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RETHINKING WORLD SECURITY PARAMETERS UNDER THE INCESSANT CHALLENGES OF TERRORISM

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Abstract

Security has on a continuous basis posed multiple challenges to so many countries around the world over the past few years. The attempt to maintain world order has been a prerequisite for quite many countries, headed by the USA, especially as challenges of terrorism accrue day by day. Therefore, the present paper is set on a venture to question whether such attempts are to be met and whether there might rise a world power that can turn over all conventional understandings of world security paradigms.

Key words: terrorism; globalization; world security; democracy

INTRODUCTION

At the dawn of the new millennium, the era of the supposed global village, disparities are more intensified than ever before. Large segments of humanity live in conditions of dire poverty and forced displacement. In fact, we live in a world of obscene inequalities, profoundly defined by two major camps: the haves and have-nots. Besides, with the advent of global information technologies, or say, globalization, different challenges have been posed to the countries of the globe. Among these challenges, security has always featured the most significant need to be looked at and fostered among nations. People have lost a sense of security, for they have had to, willy-nilly, get involved in a globalized world that advances free mobility of people, ideas, goods, services and information among many others. In this sense, globalization has also facilitated the movement of transnational agents or terrorists across borders. Indeed, such an easy mobility of everything across borders that have become soft and porous has resulted in a number of social disruptions and other pathological forms of violence fuelled by terrorist attacks everywhere insofar as people are no longer safe but subject, every now and then, to imminent and unanticipated attacks. In effect, the September 11th terrorist attacks put on display different contradictions and ambiguities manifested in globalized consumerism, and globalized terror. It is, therefore, worth noting that a great deal of literature has been produced with regard to the pros and cons of globalization. In this sense, while globalization has been attempting to bring people together into an interactive global scene, which has been compressed to become a "global village," it has also increased the rift between the haves and have-nots, thereby prompting people into despising and rejecting it.

The intensification of inequalities among people, realized by means of globalization, is one of the underlying principles that pushes terrorists into waging bloody wars, either with a purpose of protecting the weak, or in the name of stopping the corrupting effects of Western civilization on the whole world. Ironically enough, just as globalization facilitates the leaking of terrorists and arms across borders, terrorism itself makes benefit of technology and other globalized means so as to realize its goals, thereby putting the brakes on globalization itself. In an article entitled, "An Insurgent Empire: Has America Changed after the 11th September?," Rida Hilal contends that globalization is a contradictory as well as ambiguous phenomenon in the sense that it facilitates the free mobility of terrorists, arms, information and goods among many other things, but, at the same time, this very free mobility puts the brakes on globalization. In other words, exerting incessant efforts to thwart terrorists' attempts to move their sources and capital across borders is leading to a great scrutiny of trans-border dealings, thereby slowing down the flow of wealth. The fear that terrorists move freely from a country to another is also setting up new security measures about border patrol, and thus restricting the number of migrant laborers in different places. Such a complex and ironic relationship is depicted as the "globalization of terrorism and the terrorism of globalization." (Hilal 2002, 7-8). Therefore, "it is ironic that global terrorism, the phenomenon of terrorists operating in and against several nations simultaneously, was facilitated by globalization and now it has become the biggest challenge to globalization." (Khan 2004). Faced with such security challenges, the United States of America, whose corporate businesses and life styles are considered to be one of the leading forces of globalization (Hilal 2002, 8), is pummeled towards seeking a global security and deterring the terrorist threats, which do without achieving global peace and serenity. In this regard, "speaking for the United States, I can say this," Richard M. Nixon stated that, "we seek the right to live in peace, not only for ourselves but for all the peoples of this earth." (Nixon 2002). America, indeed, is in a unique position as the world's sole superpower, which makes it a necessity for the Americans to come into the rescue of nations of the world whenever in need. Driven by such an imperative, the US has expressed its willingness to fight terrorism anywhere, thereby making people all over the globe feel secured. In this sense, a report by the National War College illustrates the perception which some American students have about their country, especially that of the "modern" white man whose burden is to protect and save the globe. Part of the report states that:

> Terrorism is the societal evil of our time, and the global war on terrorism is our [American's] great challenge. This evil must be abolished as slavery and piracy were in the 19th century and Nazism and Apartheid in the 20th century. The strategy of abolishment seeks to create a global environment hostile to all terrorist groups, whether they operate globally, regionally, or within the boundaries of a single state. As a grand strategy, it would provide overarching guidance to orchestrate all instruments of national power while coordinating the collective efforts of the international community. The proposed strategy of abolishment is similar in scope to the strategy of containment of communism because the threat of terrorism, when coupled with weapons of mass destruction, poses no less a threat to the safety and security of the free world (Nixon 2002).

