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A critical analysis of the discourses on Muslims in the media before and after the events of September 11, 2001

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Appendix C: Relevant articles, The Star

SA Media - The University of the Free State
Source: STAR
Topic: 07
2
Date: 10-Aug-2001
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Page: 1
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Source Page: 4

Taliban swoops on aid offices, while 'missionaries' could face death

Kabul – Afghanistan's Taliban militia has swooped on more offices of a Christian aid group as US, Australian and German diplomats wait anxiously to visit foreigners detained under harsh Islamic laws, officials said yesterday.

Taliban soldiers took control of the provincial offices of Shelter Now on Wednesday as the Islamic militia widened its crackdown on the German-based relief agency, accused of being a front for Christian missionaries.

The group's office and a school were closed after 24 staff, including two Americans, two Australians and four Germans, were arrested for allegedly preaching Christianity.

Deputy Taliban religious police minister Mohammad Salim Haqqani said yesterday there were two decrees forbidding proselytising in the Islamic state, one setting a maximum penalty of death and another allowing for expulsion or up to a month in jail.

Taliban deputy foreign minister Abdul Rehman Zahid said: "The Muslim state of Afghanistan has no place for such organisations."

A Taliban embassy spokesperson in Pakistan, Suhail Shaheen, said the eight foreign aid workers were "safe and in perfect health" and would face trial, but he could not explain the charges or the likely punishment.

"They will be given full opportunity for defence," he said.

He added that the fate of the detained foreigners would only be decided after investigations were completed.

Diplomats expressed frustration that requests for information and visas to visit the detainees had not been met before the Islamic weekend.

A US embassy spokesperson said no visas would be issued yesterday and, as today is a holiday in Kabul, the chances of diplomatic access to the aid workers were diminishing.

"We have still received no information that we view as authoritative from Taliban officials as to what they are charged with or what the penalties might be," he said.

"We're having talks with the unofficial Taliban representatives in the US and we just need to keep pushing where we can."

An Australian high commission envoy in Pakistan described the situation for the detainees as "very uncertain and confu[illegible]".

"We're just focus[illegible] on getting access to ensure their welfare and safety and to see if they want some legal representation," he said.

Shelter Now staff in Pakistan have denied the group is engaged in missionary work.

The German-based aid group had operated soup kitchens and bakeries, and built mud houses to help the poorest people in a country devastated by more than 20 years of war and a three-year drought.

Other aid groups are now contemplating their future in a country facing humanitarian disaster.

"The episode with the destruction of the Buddhas in Bamiyan shows that the regime can resist outside pressure," said one aid worker, referring to the Taliban's destruction of two ancient Buddha statues in March.

Meanwhile, the Taliban's action has drawn both criticism and support from Muslim countries.

"What the Taliban is doing is not Islam. Islam is a tolerant faith These people are giving Muslims a bad name," said one senior Arab diplomat.

But the Taliban's position on proselytising has also struck a chord in some Islamic states, with some Muslims saying the Taliban may now be right.

Some schools of thought say religious tolerance does not mean Islam allows proselytising, a practice that is illegal in many Muslim countries, including Saudi Arabia and Malaysia.

■ Four anti-Taliban terrorists were executed before dawn on Wednesday and their corpses left dangling from makeshift gallows in Kabul, witnesses said.

Two of the dead men were swinging from the same lightpost where the Taliban hanged pro-communist president Najibullah and his brother Ahmad Zai in September 1996.

Two others were strung from the crane of a military truck in central Kabul.

They were hanged at midnight and their bodies were left suspended throughout the day as an "example for others", according to Taliban commander Mullah Abdul Quduos.

– Reuters and Sapa-AFP

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1
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Religious rivalry rages on in Nigeria

Abuja – Authorities sealed off a northern Nigerian state hit by Muslim-Christian violence, and warned communities across the state yesterday to be on guard against the conflict's spread.

Residents of the 4-million-resident city of Jos, contacted by telephone, said the killing was persisting for a third day, despite deployment of the army on Saturday.

Rival Christian and Muslim gangs were playing cat-and-mouse with police and troops, singling out targets of opposing faiths and killing them when security forces were not around, residents Susan Akele, Tanimu Oliver and Isa Abdulsalam said.

The pace of the killing appeared to have slacked off from its peak on Friday and Saturday, when witnesses said gangs were battling in the streets with guns, machetes and clubs. One man alone admitted helping to kill 10 people at a makeshift roadblock.

With residents still fearing to venture out, only two churches held Sunday services, after two other churches were set alight. Muslims tried to attack one Sunday service but were turned back by police, residents said.

Clashes were reported on Jos's outskirts as well, and at least two killings were reported elsewhere in Plateau state. With tensions high statewide, it was feared those killings were also religiously motivated.

After initially describing the situation as calm yesterday morning after curfew, officials at midday were refusing to comment on the violence.

State police commissioner Mohammed Abubakar confirmed that unrest continued yesterday, but refused to discuss the fighting or the possible death toll. – Sapa-AP

Source: STAR
Topic: 45
1
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ID: 02745437-01 | Source Page: 7

Fresh Christian-Muslim violence erupts in Nigeria

Lagos – Christians and Muslims clashed again in central Nigeria yesterday, and residents blamed the terror attacks in the US for stoking violence said to have cost at least 500 lives within less than a week.

Residents said Tuesday's attacks in New York and Washington, welcomed by some Muslims in the Middle East, ?d fuelled fresh fighting in the central city of Jos.

"Some (Muslim) people have been jubilant because of what happened in the US, and that must have encouraged them," said a resident after fleeing fighting in Nasarawa district on the outskirts of Jos.

Another resident said troops had cordoned off parts of the city centre to prevent the trouble spreading.

"Trouble began when a group of Muslim youths came out on the streets shouting *Allah akbar* (God is greatest). Then fighting broke out."

Residents said fighting spread elsewhere as soldiers restored order in the city centre.

Fighting yesterday came after violence between Christians and Muslims had erupted on Friday.

A newspaper reported that trucks had carried about 500 bodies to a mass burial on Monday.

– Reuters

Source: STAR
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1
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Bin Laden has Durban connection

Durban – Considered the top suspect in Tuesday's horrifying attacks in New York and Washington, wealthy Saudi-born dissident Osama bin Laden is no stranger to Durban, where his name is held in high esteem among some sectors of the Islamic community.

Bin Laden's riches, some of which has been channelled to his Durban supporters, has also been used to propagate Islam and for the printing of Zulu versions of the Koran.

The Star's sister newspaper, *The Mercury*, revealed two years ago how the Bin Laden family spent millions of dollars buying up property in the city and how it came to the rescue of the Grey Street-based Islamic Propagation Centre International a few years ago when the organisation ran up a R3-million bank overdraft with First National Bank by donating $1-million to wipe off the debt. – Own Correspondent and Reuters

Source: STAR
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1
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ID: 02745530-01 | Source Page: 1

THE HUNT IS ON

While the FBI stalks suspects, anti-Arab sentiment takes root

By Hans Pienaar and Correspondents
The Star Foreign Service

As the world slowly started to recover its senses following the terror attacks on US targets on Tuesday, and Western governments began putting together retaliatory measures, the first successes in the hunt for the culprits delivered unexpected results yesterday.

In addition, anti-Arab xenophobia grew in America.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell confirmed last night that exiled Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden was the chief suspect in this week's audacious terrorist attacks in New York and Washington.

The thousands of investigators currently fanning out across the US in a hunt for the people who are believed to have carried out his orders have focused on several flying schools at which the suspects trained over the past 18 months. Up to six suspects were apparently trained in Florida.

Investigators believe they have traced about 50 individuals involved in the hijack plot. Of these, 40 are believed to be accounted for – either killed in Tuesday's atrocities or else under FBI observation.

Another 10 were still at large, somewhere in the US.

