support of the majority of the Turkish population is the Islamic Justice and Development Party (AK). Its leader, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan was once banned from public service after reciting a poem that said "the mosques are our barracks, the domes our helmets, the minarets our bayonets, and the faithful our soldiers".

As we see today it is the institution of the Turkish army that prevents the government from bringing Islam back into public life. When the AK party proposed Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul to be the new President the army responded with concern about the election and stated: "It should not be forgotten that the Turkish armed forces are a side in this debate and are a staunch defender of secularism."

It follows that Turkey is not really a moderate Muslim society in the way that Lewis, Bush and Wolfowitz understand the term 'moderate'. Rather it represents the failure to replace by force a culture that was home grown and present for several centuries with a foreign one. As a military supported ruler, Mustafa Kemal faced no restrictions when he went about removing from Turkey its Islamic heritage. Many Islamic scholars were killed or imprisoned, religious schools were closed down and people were forced to behave in accordance with Western values. Yet even after eighty years of Kemalism, Islamic traditional-

ism is increasing in strength and gaining influence in Turkish society. The force that prevents Islam from coming to power is the secular army that feels duty bound to defend Kemalism.

The Failure of Calls for Reforming Islam

Despite fifty years of scholarship Lewis failed to predict how Muslims would respond to an American occupation of Muslim land. In 2001 he said that public opinion in Iraq and Iran was so pro-American that both peoples would rejoice if the US army liberated them. A year later, he repeated the message that "if we succeed in overthrowing the regimes of what President Bush has rightly called the 'Axis of Evil' the scenes of rejoicing in their cities would even exceed those that followed the liberation of Kabul." Perhaps there was a sense of relief felt by many Iraqis when the Saddam Hussein government was removed but a sense of occupation has driven many ordinary Iraqis to take up arms against the US army. Although the reality of the Iraq war has largely discredited the ideas of Bernard Lewis and his neo-conservative followers, Western intellectuals persist in arguing for ways to moderate or reform Islam. A recently published RAND report, 'Building Moderate Muslim Networks', makes the case for the West to support networks of 'moderate' Muslims in order to counter, what they argue are, the radical and dogmatic interpretations of Islam that are gaining ground in the Muslim world.

Part II

Understanding the Causes of the Political Crises in the Muslim World

Today, many if not most of the Muslim countries are dysfunctional. Politically the governments in many Muslim states are dictatorships based on monarchs, military rulers or life-long Presidents. The 2002 Arab Human Development Report (AHDR), written by a group of Arab scholars from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), described the region as not developing as fast or as fully as other comparable regions. The most striking weakness identified in the report and one which

the authors suggest lies behind all other problems is a lack of democracy, which leads to poor governance. They described that the attitude of Arab governments towards civil societies ranged from opposition to manipulation to "freedom under surveillance". The 2003 AHDR discussed the challenges of developing a Knowledge Based Society in the Arab world and concluded that the major obstacles were political. The writers of the 2004 AHDR examined the constraints on freedom that prevent good governance in the Arab world, and the last published AHDR report in 2005 examined the challenges of empowering Arab women in societies where the institutions of civil society don't really exist.

Colonisation, not Islam, is at the Root of the Muslim World's Political Problems

This state of affairs cannot be put at the door of Islamic orthodoxy, since Islamic institutions and traditions have been marginalised for most of the last century in the Muslim world. Rather the last century has been one in which most Muslim countries have first been colonised and then inherited political, economic and social institutions that the colonialists left them. Even the concept of many independent countries in the Muslim world was new. During the early part of the twentieth century the French and the British governments agreed between themselves as to who would get which part of the dominions of the Ottoman state. The task of negotiations was delegated to Georges Picot of France and Sir Mark Sykes of Britain and the resulting Sykes-Picot agreement led to the division of the Ottoman state such that France's mandate corresponded to the future states of Syria and Lebanon and Britain's mandate corresponded to Iraq and Transjordan. France ended up with direct control of Mediterranean coastal regions whilst Britain ended up controlling the provinces of Basra and Baghdad and maintained an exclusive relationship with the Arab Gulf Sheikhdoms.

Where independence brought multi-party democracies, they were soon to disappear. Most Muslim countries were characterised by one coup after another as different political or military factions

often supported by outside powers assumed power. For example, there was the 1947 coup led by Colonel Husni Al-Za'im in Syria, the 1952 coup led by General Neguib in Egypt, the 1953 CIA sponsored coup that ended the rule of Prime Minister Mossadeq, the 1958 coup led by General Ayub Khan in Pakistan, and the 1960 coup led by General Cemal Gürsel in Turkey.

Institutions in the Muslim World are Imported, not Home-Grown

In comparison the Western countries have largely not suffered from this type of political instability during the last hundred years. What differentiates Western political institutions from those in the Muslim world is that they developed organically over a number of centuries, adapted themselves to different realities over time and represent an effective social consensus on how these societies go about solving their problems. For example, the operation of and the relationship between the British Houses of Parliament, the Judiciary, the Monarchy, the Army and the Civil Service has been defined over a number of years, as the British state found itself in different situations and with different problems. Even today, it is still adapting to new realities. For example the role of the House of Lords is being redefined in light of the fact that aristocracy is no longer as powerful as big business interests and it is difficult to justify why hereditary peers should participate in the legislative process. There is a social consensus over the role of these institutions. It is not possible that a small clique of people - generals or otherwise - could undertake a coup in Britain and start making the laws themselves; the rest of society would just not accept it.