As a major in the American proposed strategy of abolishment, containing terrorism is no easy task unless coordinated by collective efforts of the international community.

That is to say, establishing a global environment hostile to terrorists and their associates should be the task of every nation in the world including the Islamic nations. This has been a call expressed by president Barrack Obama in his speech to the Islamic world in Cairo. Conducting an American partnership with Muslims has been deemed by the president to be an efficacious plan to defeat terrorism globally (Obama 2009). Such a partnership, in fact, presupposes that Muslims forget about the different atrocities committed by America, for instance, in Iraq in its mission to restore the rule of law and overthrow the totalitarian regime of Sadam Hussein. If one can go on enumerating the terrorist crimes committed by the US, the list will not end. It is worth noting, in this regard, that the American terrorist crimes against some peoples –, such as the case of Guantanamo Bay – have always been disregarded, and they have rather acquired a propagandist usage, which fits squarely with defining terrorism as an abominable act conducted, to use Chomsky's phrase, "against us" (Chomsky 2002, 81). It is when the Americans and their allies are threatened that terrorism becomes an urgent matter to be looked at and put an end to; whereas when America encroaches on states' rights and kills civilians in its unlawful use of force, the term terrorism acquires new meanings, among which self-defense and humanitarianism, as frequently encountered (Chomsky 2001, 23). Therefore, in what follows, the term terrorism is going to be put under analysis with the aim of uncovering the different discourses that lie behind the usage of the term.

Terrorism: An Anathema to Civilized Societies

The Bush administration's polarizing policy of "you are with us or against us" (Bush 2001), it is believed by many political analysts, has put on display an American mental state that advocates a division between, on the one hand, the civilized nations that are against terrorism, and on the other hand, the "failed states" (Chomsky 2006, 1-2) that are suffering from social mayhem, thereby providing suitable conditions for terrorism to be mushroomed and strengthened. In this sense, it is the duty of the civilized nations, led by the US, to uproot the danger of terrorism and its growing swamps globally. Furthermore, it is highly required that:

> The United States encourage all civilized societies to pool diplomatic, informational, military, and economic capabilities to defeat terrorist organizations wherever they exist, deter future acts of terrorism, and ultimately diminish the underlying causes of terrorism. This strategy calls upon states, regional and international organizations, private and public entities, and individuals to collaborate in the war against terrorism. From the largest superpower to the lone citizen, each has a role to play in combating terrorism, and each has a responsibility to share the burden (Nixon 2002).

In fact, fighting terrorism should be everyone's duty: developed or underdeveloped countries. Instead of polarizing the globe into civilized nations and uncivilized ones, thereby falling into the trap of *othering* and xenophobia, it can be more significant to coordinate efforts of nations and individuals globally, including even the third world countries or failed states, so as to trap terrorism wherever it exists. It is undeniably a