Powell said he would speak to Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf as Washington put pressure on Pakistan to help in its fight against terrorism.

Pakistan is playing host to several influential Muslim fundamentalist groups with links to Bin Laden's supporters in Afghanistan, where the alleged mastermind of the attacks is in hiding.

In carefully crafted diplomatic language, Powell said: "I will approach this as if I am talking to a friend, and let a friend know what I would like to see happen in order to improve the situation in the region and the situation in the world, and I hope that the president will respond as a friend. Our initial indications are that he will."

In a broadcast to the nation yesterday, Musharraf assured the US that Pakistan was unequivocally on America's side.

Pakistan appeared ready to pacify the militants as well.

"Senior Pakistani officials," reported *The News*, "made private contact with the heads of various religious organisations, including some militant outfits, requesting them not to issue statements ... that may seem to be supportive of the terrorist strikes against the US."

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1
ID: 02745530-02 | Source Page: 1

In Germany, its citizens discovered that their country had possibly played host to the bombers and provided training for them, putting President George W Bush's threat that the US would pursue the guilty parties, and the countries that harboured them, in an ironic light.

In the US itself, the Federal Bureau of Investigation said it had not ruled out the possibility that the fourth hijacked plane, which crashed in Pennsylvania, had been shot down.

"We have not ruled that out," FBI agent Bill Crowley told a news conference when asked about reports that a US fighter jet may have fired on the hijacked Boeing 757.

The US Defence Department on Tuesday vigorously denied reports suggesting the US military could ...e downed the hijacked flight in ... effort to prevent it from reaching a target, perhaps in Washington.

In the US, a backlash against Arab-Americans, Muslims and other groups perceived to be associated with the suicide hijackers began in earnest.

An angry mob of several hundred teenagers gathered in Chicago on Wednesday night and marched on the Bridgeview Mosque, deterred only by thick lines of police blocking their path..

In San Francisco, a bag of pig's blood was left outside an immigration centre catering for people from the Middle East.

Vandals smashed the windows of a mosque in Texas, and in Washington State, a prison fight broke out after a group of Muslim inmates were showered with insults.

Across the US there were reports of death threats, attempted fire-bombings, and individuals wielding guns or other weapons at people perceived to be of Middle Eastern origin.

Taxi drivers were particularly at risk, not only Arabs but Iranians, Pakistanis and Indians – particularly Sikhs – whose turbans were mistaken by many angry passengers as an indication of Arab origin.

The executive director of the Islamic Network Group in San Jose, California, said she had received more than half a dozen threatening calls and e-mails.

In Washington, the communications director for the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Hussein Ibish, said he had been threatened on air during a radio broadcast he was participating in.

The news was not all bad. For just about every backlash incident, there was a counter-backlash.

Groups of Muslims, often joined by Jews and Christians, held candlelit vigils across the US to urge tolerance, understanding and a cooling of passions.

In most major cities, police were stationed outside mosques, synagogues, and other religious and community buildings. Where violence beckoned, law enforcement teams rushed to the scene to prevent it. "The police have responded magnificently around the country," Ibish said.

"There is a battle going on in the psyche of America between the angry, enraged America which wants to lash out at anyone who might be an Arab or a Muslim, and the tolerant, multicultural America that understands that criminal actions are the responsibility of criminals, not a wider cultural group."

One arena for the battle over human tolerance was the Internet, where chatrooms buzzed with anti-Arab sentiment, countered almost immediately by calls for calm and an avoidance of mindless prejudice.

One Arab-American student at the University of Illinois at Chicago, 18-year-old Ehab Odeh, told a local reporter that a girl in his English class had said "she was sure 95% of Arabs were terrorists".

In fact dozens, if not hundreds, of Arab-Americans are believed to have been inside the World Trade Center, working as traders and brokers on the floors of the financial exchanges, making them victims every bit as much as other US communities.

Some Arab-Americans are bitter that they are not being allowed to grieve for their dead because of the growing atmosphere of suspicion and intolerance.

"We feel violated twice," Hatem Baziam, a Palestinian and professor of Islamic studies at the University of California at Berkeley, said at a candlelit gathering in San Francisco.

"We are not identified as part of the victims of the bombing, and in the aftermath we're immediately associated with the attack."

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1
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Mosques and Islamic centres targeted in wake of terror

Copenhagen – Mosques and other Islamic centres were targeted in anti-Muslim attacks as anger over last week's terrorist devastation in the US surfaced in a wave of incidents in Europe at the weekend.

Attacks were reported in The Netherlands, Denmark and Poland just days after the World Trade Center and Pentagon atrocities which resulted in large loss of life and economic damage.

In the Netherlands, a mosque and two classrooms at an Islamic school were set alight in separate incidents.

The arson at the primary school in the southern town of Nijmegen meant that classes had to be cancelled yesterday.

At Zwolle, in the east of the country, unidentified arsonists set fire to a mosque on Saturday night, but damage was limited due to the quick intervention of the emergency services.

A spokesperson for the Muslim community in the Netherlands, who condemned last Tuesday's attacks on the United States, cautioned that they must not lead to innocent people becoming victims of racism.

In Copenhagen, Danish police arrested a man as he was about to hurl petrol bombs at a mosque in an apparent revenge attack. The Danish *Extra Bladet* daily also reported that 23 windows had been smashed on Sunday by unknown persons at a pizzeria owned by Kurdish immigrants in the town of Dragoer.

Danish Foreign Minister Mogens Lykketoft yesterday denounced the incidents as attempts to incite violence against Muslims and equate terrorism with Islam.

Meanwhile, a mosque in the northern Polish city of Gdansk was stoned by a group of youths, police said yesterday.

The attackers, who fled before police arrived at the scene, smashed several windows late on Friday at the mosque, which is attended regularly by about 40 Muslims, including 15 children studying religion.

Polish Cardinal Jozef Glemp, speaking at a seminar in Warsaw on demographics, warned his audience on Saturday of the "demographic vacuum" in Poland which was at risk of being filled by Muslims.

Poland's Muslim population amounts to several thousands only. In Denmark the figure is around 170 000, or 3% of the population, while in The Netherlands the figure is 474 000, also 3% of the country's population. – Sapa-AFP

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Arab Muslims can't wait to appease US

Many quick to disown part in latest atrocities

By Robert Fisk
Beirut

They have been lining up in their condemnation. Mullahs and sheiks and sayyids, from Beirut to Tehran, are criticising last week's assault on the United States, sending condolences and sympathy and – by their very actions – distancing themselves from the atrocity which many millions of Arab Muslims watched live on their television screens.

There is genuine outrage, true, but it would be as well to place it in context.

For the Taliban, the shield of Osama bin Laden, have almost as many enemies in the Middle East as they do in America.

For two consecutive days, Sayed Mohamed Hussein Fadlallah, the spiritual guide to the Hezbollah guerrilla movement – which re-invented the art of suicide bombing against the Israeli occupation army in Lebanon, and which Washington still blames for the kidnapping of Americans in Beirut in the 1980s – has been vehemently denouncing those responsible.

"No religion justifies such an action," the Shi'ite cleric announced here. "It is not permissible to use innocent and peaceful civilians as a card to change a specific policy."

Muslims and Islamists oppose American policy in the region – "which is totally biased in favour of the Zionist enemy" – but they want to be friends with the American people, the Shi'ite cleric said.

"We reject violence as a means of solving problems."

Sheik Abdul-Amir Qabalan, vice-president of the Higher Shi'ite Council in Lebanon, insisted that Islam was "a religion of justice and equality and it condemns any attack on civilians and the innocent".

Now this makes interesting reading.

No such condemnations followed *the Palestinian suicide bombings* which killed 15 civilians, including six children, in a Jerusalem pizzeria in August.