However in the Muslim world, the institutions that exist are not home grown or organically developed, they do not reflect the historical experience of people and do not connect with their traditions or values. What this means is that there is very little social consensus on these systems, meaning they have very limited legitimacy and there is little or no reaction from people when a general undertakes a coup. In addition, Muslim countries tend to have very influential Westernised elites, who have usually studied abroad and are often

“ ... in the Muslim world, the institutions that exist are not home grown or organically developed, they do not reflect the historical experience of people and do not connect with their traditions or values

Looking back...it is very likely that if Muslims had been left to their own devices, a social consensus would have been developed in the Muslim world as to what form this change should have taken ... However occupation by foreign powers and colonisation led to an interruption of this natural process

“The collectivity of religious scholars acted at least theoretically as a countervailing force against tyranny. You had the implicit notion that if Islam is pushed out of the public sphere, tyranny will increase, and if that happens, people will look to Islam to redress the tyranny”

(Richard Bulliet, Professor of Middle Eastern Studies, Columbia University)

“ With the old well established moral compass no longer available and with social and political institutions that were French or British in origin and lacking in social consensus, it is not surprising that the Muslim world is blighted by instability, coups, tyranny and totalitarianism ”

wealthy. They are usually ignorant of their own history and traditions and their wealth allows them to live very detached lives from the rest of society. Because of their situation and attitudes they are unable to comprehend why the rest of society behaves in the way it does and they come to look down upon the masses.

Colonial Interference Stalled Indigenous Attempts at Modernising the Muslim World

Prior to the colonisation of the Muslim world, many Muslim politicians and thinkers had seen modernisation and industrialisation take place in Western nations and had come to the conclusion that the Muslim world was backward and needed to be reformed. This was a natural situation as there was much interaction and trade between the Muslim and non-Muslim world. The debate had started and there were a variety of opinions as to how Muslims should 'modernise' themselves. Iranian intellectuals Mulkum Khan (1833-1908) and Agha Khan Kermani (1853-96) urged Iranians to acquire a Western education and replace the Shariah (the religious legal code) with a modern secular legal code. Some of the Ottoman sultans pursued new models of industrialisation and modernisation of their own accord. For example, Sultan Mahmud II inaugurated the Tanzimat (Regulation) in 1826 which abolished the Janissaries (the highly dedicated elite corps of troops organised in the fourteenth century), modernised the army and introduced new technology. In 1839 Sultan Abdul Hamid issued the Gulhane decree which made his rule dependent upon a contractual relationship with his subjects and looked forward to major reform of the Caliphate's institutions. Some Muslim scholars took an approach of re-interpreting Islam so that it was more conformant to Western models; they wanted to maintain some Islamic values and principles whilst justifying

the adoption of some Western concepts which they thought would bring Muslim progress. There were many such modernising scholars, but two of the most famous ones were Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-97) and Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905). At this time the need for change was evident to many thinkers, but the nature of this change and the path to achieving it was poorly defined.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the desire for change was very strong in the Muslim world. It was self evident to most of the political elites, intellectuals, Muslim scholars and educated people that something needed to be done; the status quo was unacceptable. They had concluded that in many respects Muslims were far behind the West and needed to catch up. Looking back to this time it is very likely that if Muslims had been left to their own devices, a social consensus would have been developed in the Muslim world as to what form this change should have taken. The social consensus may have taken several decades to occur but it would have been home grown, would have happened organically and would have adapted the Muslim world to new realities. However occupation by foreign powers and colonisation led to an interruption of this natural process. When the foreign powers finally departed what they left behind was a medley of countries; many of which may have looked good on a map when the French and British planners created them, but in reality they were completely artificial and did not represent peoples that had been bound together by a common and shared history and set of values. In addition, the institutions that Muslims inherited were based on French or British models. By the time the colonial powers left there was no public role for Islam to play in society, Islamic law and education had been devalued and Islamic scholars had been marginalised. With the old well established moral

compass no longer available and with social and political institutions that were French or British in origin and lacking in social consensus, it is not surprising that the Muslim world is blighted by instability, coups, tyranny and totalitarianism.

A Lack of Islam in the Politics of the Muslim World has Created Totalitarianism and Tyranny

The institutional role that Islamic culture has historically played in Muslim societies has been recognised by some Western experts. Richard Bulliet, the Columbia Professor of Middle Eastern Studies, argued in his book - 'The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization' - that comparative stability prevailed in the Islamic world not because of the Ottomans' success but because Islam was playing its traditional role of constraining tyranny.

"The collectivity of religious scholars acted at least theoretically as a countervailing force against tyranny. You had the implicit notion that if Islam is pushed out of the public sphere, tyranny will increase, and if that happens, people will look to Islam to redress the tyranny."