fact that terrorism is an abominable act seeking to destroy the flora and fauna of nations. It does not differentiate between civilians and militants; the young or old; the woman or child. Everyone is a potential target to terrorists in their massive scale operations. This can be one of the reasons that can prove the despicable characteristics of terrorism, an anathema to every nation not just the civilized ones. In so doing, the war against terrorism can take an influential path, especially when it is backed up by the whole international community that shares and despises the same enemy. It is worth noting that the war on terrorism was not first declared after the 11th September attacks. Rather, the declaration of war on terrorism was older than that. Thirty years ago, the Reagan administration came into office proclaiming that the war on terrorism would be at the core of the US foreign policy (Chomsky 2002, 70). In this sense, look at what people, who re-declared war on terrorism after the 11th September terrorist attacks, say terrorism is. In fact, in his *Media Control*, Noam Chomsky discusses the problem of defining the term terrorism at length. He explained that the definition of terrorism is a vexing and complex issue with which big minds have been wrestling. An official definition found in the US code and Army manuals briefly reads as "the calculated use of violence or the threat of violence to attain goals that are political, religious or ideological in nature […] through intimidation, coercion or instilling fear." (Chomsky 2002, 79). However, the official definition of terrorism is untenable chiefly for two main reasons. First, the official definition of terrorism is a "close paraphrase of official government policy, it's called low-intensity conflict or counter terror." (Chomsky 2002, 80). In other words, an analysis of some of the US wars demonstrates, indeed, the extent to which these wars relied on violence or threat of violence against civilians or militants (Chomsky 2001, 70) to attain different goals that are political or ideological in nature. The other reason can be summed up in the inability of the official definition of terrorism to identify the perpetrators, thereby giving the wrong answers as "to who the terrorists are." (Chomsky 2002, 76). That is to say, considering the official definition of terrorism to be a close paraphrase to a low-intensity conflict or counter terror may generate confusion, in terms of whether or not the terrorists are those engaged in resistance wars; those countering an attack or those waging wars simply to intimidate and instill fear. Fortunately, a self-serving propagandist definition of terrorism has become the norm in the US "re-declaration" of war on terror. "The solution is to define terrorism as the terrorism that they carry out against US" (Chomsky 2002). With this new form of defining terrorism, "we can then draw the standard conclusions that we and our allies are the main victims of terrorism." (Chomsky 2002, 81). By definition, terrorism which targets the US and its allies is the one that should be paid attention to and globally fought. By contrast, the terrorist atrocities, for which the US is responsible in its massive scale terrorist operations on civilians and militants alike, are always excused or overlooked. Still, it is a fact that "the US is the only country that was condemned for international terrorism by the World Court and that rejected a Security Council resolution calling on states to observe international law." (Chomsky 2001, 44). Another issue that comes to the fore due to propagandistic definitions of terrorism relates to identifying the perpetrators or terrorists in the sense that some Europeans or Americans, tend to confuse Muslims with Islamists and take them as one entity that should be held responsible for terrorism. To that effect, the subsequent section shall outline some differences between Islam and Islamism or Muslims and radical Islamists with the aim of clearing up the confusion that some Americans, intentionally or

unintentionally, tend to have with regard to who the terrorists are and what the aims they try to achieve are.

Characterizing Islam and Islamism

It goes without saying that a great deal of literature has been produced with regard to the questions of Islam versus Islamism. Varied are indeed the characteristics and orientations that distinguish between the two. As well, different are the religious and ideological points of reference of both Islam and Islamism, which totally make them confront rather than complement or inspire each other. It is because many people tend to confuse Islam with Islamism, especially when the question of terrorism is brought into play, that misunderstanding, hatred and animosity, among many other things, are generated among people globally. By definition, Islam has become perceived as the repository of terror. As such, many Westerners have become hostile towards Muslims simply because they simply failed to understand that "most Muslims are not fundamentalists, and most fundamentalists are not terrorists." (Lewis 2003, 108). Observably, after the 11th September attacks, many Muslims have confronted hostile physical as well as verbal attacks from some of the fundamentalist Americans, for Muslims are propagated by media to be fundamentalists by nature (Prajas.d.). Ironically enough, a poll of public mood to the average Americans was conducted with regard to the responsible for the 11th September attacks: was he Yussef Islam, Osama Bin laden or Barrack Obama? (Box s.d.).

For some, the answer was Yussef Islam, an American singer formerly called Cat Stevens before he converted to Islam, because his second name is for them a stigma and a connotation to all what is evil and terroristic in nature. Some others have opted for Barrack Obama as the responsible for terrorism. However cynical it may seem, these statements have made strikingly and flagrantly obvious how ignorant most of the American public is vis-à-vis even issues related to their national security, and the extent to which such a public can be easily bamboozled into ready packaged, propagandistic images of the others by the Media: images they easily consume without questioning the reliability or credibility of the sources.