There were no condemnations following the actions of the suicide bomber who slaughtered 21 Israeli teenagers in Tel Aviv.

Hezbollah's satellite groups were held responsible for the 1983 bombing of the US embassy in Beirut in which more than 50 Lebanese civilians were killed.

And in Iran, whose boy soldiers perfected the art of suicide attacks against the Iraqi army in the 1980-1988 war, and whose government has always supported Palestinian suicide bombers, there was total condemnation of the New York and Washington bombings by President Mohamed Khatami, as well as his conservative opponents.

Nor is this surprising. For in Tehran the rulers of Afghanistan have been called the "black Taliban" for years – long before the US identified them as Bin Laden's protectors.

The Iranians – and by extension their Hezbollah proteges in Lebanon – have always regarded the Taliban's "Wahabi" Sunni Muslim leadership as obscurantists as well as potential "terrorists".

Indeed, Iran nearly went to war with the Taliban after their murder of almost all Iran's diplomats in the northern Afghan city of Mazar-e-Sharif.

At least 2-million Afghan refugees are living in great poverty in eastern Iran, many of whom would have

stayed in their own country were it not for the Taliban's rule and the mass starvation that the Taliban has done little or nothing to alleviate.

Iran has now closed its border with Afghanistan to prevent a further exodus of refugees and the US has said that it would "consider" inviting Iran to join a coalition against World terrorism – an invitation which Iran will most certainly decline.

The Saudis, of course, can scarcely do anything but join in the chorus of condemnation.

They helped to create the Taliban, to legitimise its presence in Afghanistan, to fund and arm the so-called "students" who destroyed most of the rival "mujahedeen" groups which had been pillaging Kabul and the other great cities of the country in the years that followed the Soviet military withdrawal.

Bin Laden is himself a Saudi – though officially deprived of his citizenship – and, it is becoming ever clearer, some of the hijackers a week ago were Saudi citizens.

In Egypt, Sunni Muslim clerics added their own condemnation, although President Hosni Mubarak has been one of the few Arab leaders to warn of the consequences of indiscriminate American retaliation.

He it was who warned two short weeks ago that unless a peace was restored to the Middle East, he feared "an explosion outside the region".

Back in Lebanon, the Hezbollah itself issued a crafty statement yesterday in which it said it regretted the loss of innocent lives in the US.

However, it warned America not to take advantage of the atrocities "to practise all sorts of aggression and terrorism under the pretext of fighting aggression and terrorism". – The Star Foreign Service

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1
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Bin Laden revered as a holy warrior

Karachi – Vilified by Washington, Osama bin Laden, prime suspect for the horrific attacks last week on the United States, is seen by many in Muslim Pakistan as a shining example of the perfect holy warrior.

"(Bin Laden) is the leader of the Muslim nation, a real lion ... fighting for the rights of suppressed Muslims all over the world," a driver for a European firm said yesterday.

With Bin Laden being sheltered by the ruling Taliban in Afghanistan and that country being considered for US military reprisals, many people on the streets of Pakistan's volatile city of Karachi see the Saudi-born militant as an innocent victim.

"Osama is a mujahid (holy warrior). He fought a holy war against the Russians ... how can he be a terrorist?" said Syed Naeem Ahmad, the owner of an Islamic bookshop.

The latest pro-Bin Laden protest took place in Karachi yesterday, with hundreds of people chanting slogans and waving portraits of their hero. An alliance of religious groups has called a national protest on Friday.

Although posters of him have been pasted on walls in Karachi, these have been put up discreetly and removed just as quickly by authorities.

Some video and bookshops in the city's teeming markets and bazaars have been selling material on Bin Laden and his al-Qaida organisation, but little has been on show in public.

Bin Laden, a multi-millionaire who sees himself waging a holy war that God will reward, is the world's most wanted man.

Even before being fingered as the main suspect in last week's attacks he carried a R40-million bounty on his head for alleged involvement in the deadly 1998 bombings of two US embassies in Africa and planned attacks on other US interests.

In the northwestern city of Peshawar, Bin Laden devotees brandished a poster reading "Osama is herrow (sic)", while local residents crowded bookstores to leaf through volumes displaying a colour photograph of the bearded fugitive leader.

Across Pakistan, images of Bin Laden decorate match boxes and the sides of trucks, and are even printed on the long turbans that many Afghans wind around their heads.

While many condemned the attacks on the United States that claimed thousands of lives, some said they were ready to fight for Islam.

"If Afghanistan needs me for jihad, I will go there and fight against the United States," said one man. – Reuters

Source: STAR
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1
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Clerics have role to play in defusing human missiles

Suicide hijackings are made possible by perversion of a great faith, writes William Safire



One Sunday morning a generation ago, the CIA chief William Casey dropped in at my house for a cup of coffee and gruffed, "You got a map of Afghanistan?"

Not your usual request, but I found a world atlas. Casey's fingers stabbed at the map to show the strategic purpose of the Soviet army's thrust southwards into that nation. First, conquer Afghanistan; then take over neighbouring Pakistan, thereby achieving the czarist dream of an opening to the Indian Ocean, leading to Communist victory in the Cold War.

To counter Moscow's daring plan, we overtly supported the Afghans with guerrilla training and anti-aircraft weapons. Sure enough, with our secret aid and with the help of adventurous Muslim volunteers from all over – including one rich young Saudi named Osama bin Laden – the Afghans stunned the world by breaking the will of the Red army. Our spymaster was prescient: that demoralising, decade-long military defeat did begin the end of communism's evil empire.

But the soldiers of misfortune triumphant in that war found further sponsorship from ayatollahs who took over Iran as well as dictators of Iraq, Libya and Syria. That gave impetus to a loosely linked, resentment-motivated terrorist empire usually lumped together as "radical Islam".

After the murder of thousands of American civilians by 19 suicide bombers, almost every Arab man in the United States has been receiving looks of fear or suspicion. Our leaders, recalling the unjust roundup of patriotic Japanese Americans in World War 2, rightly condemned such knee-jerk bigotry.

It was fitting that a Muslim cleric was among those chosen to offer his condolence at the National Cathedral memorial service. Other Muslim clergy have dissociated their religion from radical violence, and Arab American groups have taken out advertisements expressing their revulsion at the crime and solidarity with the grief-stricken. But Muslims are uniquely equipped to undertake more specific action.

What are the two most powerful weapons the terrorists possess? First, the element of surprise, which we will try to reduce with closer surveillance, air marshals, biological and missile defences, etc.

A more powerful weapon of radical Islam is its ability to erase from the brains of recruits the basic will to live through pseudo-religious fantasies of the paradise awaiting martyrs.

How to build a defence against the theological brainwashing that creates these human missiles? That is the challenge to Muslim clerics everywhere, not to mention Arab governments fearful of radical takeover. In recent months, official Palestinian stations have been broadcasting sly evocations of suicidal martyrdom, and over the weekend, in a mosque in Peshawar, Pakistan, a radical cleric hailed America's black September as a victory for Islam.

Mainstream Muslim clergy need to step up in their mosques and in public to give the lie to the fanatics' perversion of their faith. It is for them to cite teachings from the Koran that forbid the murder of innocents and to warn that such murderers will suffer for their sins.

Political leaders are weighing the wisdom of invading Afghanistan or plastering other havens of terrorist cells. It may be that a not-so-holy alliance of democracies determined to end this scourge and autocracies afraid of internal terrorist takeover will unite in uncomfortable military collaboration and *rampant realpolitik*.

But if, at the same time, the great majority of peaceful Muslims can be helped to win their internal theological war, today's military solutions need not beget tomorrow's tragedies. – NY Times

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1
ID: 02747841-01 | Source Page: 6

Attacks the effect of flawed foreign policy, say Algerians

Algiers – Algerians, who have been prey to terrorists for nine years, consider recent attacks against the United States are the predictable result of Washington's ambiguous foreign policy towards Islamic fundamentalists.