This began to play out during the period. Instead of modernisation, what ensued was what Muslim clerics had long feared: tyranny. What the Arab world should have seen was "not an increase in modernisation so much as an increase in tyranny. By the 1960s, that prophecy was fulfilled. You had dictatorships in most of the Islamic world." Egypt's Gamel Nasser, Syria's Hafez Assad and others came in the guise of Arab nationalists, but they were nothing more than tyrants.

Some Muslims put the blame for the tyranny and the totalitarianism practiced in the Muslim world and the lack of a role for Islam in Muslim societies on Western interference. There is little doubt that historically Western nations have a share in the responsibility for bringing the Muslim world to where it is; they occupied it, created artificial entities and left the conditions for tyranny to arise. However, arguably the Muslim rulers who practice tyranny upon the Muslim masses and the Muslim elites who support them also

have a share of the blame. However, only a few from amongst this viewpoint place all the blame on the West for the current situation of the Muslims and then seek to attack the West so that Westerners also taste the pain of what Muslims have been forced to suffer. Their aim, we are told, is to push for a civilisational war between the Western and Muslim worlds, one in which all Muslims will be forced to join in from the sidelines. The irony is that the Lewis-Bush doctrine in Iraq has done far more to realise such an aim than any preachers from within the fold of Islam could have achieved.

Part III

Allowing the Muslim World to Shape its Own Political Future

The Implications of Silencing the Voice of Islam

It is well known within Islamic scholarship that the deliberate targeting of civilians is prohibited irrespective of the victims religion of nationality. However in the tyrannies of the Muslim world, it is extremely difficult to start a debate upon the correct response to Western imperialism using Islamic texts and principles. Islamic scholars in the Muslim world are unable to debate this or other social issues openly because the current regimes in the Muslim world do not tolerate such debate and discussion. For this reason the public scholars, appointed by the governments to preach a message of the governments choosing, lack credibility in their pronouncements. These governments view any genuine Islamic debate as a threat and they fear that once started it will be directed towards them, exposing their own lack of legitimacy and their ongoing tyranny. Whilst some Muslim scholars are co-opted by the regime, given government funded positions where they are only able to state the official government position, many others remain locked up in prisons because in the past they have dared to criticise the actions and policies of Muslim governments. Other Islamic scholars practice self censorship of the subjects they will discuss because they are afraid of the consequences of being seen to be critical of the government.

Even though orthodox Islam has not played a public role in most Muslim societies for the last century and Islamic scholars and teachings were marginalised, in many Muslim societies a revival in Islamic practice and teachings is taking place. For more and more Muslims, Islam is becoming a major factor in shaping their attitudes, behaviour and perspective. Many ideas such as Arab nationalism, secularism and socialism have been discredited in the Muslim world by regimes that claimed to be socialist, secular, or pan-Arabist but brought totalitarianism and tyranny and little material progress. Today however, the only public choices that are being presented to Muslims are chosen by governments that are discredited and there is a distinct lack of independent voices - Islamic or otherwise - for people to listen to. Those that exist operate under persecution. Given this lack of open political debate and the sensation of Western armies occupying Muslim lands, with the blessing of many Muslim governments, it is unsurprising that many Muslims feel deeply alienated from their own governments.

Muslims Should be Allowed to Determine Their Own Political Destiny

There is a way of tackling chronic instability in the Muslim world caused mainly by oppressive pro-Western dictators. Outside attempts to dictate a secular Islam will fail and occupation of Muslim lands by foreign armies is counterproductive and will simply generate more recruits for countering, by any means, the Western onslaught. Therefore, it is required that Western politicians and intellectuals to accept that Islam should be allowed to play its natural role in Muslim societies. They should do this even if they disagree with some of orthodox Islam's positions. There are too many Muslims in the world for their beliefs and religion to be sidelined against their wishes. Globalisation means that we will be affected by what happens in other parts of the world. Muslims need to be allowed to complete the transformation of their societies without Western interference - a process that started in the nineteenth century - so that they too can find their place in the world of the twenty-first century with a system that fairly represent their own beliefs and

“ Western politicians and thinkers must find a constructive way of dealing with Muslims and Islam based around the notion that Muslims must be left to define their own political destiny independently

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values. If liberal and secular thinkers find they have strong disagreements with Muslims then they should try to engage in thought provoking debate with Muslims on the rights and wrongs of their beliefs and system. The approach of the neo-conservatives and intellectuals like Bernard Lewis or the RAND Corporation who want to dictate the reformation of Islam, import American defined democracy upon the Muslim world and occupy large parts of it, will bring about a conflict that will last for many generations. To avoid this, Western politicians and thinkers must find a constructive way of dealing with Muslims and Islam based around the notion that Muslims must be left to define their own political destiny independently.

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Notes

Explaining the aims in the 'War on Terror'

Challenging misconceptions about Radicalisation,
Extremism and Political Violence

Explaining Islam's Political Tenets

Mapping a Way Forward