Building upon what has been said, this section shall be concerned with drawing a distinction between both Islam and the insurgent Islamism. Understandably, Muslims complain when some Westerners are being hostile to them and when their reputation as well as that of their religion is being defamed. In its nature, Islam advocates tolerance and peace. It is a religion that denounces violence and the killing of human beings without having the lawful right to do so, which is mostly issued by Islamic courts. Intimidating people by the use of force is stigmatized by Islam simply because peace ranks first among the priorities and obligations of such a religion. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the best example of the people who advocate peace globally. His teachings have concentrated on seeking peace while condemning violence and terrorism. This is further explained by Juhaya S. Praja contending that:

> Islam and Islamic law have consistently condemned terrorism (the killing of non-combatants). Like the members of all religious faiths, Muslims have had to deal with religious extremism and terrorism from their earliest days. The responses of the mainstream majority to groups like the Kharijites and

> the Assassins and more contemporary groups like Islamic Jihad in Egypt or al-Qaeda have been to condemn, combat, and marginalize them (Prajas.d.).

It is true that many a Muslim was a target of the terrorist activities in places like Morocco, Egypt or Iraq. Muslims have openly denounced the killing of civilians, be they Christians, Muslims or Jews (Zakaria 2009, XXVII). From its earliest days, Islam had to handle and put an end to religious fanaticism, social and religious insurgency and civil wars carried out by extremist militant groups, such as the Kharijites, whose fundamentalist beliefs dictated to them to act in violent ways. We should also bring into notice the fact that:

> The Kharijites were a pious but puritanical and militant extremist group that broke with the Caliph Ali and later assassinated him. The Assassins lived apart in secret communities from which they were guided by a series of Grand Masters, who ruled from the mountain fortress of Alamut in northern Persia. The Assassins' jihad against the Seljuk Dynasty terrorized the princes, generals, and ulama (scholars), whom they murdered in the name of the Hidden Imam. They struck such terror in the hearts of their Muslim and Crusader enemies that their exploits in Persia and Syria earned them a name and memory in history long after they were overrun and the Mongols executed their last Grand Master in 1256 (Prajas.d.).

Though, in fact, there exist too many versions of the Kharijites' stories of assassination and terror, one cannot deny that their terror had effects on both Muslims and Crusaders. Closely related to the Kharijites' case are groups like Egypt's Islamic Jihad who have organized their massive scale terrorist operations against western tourists, burned churches, and killed Copts and Christians (Wikipedia 2009). A case in point is Algeria, where "the Armed Islamic Group has engaged in a campaign of terror against the Algerian government." (Global Security 2010). Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaeda commenced an international war of trepidation against Muslim and Westerns alike, thereby distorting Islamic commandments while delivering their own fanatical fatwas, that is, legal jurisdictions in an attempt to legitimize their war and call for an attack on civilians or non-combatants (Prajas.d.). The examples of terrorist activities organized against Muslims themselves are numerous; which conveys and proves the fact that Muslims are also victims of terrorism, and hence Islam is not tantamount to terrorism. Rather, it is a religion that advocates elevated ideas and principles in pursuit of global peace, security and coexistence. Extensively noticeable is the fact that most of the extremist groups sanctify their actions through pious references to Islamic texts, notably *The Qur'an* and the traditions of the Prophet (PBUH). While doing so, they claim to represent a truer, purer and stricter Islam than that currently practiced by the majority of Muslims. Given the adaptive nature of Islam –, that is, the fact that Islam has left up a space for the interpretations of some of its teachings to the clergy or the Islamic *jurisconsult* who is authorized to issue a fatwa, thereby permitting them to sieve the Koran's messages through different cultural lenses–, different interpretations of the guiding principles of *The Qur'an* have come into the fore with the rise of different extremist groups. Nowhere are differences in Islam more visible and intensified than in the different interpretations and readings of the Holly *Qur'an*. Radical Islamist groups, in fact, fit squarely within the category of those who misinterpret

the teachings of Islam, thereby sharing in common a tendency to re-establish a strict rule of the Islamic laws in the whole globe while stopping the corrupt effects of western modernity or civilization on the Islamic world. In this sense, new "fatwas", that is, a legal opinion or ruling on a point of law, (Lewis 2003, 109) have been issued so as to put into display new regulations that extremism aspires to establish. For instance, The 11th September terroristic occurrences were an epitome of Islamist fundamentalism that structurally carried out the fatwa issued in 1998 by Osama bin Laden. The fatwa stated:

> The duty to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy mosque (Mecca) from their grip, and in order for their armies to move off of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim. This is in accordance with the words of Almighty God (Bin Laden 1998).