While saying they are deeply moved by the huge human loss and suffering inflicted by the attacks against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, many Algerians call the tragic events the boomerang effect of the unclear stance of "a country that sees itself as the leader of the world and of democracy".

"They wanted to play with the fundamentalists' fire, but anyone who does that gets burnt," one man well versed in Algerian politics said. Like others in a nation up against a bloody Islamist insurgency, he preferred not to be named.

"The Americans have just learned the hard way that you don't mess around with the bearded ones," an Algiers lawyer who has himself suffered the wrath of the Islamists said. "They have reaped what they sowed. Osama bin Laden is of the Americans' own making and now they're paying for creating him."

> **"They have reaped what they sowed"**

Ordinary Algerians do not mince words when talking about Uncle Sam.

"When Algeria cried for help to fight terrorism, the silence from the US was deafening, and terrorist murderers live over there without being bothered by the authorities," a pharmacist said, citing the name of Anwar Haddam, a leader of the now disbanded Islamic Salvation Front who lives in conditional liberty in the United States after serving time in prison on immigration charges.

Haddam admitted in 1995 in Washington that he was responsible for a car bomb attack in front of Algiers' central police station that claimed 40 lives.

He was sentenced to death by a court in Algiers.

"If the Americans are sincere in saying they want to fight this violence they must extradite this criminal," a journalist said, referring to Haddam. "That would be a first step in the right direction and would give his followers something to think about."

A shopkeeper raised a recurring theme in what people on the street had to say: "We've been on our own for 10 years. We've been accused left and right of every possible act of villainy.

"Now, people realise that other people have been through a tragedy. Let the United States stop weeping crocodile tears; let them truly give us some help and stop all their compromising."

That sentiment was reflected in the daily *L'Expression*, which said that Algerians "refuse to be the forgotten victims of the war against fundamentalism".

The paper commented that "the United States has bluntly refused Algeria's pressing requests" for high technology, such as night vision equipment, for use in its fight against the Islamist underground.

"Let's hope the attacks in the United States finally open the eyes of those who tolerate and provide refuge to fundamentalist movements, including those who do so in Europe," a teacher said.

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who gave amnesty to thousands of Islamists as part of his campaign for national reconciliation, said he was "horrified" at the "savage attacks" against the United States, and called for "universal action" against terrorism. – Sapa-AFP

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1
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Attack on US is a 'divine wrath', says Muslim cleric

New Delhi – India's top Muslim cleric yesterday said the terror attacks on the United States were signs of "divine wrath" and a warning for Washington to stop its "anti-Muslim policies".

Syed Ahmed Bukhari told a press conference in India's biggest mosque that the United States and its allies should also steer clear of retaliating against innocent people in Afghanistan.

"The world is describing what occurred in America last week as the worst attack of terrorism, but I consider it divine wrath on the American government for all its tyrannical activities," Bukhari said at New Delhi's Jama Masjid mosque.

"In my opinion it is a reaction to the oppressive activities of the US on Muslims in Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Muslims are being targeted in different parts of the world for the past 50 years," he added.

While stressing that he felt the "great loss of human lives" in the attacks which left more than 5 000 people dead or missing, the cleric went on to warn the United States that any retaliatory action against Afghanistan would only lead to a new cycle of violence.

"If the US opts to attack Afghanistan a severe reaction from the world will follow swiftly and be natural," Bukhari warned.

"America should keep in mind that the arrest of Osama bin Laden or the destruction of Afghanistan is not the solution," he said. "The only solution lies in the revision of its policies towards Palestine and Iraq."

Bukhari said the United States should reverse its "anti-Muslim policies" in the Middle East.

"It should persuade Israel to vacate occupied Palestinian and Arab land and restore the right of self-determination to the Iraqi people.

"America should also grasp by now that violence creates violence," said Bukhari.

In contrast to the belligerent tone adopted by India's top Muslim cleric, India observed a two-minute silence yesterday to mourn the thousands killed in the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington.

Yesterday was observed as "anti-terrorism" day by the federal government, led by Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. – Sapa-AFP

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Date: 19-Sep-2001
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Somalia agencies beef up their security

SAPA-AFP
Nairobi

Aid agencies working in Somalia have stepped up security measures in the mainly Muslim war-torn state in the wake of last week's attacks on New York and Washington, a Western source said yesterday.

"Programmes are continuing but staff levels have been brought down to a minimum, United Nations and European Commission flights have been reduced and missions from abroad suspended," said an official who attended yesterday's meeting of the Somalia Aid Co-ordination Body.

This body is made up of donors, UN agencies and non-governmental organisations.

"The main worry is that there could be reprisals taken against foreigners in case of an American strike against an Islamic country," the source added.

Somalia has in any case been the theatre of factional violence for more than a decade and the unrest has not been halted by the installation last year of a transitional government, a regime described by its detractors as closely linked to Islamic fundamentalism.

US President George W Bush has called radical Muslim leader Osama bin Laden the prime suspect behind the terror attacks which killed more than 5 000 people in New York and Washington.

"Somalia is a loose cannon out there ready to go off,". a well-informed Western diplomatic source said.

"Somalis are, of course, very fractured. They have many groups all wanting power, who will go with whoever has money," added the source, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Asked to comment on speculation that Bin Laden might take advantage of the chaos in Somalia and seek refuge there, the source shed doubt on this scenario, explaining that Somalia's flat terrain offered little protection compared with the mountainous topography of his supposed current location, Afghanistan.

Tension is now running particularly high in Puntland, a region of north-east Somalia that declared itself autonomous in 1998.

Aid operations in Puntland, where a power struggle has raged in recent months, have been scaled down.

Two Islamic movements are active in Somalia, al-Ittihad and al-Islah, and are reportedly present in the south of Somalia and in Puntland.

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1
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'Revenge' attack on UK Muslim woman

London – British police said yesterday an assault on a young Muslim woman appeared to be a reprisal attack following the destruction of New York's World Trade Center last week.

The woman, aged 19, was walking alone in Swindon, 120km west of London, on Friday night when she was approached by two white men, one of whom attacked her with a baseball bat, a police spokesperson said.

She was treated for head and shoulder injuries.

"It appears that it is a race attack after the events of last week and that's how it was viewed by the victim," the spokesperson said. "Obviously she is very traumatised by it all. We are seeking witnesses."

Afghan taxi driver paralysed

Reports of such attacks, including an assault which paralysed an Afghan taxi driver in London, come as Muslim leaders prepare to meet with police chiefs to discuss the safety of their community.

Schools and mosques have been targets, with threats against pupils and graffiti attacks on places of worship, Muslim leaders said.

The Islamia School in West London, founded by 1970s pop singer Cat Stevens, now known as Yusuf Islam, reopened on Monday after closing on Thursday following a series of telephoned death threats.

"London can have no truck with any racial attacks against our Muslim population," London Mayor Ken Livingstone said yesterday.

Sir John Stevens, the Metropolitan Police commissioner, echoed Livingstone's comments.

Police were investigating a suspicious fire outside a mosque in Bolton in northern England on Monday night. – Reuters

Source: STAR
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1
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New Islamic network seen as globalised and sophisticated

Paris – The perpetrators of the terrorist outrages in the US form part of a new Islamic International – a diffuse, sophisticated network that operates around the world and sees in Osama bin Laden more of a figurehead than an organisational chief, experts said yesterday.

"The essential fact that leaps to the eye when you study the people behind these attacks is that national borders have no meaning for them," said Pierre Lacoste, a former head of the Direction General de la Securite Exterieure, France's equivalent of the CIA.

"These are terrorists of a new generation: doctors, engineers, familymen – all able to draw on the best resources that modern society can provide."

What little is known of those who carried out the kamikaze raids confirms the profile: men of Middle Eastern origin who assumed effortlessly the trappings of Western life and moved with ease from country to country, internally nurturing their resentment.

The experts said cells of like-minded people can be assumed to exist in countries around the world: some directly linked to Bin Laden's al-Qaeda organisation, others drawing on it for inspiration, all sharing the view of jihad as an international struggle.

"Bin Laden has two types of network. First the old fighters from the Afghan war, but now a new category: 25- or 30-year-olds, many born in the West, with Western citizenship, who were radicalised in the West," said Islamic politics specialist Olivier Roy. The relationship between these groups and Bin Laden and between each other are both highly sophisticated and highly imprecise – a hallmark of the globalised world.

Roland Jacquard, terrorism expert and author of *In the Name of Osama bin Laden*, just published in France, said: "The cells are not centralised. They are scattered, most of them self-financing, compartmentalised. It is a vast, dispersed organisation that communicates via hidden pages on the Internet."

"More important than Bin Laden (are) ... the religious leaders from Saudi Arabia and Egypt, many ... in jail, like Omar Abderrahman (jailed in the US after the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center).

"They have delegated to Bin Laden the authority to issue fatwas (religious edicts) in their name. Their followers are hyper-religious people who would certainly only carry out suicide attacks if they were covered by a fatwa." – Sapa-AFP

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1
ID: 02749156-01 | Source Page: 11

Arabs insist on apology for 'slur' by Italian PM

Cairo – Arabs are demanding an apology from the Italian government after Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi made "racist" remarks about Western civilization being superior to Islam, the Arab League chief said yesterday

"I consider his remark as racist and by such a remark he has crossed the limits of reason and decency," Amr Mussa said, expressing "indignation" at what Berlusconi had said.

"We don't believe there is a superior civilization and if he is thinking so, he is utterly mistaken and would have to teach himself – to read, to learn about Muslim civilization.

"Otherwise, he will put himself and Italy in a very embarrassing position *vis-à-vis* all of us in the Mediterranean, in the Arab world and in the Muslim world," he said.

Mussa, who met delegates of the European Union troika led by Belgian Foreign Minister Louis Michel on a Middle East tour, said the Arabs demanded an apology from the Italian government.

Michel agreed in the joint press conference that Berlusconi's remarks were "not acceptable".

The Italian prime minister had been speaking to a group of special correspondents from Italy, shortly before giving a joint press conference with German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, when he allegedly cast a slur on Islam.

Later, during the press conference, Berlusconi said the September 11 terrorist attacks affected not only the US but also what he described as "a civilization of tolerance" which understood human rights and democratic structures "of which we are proud".

He then said: "It is a civilization which has demonstrated its supremacy," but this was not translated into German by the interpreter.

In Brussels, Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt deplored Berlusconi's remarks, saying they could have "dangerous" consequences and "feed a feeling of humiliation". – Sapa-AFP

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1
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Tension at Wits anti-US march

White student accused of ice-cube attack almost lynched by students

BY RAPULE TABANE AND JENNIFER PLATT

Protesting students nearly lynched a white student after he tried to disrupt an anti-American imperialism march at Wits University yesterday.

The drama happened at an emotionally charged protest march organised by the Muslim Students Association, in which about 500 students chanted anti-US slogans and ...ted that Washington was ...ying the price of its foreign policy.

Wearing T-shirts that read "Long Live Intifada" and flags saying "the United States of Aggression/Arrogance", the students, said they sympathised with the 6 000 or so people who are presumed dead from the New York and Washington bombings.

But the otherwise peaceful march from West to East campus almost descended into chaos when a student threw condoms and ice cubes from the top of a building into the crowd.

The students mounted the stairs and caught him with condoms and ice cubes in his ... but he denied throwing ...em at the crowd.

Wits Security intervened and led him away before he was seriously assaulted.

The protest was held on Yom Kippur day, meaning most of the Jewish students were not on campus.

Acting vice-chancellor Professor Leila Patel said she had raised concerns about the march happening on a Jewish holy day, but the Muslim Students Association assured her that the date was not deliberate and had long been scheduled.

Patel said an investigation would be carried out into the disruption before a decision was made whether to institute a disciplinary hearing or not.

Muslim student leader Mohamed Nanabhay said: "Our hearts goes to those who were killed on September 11.

"But our hearts also goes to the thousands who were killed by Israeli bullets and the 500 000 children who died in Iraq as a result of US policies.

"We are here to ask why the world did not light candles when Africans were killed or when the Iraqi children were killed.

"The American government is not an innocent victim; they need to ask themselves why these things happen. We think war is the biggest form of terrorism and Israel Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is the biggest terrorist alive".

The Wits Student Representative Council supported the march saying that they believe in free and fair debate and that the attacks on the US have students debating on a bigger scale than ever before.

They also applauded the MSA and the other organisations on a peaceful march.

The MSA collaborated with the ANC Youth League, the South African Student Congress and the Keep Left Movement in organising the march.

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1
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The anti-hero with a thousand faces

The media casting of Osama bin Laden as some sort of simplistic all-purpose villain isn't helping us understand his motivations, reports ***Reed Johnson*** *from Los Angeles*

Dark facial hair isn't mandatory, but it adds to the aura of intrigue. The eyes may be hard-set and smouldering, like the Ayatollah Khomeini's, or soulful and sensitive, like Che Guevara's. Typically, only a few murky biographical details are known, leaving rumour and legend to fill in the gaps.

But the crucial trait for any bogeyman of US foreign policy is elusiveness, a protean quality that's both physical and almost metaphysical. It's what can turn a rogue dictator, rebel commander or head of a sub rosa terrorist network into a mass-media emblem, an international symbol who provokes revulsion in some, adulation in others.

So it is with Osama bin Laden, a man who is lionised in some parts of the Islamic world but condemned by most Americans for the murder of 6 000 of their fellow citizens in the assaults on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Though no conclusive proof has yet been made public of his involvement in the September 11 attacks, Bin Laden has quickly become the glowering personification of global terrorism, summoning intense feelings of anger, hatred and anxiety, as well as a gathering fascination.

"We're turning him into a kind of icon of evil," says Richard E Rubenstein, a professor at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University in Virginia, and author of *Alchemists of Revolution – Terrorism in the Modern World*.

The preoccupation with Bin Laden may result in part from the void of new reliable information about him. Only a handful of Western journalists ever have interviewed him, and with the world bracing for warfare, his movements and motivations can only be guessed at by most people.

The 44-year-old exile's rise to international celebrity is both revealing and disturbing, some foreign policy analysts and cultural observers say. By focusing so intently on Bin Laden, America may be oversimplifying complex geopolitical issues and forsaking a process of slow, deliberative fact-gathering for a form of ritualised myth-making. The Bin Laden phenomenon, some argue, reduces the aspirations and grievances of millions of Muslims around the world to a psychological mug shot of just one man.

"The consequence of paying too much

attention to this guy is that you're not focusing on the real threat and you're missing potential other threats," says British journalist Simon Reeve, author of *The New Jackals: Ramzi Yousef, Osama bin Laden and the Future of Terrorism* (1999). "Bin Laden is one part of a bigger picture. He's one element of a group that is threatening the West now. The problem will not go away if Bin Laden is attacked, arrested or imprisoned. Quite the opposite, in fact."

While some commentators have attributed Bin Laden's anti-US outlook to specific historical events, such as the 1978 Camp David peace accords or the 1991 outbreak of the Gulf War, others trace it to his formative years. "A key to (Bin Laden's) holy war against America may be found in his childhood," one UK newspaper declared recently, referring to his father's death in a plane crash when Bin Laden was 10.



Like Frankenstein's monster, Bin Laden has been accused of attacking his creators.

Slate, the on-line magazine, framed a September 13 story about the attacks with a spin on Freud's famous query about women: "What Does Osama bin Laden Want?" Author David Plotz's chilling conclusion was that Bin Laden wants absolutely nothing the West can offer.