What Al Qaeda has committed, indeed, transgresses the Islam laws and teachings. Such heinous crimes were conducted by a bunch of fanatical terrorists in a bid to lend legitimacy to their group's power grab. That is to say, issuing a "fatwa" to kill civilians and military alike runs counter to what Islam preaches. Such a fatwa is meant to escalate the level of terror and violence, and hence prove that Al Qaeda has the power to attack any target regardless of whether or not it would harm civilians. Besides, the strategy which Al Qaeda follows in its terrorist wars is to gain the sympathy of many a Muslim by claiming to have the intention to liberate the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Holy mosque of Mecca from the grip of the unbelievers. Therefore, defending such an Islamic cause is likely to yield fruitful results, such as garnering many fundamentalist sympathizers who could join the terrorist organizations in order to fight for the liberation of Al-Aqsa Mosque, the Holy mosque of Mecca and even the Islamic governments no matter what it costs them since their death will be deemed as martyrdom. In fact, Islamist groups tend to make a good use of the naivety of some fanatic Muslims by promising them to die as martyrs and enjoy the blessings of Allah in the afterlife if only they could valiantly fight holy wars against the Western as well as the Islamic infidels. In short, issuing "fatwas" so as to achieve ideological or political ends is a flagrant deviation from the basic Islamic principles and teachings.

Another revealing example of such a deviation is the famous fatwa issued by the Ayatollah Khomeini on February 14, 1989, against the novelist Salman Rushdie because of his novel entitled *The Satanic Verses*. The fatwa reads as:

> [I inform] all the zealous Muslims of the world that the blood of the author of this book […] which has been compiled, printed, and published in opposition to Islam, the Prophet, and the Qur'an, as also of those involved in its publication who were aware of its contents, is hereby declared forfeit. I call on all zealous Muslims to dispatch them quickly, wherever they may be found, so that no one will dare to insult Islamic sanctities again. Anyone who is himself killed in this path will be deemed a martyr (Lewis 2003, 108).

To promise martyrdom and the rewards of paradise to whomever kills Salman Rushdie and the contributors in his novel is unislamic; for nobody has the right to interfere with whether people can go to hell or paradise. This is something decided upon and

destined only by Allah the Almighty. In Islam, even if one is totally pious and follows strictly the orders of Allah, still he should always ask for Allah's mercy. No one is going to be rewarded with paradise upon the good deeds he or she has done in his or her life, except by the mercy of the Almighty. If this fact has something to reveal, it will be that dying as a martyr, and thereby enjoying the rewards of paradise is a divine job and not the Mufti's, "the Islamic *jurisconsult* who is authorized to issue a fatwa." (Lewis 2003, 109). Islam does not urge its zealous to be hired killers so as to defend it. By contrast, there are different things one can do in case Islam or the Prophet is defamed or insulted. The simplest thing one can do is to bring the accused of an offence to trial, be confronted with the accuser and then be given the opportunity to defend himself. In case the accused is found guilty, the usual verdict is to consider his act to be tantamount to apostasy. "Jurists usually decide that insulting the prophet should be sanctioned by a flogging and a term of imprisonment, thereby the severity of the flogging and length of the term depend on the gravity of the offence." (Lewis 2003, 109). These are, in fact, some of the teachings, which the Prophet Mohamed (PBUH) tried to instill in his Umma, Islamic community, and which he himself used to put into practice whenever necessary. In short, the adaptive nature of Islam has given leeway to a multiplicity of interpretations to its basic principles. Radical Islamists have manipulated the Qur'anic verses to suit their terrorist activities. "Some even go so far as to dismiss some Qur'anic verses as 'revoked' or 'abrogated'." (Lewis 2003, 108).

Terrorism, in this sense, has been infiltrated so as to execute the mis-interpretations of the Islamic religion. This proves that there exists a huge difference between Islam and Islamism, and that the hatred and animosity which some Westerners have against Muslims stem, indeed, from their ignorance of the true teachings of Islam and the prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This is a fact that has been proven in a number of occasions, the most notorious of which is the 11th September terrorist attacks. In an attempt to lay bare some other facts about America uncovered by the terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center, the following section shall address the 11th terrorist attacks and their ensuing results that could have instigated changing perspectives with regard to the American as well as the world's perceptions of the superpower's or American might.