"This characterisation of Bin Laden as possessed by a kind of inscrutable, all-consuming malice recalls the aliens' nihilistic one-word response in the movie *Independence Day* when the US president asks what they want earthlings to do: "Die."

Terrorism expert Rubenstein says Bin Laden has made clear in previous remarks that he is seeking to force a US withdrawal from the Arabian peninsula. He also hopes to destabilise pro-Western regimes in the Middle East and possibly provoke a US military response that will further anger and alienate the Muslim world.

"It's actually quite clear what he wants," Rubenstein says. "What makes him different is not what he wants, but the way he proposes to get it."

Whichever psychological profile of Bin Laden one chooses, Reeve suggests, it needs to take stock of his political evolution and the global context that has shaped him. "Perhaps it's easier for us to imagine (Bin Laden) as the devil incarnate, who's always had these extreme views. But if we are to have a chance of preventing these kind of attacks in the future, we (need to) understand the mentality of the kind of person who would commit these attacks."

As a great world power, America seems to require larger-than-life adversaries and gravitates toward dramatic, enigmatic figures: deranged would-be prophets such as Unabomber Ted Kaczynski, or an inscrutable "mastermind of terror" (as *US News & World Report* described Bin Laden) who strikes without warning, then melts back into the jungle mists or steals away to a remote mountain lair, like a James Bond villain.

Like Saddam Hussein, another former US-ally-turned-enemy, Bin Laden has been compared to Frankenstein's monster, attacking his own creators. A widely circulated e-mail casts him as the evil "Binch" in a parody of Dr Seuss' *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. ("It could be his turban was screwed on too tight. Or the sun from the desert had beaten too bright.")

Some commentators refer to Bin Laden's "megalomania" *(Washington Post)*. Others describe him as "modest, almost shy" *(BBC News)*, a fragile figure with kidney problems who walks with a cane.

A few have compared his charismatic appeal to that of a cult leader, evoking a mesmerising, modern-day Rasputin ushering brainwashed minions through a high-tech Heaven's Gate.

"The domestic equivalent, I think, would be someone like Charlie Manson: the violence, the drugs, the cult, the fear," says Juliette N Kayyem, executive director of the programme on domestic preparedness at Harvard University's John F Kennedy School of Government and a former member of the National Commission on Terrorism.

Bin Laden's followers idolise him as the prodigal scion of a Saudi construction magnate, a trust-fund baby so devoted to his cause that he renounced his family's wealth and reportedly now lives like an outlaw, surrounded by his warrior brethren,

four wives, multiple children and trusty Kalashnikov assault rifle. Western pundits are more inclined to see this as a mark of patrician kookiness: Howard Hughes as Holy Warrior.

A few commentators have imputed god-like powers of omniscience to him, marvelling at the attack's precision and the planning it must have entailed. Descriptions of Bin Laden's "elusive" character, the reported 40 attempts made on his life, and his "shadowy" supporters, who are "everywhere and nowhere", have become journalistic commonplaces.

Kayyem thinks that Bin Laden's mythic stature derives in part from his careful stage-management of the Western media. By limiting access, he enhances his personal mystery.

"He's never been on a talk show. No one knows what he sounds like. No one's ever really seen him talk, except a few of those journalists. US intelligence lost track of him probably over a year ago, so you're not getting any new information," Kayyem says. "That element of the unknown is kind of fascinating, in an awful way."

These contrasting but complementary images indicate the potency and flexibility of Bin Laden's expanding myth. Much as the attacks assimilated several of our deepest cultural phobias – our worst-case scenarios of terrorist subterfuge and technology run amok – representations of Bin Laden fuse several legendary bad-guy personas into one frightening composite.

In the eyes of much of the Western mass media, he has become a one-man rogue's gallery, a perversion of Joseph Campbell's mythological prototype, the Hero With a Thousand Faces. Bin Laden is the Anti-Hero With a Thousand Faces. – Los Angeles Times

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'Pulpit impostors' a disgrace to Islam



The anti-American ranting of some Friday preachers in South African mosques is deeply disturbing, writes ***Ebrahim Moosa***

While many respectable Muslim organisations the world over have condemned the reprehensible carnage at the World Trade Center in New York, there is a growing number of groups and individuals who equivocate in their rebuke of violence.

In doing so they become apologists for violence and or in furtherance of political and religious ends.

The equivocation occurs when spokespersons invite people to understand the possible causes as to why the suicide missions were directed at the United States.

It is of course legitimate to distinguish between the justification of mass murder and an explanation as to its immediate and remote causes. However, if condemnation of violence is not unconditional, then the divide between justification and explanation becomes a thin disguise for inhumanity.

Most impartial observers concede that US policy towards Muslim populations has had catastrophic consequences for millions, from Palestine and Iraq to Chechnya. Nothing characterises this attitude better than the statement of former US secretary of state Madeleine Albright who said with stoic certainty that the deaths of 500 000 Iraqi children caused by American-led sanctions were a "small price to pay" in order to keep Iraq isolated.

In the US, a few representative Muslim bodies have recently been criticised for equivocating and refusing to condemn violence employed in other theatres of conflict in the Muslim world. Their critics claim their failing to distance themselves from all violence casts a shadow on their credibility.

At some mosques in South Africa, instead of displaying compassion for those suffering, some Friday preachers went on to rant about possible conspiratorial causes behind the violence and explanations that Americans "deserved" the cruelty of the September 11 carnage as recompense for their atrocities against Muslims elsewhere.

There is something deeply disturbing about employing explanation and understanding as a fig-leaf for justification and as a pretext to spread feeble diatribes about just deserts. Even more disturbing is the fact that intelligent and right-thinking people sit through sermons and speeches where such dehumanising pseudo-religious drivel is preached without demurral or protest.

The most preposterous aspect of the rhetoric of Muslim apologists of terror is that they advance their claims in the name of justice. To allow them to become the guardians of justice is to bring it into disrepute. These pulpit impostors and armchair generals know little of humanity, are bereft of compassion and have perverted justice for their own ends.

Indecency paraded as virtue

No human being deserves to die. Our moral sensibilities are tested even in the most conclusive convictions leading to the death penalty, let alone when acts of determined destruction and terror are unleashed on innocents at the New York WTC.

No Iraqi children deserve to die as a result of unyielding sanctions meant to punish a draconian political authority. Nor do Palestinians and Israelis deserve to die in spine-chilling slaughter if their respective leaders cannot make peace.

It may be better that Muslims condemn acts of terror unequivocally without launching into explanations about the algebra of grievances. To venture into such complex levels of sociological commentary without the requisite skill and empathy is to become almost Albright-like in the logic of treating human life as dispensable.

For Muslims to make such claims is to bring into disrepute the legacy of the Prophet Muhammad, whose person is fondly recalled in Islamic teachings as a "mercy unto humanity".

The truth is that large numbers of Muslims have become so dehumanised that they parade indecency as grandiloquent virtue. It is difficult to see who lacks more compassion: the terrorists who perished with their victims or their apologists who make a link between tragedy

and just deserts, sometimes without even disguising their joy at others' misery.

What the apologists are effectively saying is that human beings are dispensable at the altar of their imagined or real causes.

Long before the thousands at the WTC became the latest victims, countless thousands of unknown persons had died as victims of terror perpetrated by authoritarian states such as Iran and Afghanistan, and diabolical agendas that are vigorously pursued by religious bigotry and agents of vigilantism.

Would viewing human beings as dispensable for some unquestioned ideological ends not be deemed as idolatry in the Abrahamic tradition?

For some time now critical voices within the worldwide Muslim community have either been silenced or deemed traitors and sell-outs by vigilantes, authoritarian states and religious orthodoxies alike.

At a time when Islam as a civilisation stands at risk of being dehumanised from within and brutalised from without, it would be too treacherous a complicity to remain silent any longer. My only regret is that it took so long for us to awaken.

■ *Ebrahim Moosa is professor of Islamic Studies at Duke University, North Carolina.*

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SA Muslims 'have right to join jihad'

'Government can't restrict movement of citizens'

By Malcolm Ray
Cape Town

The Muslim Judicial Council (MJC) has backed the right of Muslims to defend Afghanistan by force if necessary, but has implored South African followers of the faith not to turn to violence within the country's borders.

We have since the start of the war against Afghanistan on Sunday made it clear that we reject the US-led military onslaught on what we believe is an Islamic country, and therefore support the right of Muslims all over the world to align themselves with the jihad," MJC secretary-general Achmat Sedick said.

He was responding to an official statement by the al-Qaeda network on Tuesday calling on Muslims to defend Afghanistan and Islam.

The apparent about-turn came before yesterday's march for peace by the MJC, Cosatu and the Western Cape Council of Churches (WCCC).

The MJC in a joint statement with Cosatu and the WCCC said on Tuesday that it was vehemently opposed to war and would rally its members to march to the US consulate on the Foreshore in support of peace.

But Sedick said the MJC's stance did not detract from the principal purpose of yesterday's march.

"A clear distinction should be made between our support for the right of Muslims to go to Afghanistan in defence of their religion and our rejection of violence in all other countries.

"We do not want the war to spill over in South Africa – hence the march."

Regarding Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Aziz Pahad's warning earlier this week that local groupings vowing to conscript Muslims to support Afghanistan's Taliban rulers would be prosecuted, Sedick said it was not within the government's legislative power to restrict the movement of South African citizens.

"If individual citizens choose to go and fight in Afghanistan, where Islam is clearly under threat, that's their choice, and we have no problem with that, provided they are equipped for the task at hand. That's what jihad is all about."

WCCC secretary-general Keith Benjamin said the MJC's stance did not detract from the basis for unity between the three organisations.

"We differ with the MJC in that we are unequivocally against violence as a means to achieve one's aims globally, and that includes Afghanistan.

"We nevertheless respect the MJC's right to defend Afghanistan, provided that the core message at the march is peace in our country," he said.

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1
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The clash is complex and begs a million questions

Ethnicity, religion and civilisation are not light issues, writes Peter Fabricius

WINDOW ON AFRICA

Samuel Huntington's book *The Clash of Civilizations* has been invoked countless times since the terror attacks on the US last month. Yet he himself has apparently remained silent. One can only guess why. My guess is that he is afraid that anything he says will play into the hands of the Islamic terrorists who were apparently responsible.

Huntington's thesis is that the end of the Cold War did not bring an end to history and spread democratic capitalism across the globe as many in the West had hoped. Instead, it unbottled a mess of suppressed rivalries between civilisations. He saw Western Christendom, the Cold War victor, as overreaching itself while it tried to plant its values in the rest of the world, and clashing with Sinic civilisation (China) and Islam – or possibly both.

Many suspect that we are seeing the start of that clash now. The US and its allies have naturally been eager to avoid this interpretation of the war they are fighting against Osama bin Laden and Taliban government of Afghanistan.

The US insists that it is a war against terrorism and that the religion of the perpetrators is incidental. This makes sense because the US hardly wants to take on the whole of Islam. Their enemies have of course been equally eager to present the war as a "crusade" versus a "jihad", precisely because they hope this will rally all of Islam to their cause.

The US is – at least within its own value system – morally justified in seeing this not as a war between civilisations but as one between civilisation itself and the barbarism of those ready to kill thousands of innocent civilians in pursuit of fascist aims. But Huntington's perspective is ethnic and pragmatic, not ethical and theoretical.

If ethnicity is indeed the primary driver of politics, then Western civilisation will face constant resistance to its efforts to globalise itself. He says it should rather consolidate its power within its own territory – forging closer ties between the US and Europe, for example – and leave other civilisations to themselves. The implications of this are, of course, immense. From a Huntington perspective, Israel is an outpost of Western civilisation in the territory of Islam. So are US forces stationed in moderate Arabic states. They should presumably all be abandoned. These are also the views of Bin Laden who is motivated primarily by a desire to drive the "infidel" from Islamic soil. So the conservative American political scientist finds himself agreeing with the Islamic archterrorist. Maybe that is why Huntington remains silent.

But if Huntington's apparent support is a comfort to those who criticise America's war on Afghanistan, they need to be aware of exactly what it is they are criticising. This conflict is not about whether the US is biased in favour of Israel. It is about whether Israel and moderate Arab states should exist at all. And perhaps it is bigger still – about whether the Western values of political and economic freedom, if indeed they are Western, should be defended anywhere beyond the frontiers of Western civilisation. Taiwan and perhaps South Korea may be considered outposts of Western values in Sinic territory – surviving only by virtue of US force.

This week, interestingly, Taiwan put its military on full alert, a precaution against possible aggression from the mainland which regards the tiny island state as a renegade province.

If the West must retire behind its ramparts, should Taiwan and South Korea too, like Israel, be surrendered? One would hope not. Yet there is a chilling logic to Huntington's thesis which imparts a sense of tragic inevitability and frightening uncertainty to the war that is now being waged.

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1
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Religious violence erupts in Nigeria

Kano – Nigeria's army was restoring an uneasy calm to northern Nigeria's largest city yesterday after a day of Muslim-Christian rioting.

At least a dozen people were killed, cars and shops were burnt and places of worship destroyed.

Burning tyres and garbage littered a four-lane highway, where a few stunned residents wandered out from their homes to assess the damage.

An elderly man wearing a Muslim kaftan and cap picked up lettuce leaves from the glass-strewn remains of his market stall.

Nearby, the blackened remains of the Divine Bookshop, a Christian bookstore, smouldered.

Firefighters battled to put out blazes in several buildings next to a burnt oil tanker that also still smouldered.

The latest outbreak of inter-religious fighting in northern Nigeria, where thousands have been killed in Muslim-Christian clashes, was apparently fuelled by a clash on Friday between Muslim fundamentalists and police during a street protest against US-led airstrikes on Afghanistan.

Hundreds of soldiers were deployed in an anxious bid by authorities to restore order and prevent an escalation of the fighting, the latest in a cycle of bloodletting since a dozen northern states began introducing Islamic law, or sharia, last year.

One official, speaking on condition of anonymity, worried that if the city's large population of non-indigenous merchant traders fled the city, they would take tales of woe to other part of the country, and potentially spread the conflict.

Although Kano, northern Nigeria's largest city with several million inhabitants, is overwhelmingly Muslim and ethnic Hausa, it also attracts a significant number of non-indigenous Christian traders of other ethnicities who come to the city to trade consumer, agriculture and industrial goods.

The offices of many Nigerian newspapers were among the businesses looted and destroyed. The roof of the office of Lagos-based *ThisDay* newspaper was caved in. It was unclear whether the papers had been specifically targeted by rioters.

Places of worship, newspapers targeted

Three churches were at least partly burnt and a mosque was also torched, witnesses said.

Kano State government officials tried to play down the rioting, saying they couldn't confirm a religious basis to the fighting.

Government officials in Nigeria often refuse to discuss the ethnic, religious and other divisions contributing to the frequent surges of violence in Africa's most populous nation, fearing that could escalate the bloodletting. – Sapa-AP

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2
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Terrorists will pass through history like a base wind

Nothing noble about vandals and monsters, writes Jean-Jacques Cornish

DIPLOMATIC BAG

One has to step lightly when writing about Islam in South Africa. Rightly so. Muslim pressure groups, which have mushroomed in this country, spend much of their time responding to unforgivable Islamophobia and sheer bigotry.