The 9-11Trauma: A Lesson to Heed

Seventy years ago, in 1943 to be precise, the American invincibility was contested by the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor. This historical incident has often been brought into play to describe the latest terrorist attacks of the 11th September on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center. Historically, the Japanese attacks of Pearl Harbor were seen by some to have changed the international scene, especially that the US reaction at the time was very aggressive by dropping nuclear bombs on both Hiroshima and Nagasaki, launching, thus, the beginning of an era wherein nuclear weapons and wars can make a huge difference. However, the myth of the American invincibility has been aggressively contested again in the 11th of September, 2001. Therefore, that day was, to some extent, a threshold to a new phase in the history of the world as well as that of the US on the grounds that America is no longer that imagined invincible power living behind a colossal fortress, which cannot be reached and attacked. Rather, the terrorist attacks of the 11th September seem to be a watershed event in the American history and the whole world, declaring, thus,

that the US can be defeated in its home not just abroad. The attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center are significant in the sense that both of them epitomize a side of the American power and its influence globally. For instance, the World Trade Center symbolizes the influence of the American corporate businesses spread across the globe, thereby holding a tight grip on the global economy. As for the Pentagon, it has always stood for the supremacy of the American politics and military; an invincible military that can cross miles and miles away to deter or punish wrong doers anywhere in the globe. Significantly, the choice of such American settings for the terrorist attacks unravels the hatred which many individuals across the globe have for America and its hegemonic policies and plans globally. Following such line of reasoning, this section shall be devoted to discussing two main points, one of which explains the 11th September terrorist attacks, while the other point dwells upon some of the facts about the US that the attacks have unraveled.

After the 11th September attacks, three interpretative paradigms have been suggested to explain the nature of the terrorist events. Rida Hilal explained these three paradigms at length in his article entitled, "An Insurgent Empire: Has America Changed after the 11th September?" (Hilal 2002, 7-8). The first paradigm that was suggested is that of Samuel Huntington's famous thesis on the Clash of Civilizations, which propounds a conflict in which civilizations will be involved sometime in the future, namely the Islamic civilization against the Western one. At the beginning, such an interpretative paradigm was prominently accepted to be a truism by many Westerners, but all of a sudden, it turned out, the *Huntingtonian* thesis was dismissed, for the simple reason that Muslims themselves condemned the terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center and described them as unislamic. Besides, Muslims have always been subject to terrorist activities, and therefore it is a war against fundamentalist groups of Taliban or Al Qaeda and not Islam versus the West.

The second paradigm interpreting what happened in the 9-11 attacks were that of Francis Fukuyama's "The End of History and he Last Man." Francis Fukuyama explains that after the defeat of communism, two forces will be the markers of human advancement: Liberal democracy and the global market. Therefore, global peace will reign by the time liberal democracy, global market and Western modernization are spread out across the globe. However, the 11th September attacks have proven the contrary in the sense that there are still some people who are against liberal democracy, so to speak. Drawing from a reservoir of anger and resentment against the spread of Western or American ways of life to their cultures, Al Qaeda conducted its attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center as a sign of their insurgency and protest against the American foreign policies and economic invasion worldwide. In this sense, the likes of those who attacked America are numerous, thereby refuting the *Fukuyamist* interpretative paradigm of global peace with the advent of liberal democracy and global market.

The closest interpretative paradigm of the events of the 11th September was that of Benjamin R. Barber's *Jihad vs. McWorld*. Barber provides a picture of two viewpoints held by some people with regard to globalization. While the first perspective holds it necessary to recover all what is traditional or local, that is, regaining traditional identities of individuals in a massive scale conflict with the West, the other standpoint votes for McWorld, that is, the spread of McIntosh computers and McDonalds Hamburger among many other "Mcs." by virtue of their ability to group different identities across the globe in

a virtual space (Benjamin 1995). In fact, it was this interpretative paradigm of Benjamin R. Barber's *Jihad vs. McWorld* hat could offer a closer explanation of the 11th September in the sense that terrorists of Al Qaeda can fit squarely within the category of those conducting Jihad against McWorld or globalization. In their efforts to stop the corrupt effects of western modernization on their countries, cultures, traditions or identities, Al Qaeda and its associates have made it clear that "the duty to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it." (Bin Laden 1998).

Coming to the second concern of this section, the discussion of some of the facts that the terrorist attacks on America have put into display shall be of paramount importance to understanding the extent to which the US is faced with a serious situation wherein it is required to abide by the international law, work cooperatively and multilaterally with the international community with the aim of extirpating terrorism. Some of these facts shall be outlined in what follows:

1. The attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center have proven that America is not that invincible superpower that cannot be contested by a terrorist organization let alone another country. The image which the Americans have built about their power portrays them as living behind giant fortifications through which no other power can break easily. Given the sophisticated security measures, such as the radars and X-rays that the Americans use so as to detect any danger seeking to breach their national security, it is thought that the Americans are in an isolated peaceful land away from danger, and that the only incident that could challenge their colony's security, seventy years ago or thereabouts, was the historical incident of Pearl Harbor to which they reacted aggressively and ruthlessly. However, the 11th September attacks have proven that the Big Brother can be attacked even from behind his gigantic walls and fortifications and have his population intimidated (Hilal 2002, 6).
2. The attacks of the 11th September have proven that tracing enemies or anticipating threats has become the biggest challenge to the US and its national security. Osama Bin Laden and his associates are nothing but protracted transnational agents representing no country and who cannot be easily hunt down or even identified. They operate from within decentralized, protracted and global transnational networks and organizations. In this regard, the war against terrorism is predominantly a war against decentralized organizations and not countries. Consequently, such a fact has demonstrated a changing perspective in the whole scope of international relations. That is to say, international relations are conventionally set up among sovereign countries varying with regard to economic and military power, different vis-à-vis the agendas whereby they seek to empower their sovereignty and, most of all, similar in their tendency to establish economic and diplomatic relations with one another, thereby securing their own distinctive interests worldwide. Settling disputes between such countries is done by means of war or peace (Sahli 1993, 41). The problem that has been posed with the rise of terrorism is that countries can be subject not only to the sort of challenges posed by a country to another –, that is, challenges such as those considered to be posed by Sadam Hussein when he decided to annex Kuwait and take hold of two thirds of the whole world oil reserves, thereby contesting the American interests in the

region –, but also to decentralized and protracted transnational organizations and their diffused agents.

3. Furthermore, the attacks have instigated a need for the re-constitution of the conventional notion of the state as sovereign and bounded (Hilal 2002, 7). That is to say, fighting terrorism entails the imposition of some constraints on individuals and their easy movement. Given that globalization has been the major element facilitating an easy movement of terrorists, information and money across borders, it has become a necessity to put the brakes on globalization itself, regardless of what the costs can be, by setting "new rules about border patrol, VISA regulations, and monitoring of foreign travelers." (Khan 2001). In this account, it can be noticed that, "new security measures at airports have already raised the costs of travel and are affecting the profitability of the airline industry. Increased regulations on imports are slowing international trade. Higher costs, as a result of all the above are reducing profits and may dampen the incentive to seek foreign markets." (Khan 2001). In light of all these restrictions, the modern nations are perceived to be moving towards re-establishing borders between one another, thereby going back to ages characterized by their bondedness and isolation.
4. Finally, America as a melting pot or a society wherein an amalgam of ethnicities, races, cultures and religions are thought to cooperatively coexist has proven illusory after the 11th September events. In other words, the hostile attacks, to which the Arabs and Muslims were subject after the 9-11terrorist attacks, provided evidence to the fact that America has not yet managed to bridge the cultural or religious differences of its citizens. Rather, the American multiculturalism – which is always reiterated by politicians in their public speeches or over which a great deal of literature has been produced in academia – when always emphasized in different political as well as academic discourses can be ironically portrayed to be a tranquilizing drug taken by the Americans so as to make them believe that they really cohabitate and constitute one single body, which is the reason why America is the world's powerful country (Hilal2002, 8). Nowadays, "Multiculturalism is generating a lot of interest among concerned people in the United States. Americans are becoming more aware of the importance of multiculturalism in the country." (Jackson 2010).