They do this with some energy and an uncompromising defensiveness – so much so that it is often easier simply to avoid the subject than incur their scrutiny and their wrath. Not possible this time, I'm afraid.

The first row I ever had with the Laudium-based Media Review Network (MRN) – which scours the newspapers for anything written about Islam – was after my first visit to Algeria in 1995. It was a very civilised encounter. Two gentlemen came to the office and took me out to tea.

Was I sure about labelling the extremists– who had at that stage slaughtered about 50 000 men, women and children – as terrorists, they wanted to know. Why had I not given equal space to the grievances of those people who had resorted to violence following the government's cancellation of the 1991 election, when it looked as if the extremists were going to win the election?

True, I had concentrated on the activities of the hard men. This involved decapitation, throat-slitting, rape, beating babies to death by swinging them up against a wall, and blowing up merchants driving by in their panel vans.

Their aim was to strike such terror in the hearts of the population that the country would become ungovernable.

I didn't apologise then, neither would I do so now with the benefit of hindsight, for my news judgment. The horror of what was being done needed to be broadcast to the world.

I never got the other side of the story because the perpetrators of this terror were not in the business of talking to the media. Try it, I was warned, and you will get your throat slit. The extremists had already killed half a dozen journalists by then.

Understandably, the visiting Algerian President, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, stands four square behind the war on terrorism. As he said in Cape Town this week, the countries now enthusiastically prosecuting that war have given refuge to terrorists from his country and others. The terrorists who killed thousands in New York and Washington last month have also preferred not to identify themselves.

The apologists for them took some weeks to come out of the woodwork. Now that they have, they sound alarmingly like the apologists for the terrorists in Algeria. Both terror groups are largely the creation of the Americans, who trained and armed them in Afghanistan during the Cold War in the 1980s to fight the Soviet occupiers.

Sure, they have some legitimate grievances to air, but nothing justifies their bloody, indiscriminate terrorism.

To act in the name of Islam is an insult to that religion. The overwhelming majority of Muslims will argue that theirs is a religion of tolerance and humanity. It is designed to build society, as groups such as the MRN contend.

The terrorists claim to have a finer grasp of the religion. Nothing could be further from the truth. We know they wish to cast all the infidels out of Islam's most holy places. But who will they include, and how will they benefit by this?

They know how to kill their enemies. But where do they show how this will genuinely raise the people they send to their kamikaze deaths?

To remotely justify breaking something down, you have to build an alternative. But the terrorists offer none. History will judge them as vandals – monsters who destroyed with no hope of rebuilding.

They scared the hell out of us, but they will pass through like a base wind.

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1
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Life covered in a burqa

By Lois Raimondo
Khodja Bajahuddin, Afghanistan

The silent shapes slide quickly and efficiently down the street, clothed from head to toe in bulky garments called *burqas*. They do not talk to strangers. They rarely stop to talk to other women. If approached, they turn their veiled faces and walk the other way.

From a distance, the bright white, pastel blue and green burqas seem to flutter lightly across an otherwise hard and dusty landscape. Up close, the heft of the heavy folds of fabric becomes noticeable when a husband beats his wife with a stick for standing still as a foreigner comes near.

On the surface, it would seem that women here in rebel-held northeastern Afghanistan live much the same as those in areas ruled by the ruling Taliban militia, which enforces a strict brand of Islam. The majority of women here do not leave their homes; of those who do, most go covered in full burqas. Young girls, heads scarved but not yet fully covered, hide their faces and turn away when a camera moves close for a picture.

But unlike in Taliban-ruled territories, there are no religious police enforcing a long list of harsh restrictions on how women live. True, women rarely go to the market in Khodja Bajahuddin and few work outside the home. But that is not because of Taliban edict, but the conservative social and moral customs followed by most Afghans.

The difference might seem slight, but for some women it is the difference between life and death.

Eight months ago, ACTED, a French-run aid agency, started a food-for-work programme in Khodja Bajahuddin. It provided the only organised work for women in Northern Alliance territory, and today more than 225 women make quilts and children's clothes as part of the programme.

"At first, there was some reluctance from men – husbands and local leaders – village men saying it was not right for women to work," said Cyril Dupre, ACTED co-ordinator for northern Afghanistan. "But once they see that women contribute, bring home food, now there is a long waiting list for women who want to work. Husbands knock on the door wanting their wives to work."

Rules in the workshop regarding women's dress are strictly enforced. Workers must remain covered. When they arrive in the early morning, some are wearing burqas that they keep on throughout the day; others hang theirs up and put on head scarves.

Project participants, all of whom are illiterate, must attend literacy and health classes each morning. It is an experiment that seems to be working.

"Before, my family had no food, was sick all the time," said Qandi Gul, a widow (52). "Now the children eat."

Gul's daughter, Zainora (9) sits next to her, threading the bobbin and needle. "My eyes," the mother explained. "Old woman's eyes."

"This is a small step," Dupre acknowledged, "but small steps are what is needed. Afghanistan is a very structured society. We must go step by step."

It is difficult to measure the long-term impact that allowing women to work outside the home will have on this local community, but some changes are already being felt.

"Before, many of them were shy," said Fawzid Sahar, who teaches a writing class each morning. "Now they talk and laugh together."

Farahnaz Nazir (42) is an outspoken supporter of women's rights and critic of the Taliban. Born and raised in Kabul, the Afghan capital, she lived briefly in the Ukraine while earning an engineering degree, then returned to Kabul just as the Taliban came to power in 1996.

"Afghanistan is like a bird with a broken wing," Nazir said. "One wing is the man, and that one works. The other wing is woman, and that one is broken. With one wing broken, the bird cannot fly. A society without the strength of its women cannot function."

Nazir now works on women's health issues in Khodja Bajahuddin. She is married with two children. Her daughter Vida (10) is fluent in English, Urdu and Dari, but dropped out of school when the male headmaster made all girls 8 and older wear a burqa. She now studies at home and says she wants to be a doctor.

The mother supports her daughter's choice.

Nazir insists that all women in Afghanistan want change. And peace.

"A woman I worked with in Kabul," she said, "is now still there. She said to me: 'We maybe will die one day from an American bomb. But we are slowly, slowly dying every day by the Taliban'."

Asked to recall what life was like under Taliban rule, Nazir paused and looked away.

"The Taliban – this is something else," she said.

"They can cover us. They can make us cover ourselves, but they cannot close our minds. They cannot close our minds." – *The Washington Post*

US and Britain asked to help end Nigerian 'ethnic cleansing'

Makurdi – President Olusegun Obasanjo has ordered the army to halt any activity in central Nigeria where hundreds of ethnic Tiv villagers have been killed in apparent revenge raids by soldiers, the region's governor said yesterday.

Lawmakers from the area have also sent an urgent appeal to the United States and Britain to help end "this gruesome act of ethnic cleansing".

"The president has ordered the immediate cessation of all [illegible]litary operations in the [illegible]a," Governor George Akume told reporters in Makurdi, capital of central Benue state.

In the first official casualty figure of this week's massacre in about half a dozen Tiv villages, Akume said between 120 and 130 people were gunned down in a single village, Gbeji.

Witnesses have said at least 200 people died in the attacks, which spread to neighbouring Vaase, Anyiin and Zaki-Biam.

Obasanjo's government is struggling in the face of the worst cycle of ethnic or religious violence since the end of the late 1960s, when civil war erupted over breakaway Biafra.

Unrest in central Nigeria, the breadbasket of Africa's most populous nation, follows a spate of Muslim-Christian riots in towns in the largely Muslim north, where hundreds of people have died in violence over the past two years.

Gbeji bore the brunt of the military crackdown on Tuesday, which followed the killing of 19 soldiers who said they were there to halt fighting between the Tiv and the Jukun.

The slain soldiers were given a national burial in Abuja on Monday. – Reuters