CONCLUSION

Having discussed at length the different interpretations given to the 11th September attacks and the facts that have been made obvious after such attacks about the Americans, this paper has tried to lay bare the fact that before making a judgment convicting some people on charges of terrorism one should rather get to know these people and their different affiliations. As well, some of the different information which are conveyed by the media are ideological in nature and tend to serve some particular propagandistic purposes. In this sense, there should always be a critical reading of each and every single information one receives. Unfortunately, for some Americans, Arabs/Muslims have been a malleable fantasy that drew upon whatever characteristics presented in the Western popular imagination and embedded in a long tradition of European colonialism. Therefore, some Americans are not interested in marketing who the Arab or Muslim truly is, but they, rather,

stress the importance of having to make sure the Arab and Muslim keep matching the misconceptions and images the American public have on them. In so doing, "in an attempt to place Islam in a category that Americans can understand, the media portrays images of Muslims as belonging to a faith of 800 million people, consisting of strange, bearded men, […] in robes and turbans." (El-Farra, Narmeen 1996).

Importantly, some Western movies' images of Arabs reflect the longstanding Western attitude of disgust with the Arab/Muslim culture while associating Arabs/Muslims with exoticism, fantasy, barbarism and sexuality as extracted from tales of the *Arabian Nights*. Some orientalist films constructed Arabs/Muslims as the *other*, different and inferior in all aspects. Conversely, it is not a coincidence that the Arab/Muslim image in the western culture suffers greatly. Arabs/Muslims emphasize that their depiction in western Media in downgrading terms leads to numerous acts of violence against them. Films in this way encourage the abuse of Arabs. Stereotypes turn to be murderous and devastating to very great extents. In so doing, some Americans have developed petrified stereotypes about Arabs and other races that are often reacted against in ignorance and vehemence. In this sense, ignorance has characterized most incidents of violence against Arabs in Europe or America. Violence usually feeds on the impulse of the exotic images presented about Arabs mainly by the media. Therefore,

> Ask American college students, in the elite universities or elsewhere, what they think of when the word "Muslim" is mentioned. The response is inevitably the same: gun-toting, bearded, fanatic terrorists hell-bent on destroying the great enemy, the United States (Said, W. Edward 1997, 26).

Noam Chomsky further goes on as to suggest that the media nurtures and disseminates stereotypes, and the American public is firmly controlled by a prejudiced media (Chomsky 2002). As a result of such prejudiced views about Arabs and Muslims, "many parents have complained that their children have become ashamed of their religion and heritage. Some have asked their parents to change their Arab names to something more American sounding. A Texas teen told his sister, "I lied about where our parents had come from." (Shaheen, G. Jack 2000). The feeling of embarrassment from the stereotypes embossed to one's origins does really have deep influences on Arab children living in America. Extensively noticeable indeed are the multiple sorts of verbal and physical annoyances to which children are constantly exposed at almost a daily basis, whether at school, street or neighborhood. Following such examples, therefore, people need to be wary of judging other cultures and people before getting to know them closely. Certainly, no one would be comfortable in being the target of false judgments.

As long as citizens of countries are bamboozled into ready-packaged, stereotypical perceptions about other nations, as long as they keep faith in their ignorant knowledge regarding whom the other nations are and whether or not one should make efforts to establish peace and partnership with them, governments will continue to manufacture public consent to whatever agenda that suits their self-opinionated interests. Now, even wars are being waged by means of instilling propagandistic images in the minds of people about their potential enemies, which they do not even know quite enough. Therefore, the power to govern and positively affect the decisions of nations "comes directly from the people, not through the force of arms. This may have been tidy and direct as a theory, in practice it was far from exclusive." (Targonski 2000, 110). The mobilization of "the

bewildered herd" can make a difference and affect whatever unnecessary decision is to be taken by a certain country. This applies to both the Arab-Islamic world as well as the Western-Christian one, and whether or not such citizens are fully aware of each other's differences, thereby willing to respect these differences and live in peace regardless of what the official discourses dictate. No less important is the fact that citizens of nations are controlled by media, which tends, most of the time, to convey to them bogus information serving nothing but the agendas of governments sponsoring them. In a nutshell, the hope for peace – if any – should be sought by individuals or collectivities alike with the aim of breaking out of the tight circle of knowledge wherein they have become confined by media. This will certainly contribute to influencing, later on, most of the decisions made by nations of the world, on top of which sits the United States of America.

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