

Violence in the Name of God and the World Order¹

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Abstract

Religious terrorism has been made the dominant discourse of the Unipolar World Order dominated by USA. The international system is anarchic, according to structural realism, and states pursue security by trying to balance each other. The (reactionary) theory of religious terrorism (violence) makes sense in explaining the current violent wave of terrorist attacks by Islamists, that in case there is no apparent balancer to the current unipolar order, religion is the chess player in power politics. The claim of this paper is that whenever a balancer to a hegemonic order is absent, religion will try to seek some sort of balance by raising arms against that hegemonic order.

Keywords: Religious violence, world order, uni-polarity, reaction).

Introduction

War and political violence has always been made the main subject throughout the history of International Politics. From Stone Age upto this date, violence has been the main puzzle for scholars and policy makers. With the changing dynamics of world politics and the development of human civilizations, the instruments of violence have also got sophisticated. Despite extensive study on the subject of war, International Relations' theorists have not excelled in understanding the causes and motives for wars.

War has been a dominant discourse among social scientists and philosophers and every philosopher and scientist has his own views on the causes of war ranging from Hobbes' "survival in the state of nature"², Marxist "class struggle"³, Gurr's "relative deprivation"⁴ to Kenneth N. Waltz's "anarchic structure"⁵. Although every claim has been justified by the day-to-day happening in the Homo Sapiens' world but no one is absolutely right in claiming the finality of the theory. For example, Thomas Hobbes is of the view that Human Nature is evil and there was a constant struggle among humans for survival and he concludes with Leviathan as a final solution in which there would be justice

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and peace.⁶ But in his *Leviathan*, the Sovereign has the final authority and a man of evil nature as sovereign will commit to violence to compete with his neighbours, so there is no assurance of peace and as all humans are of evil nature, says Hobbes, then how will they surrender to the sovereign, of whom there is no guarantee that he will act according to their wishes.⁷ It can be said in conclusion that men will not resort to surrender their freedom for the benefits of others at their own cost. i.e. in the words of Kenneth Waltz, “man acts in ways contrary to his nature is *prima facie* absurd”.⁸

The Marxist theory about war and the relative deprivation theory are very vividly applicable in some of the conflict scenarios, mostly in revolutionary and civil wars. But to claim on the basis of few cases that every war has an economic purpose is injustice to the subject of war. The relative deprivation theory, as propounded by Ted Robert Gurr, catches some ground on the basis that the main impetus for violence committed due to frustration is due to the inequality among humans.⁹ But, if one goes through the history of warfare, it is obvious that one will find that majority of the wars are fought for reasons other than relative deprivation. These reasons may be “man’s ubiquitous lust for power” or the anarchic structure (under which survival is the focal point) or using the banner of God.

The majority of wars in the age of industrialisation were fought under the auspices of “lust for power” thesis, i.e. wars of imperialism. Because men of the time were deadly motivated by the “lust for power” and wealth and the weaker states were always (the) easy prey for the power-hungry men.¹⁰ But most of the scholars are doing injustice to the topic by missing the religious link to (the) colonialism and imperialism, which was termed as “civilizing the uncivilized”.¹¹ The mission of “civilizing the uncivilized” was a religious mission originated by the Spaniards under the auspices of which, the colonists prosecuted the colonised.¹² So religion has always been involved in one way or the other and is used by its believers as *Jus ad Bellum* card against their adversaries.

In fact, the role of religion has re-emerged in International Relations after a long period of alienation from the worldly affairs due to Treaty of Westphalia, *if the exclusion of religion from politics is true and empirical*.¹³ The resurgence of religion is mainly seen not as a return of the old days religion but in a radical form, what Samuel P. Huntington has predicted, will cause “the Clash of Civilizations”.¹⁴ The violent attacks of 9/11 at the core of

the sole super power by a religiously motivated Islamic group named Al-Qaeda has opened a new chapter like a sheer precipice in International Politics and security studies. Interestingly, these attacks were not carried out by an entity we called state but by non-state actors who are championing the cause of religion.

Here a question arises: Why religious groups go violent? Many scholars have devoted their efforts to answer the question, but they are unable to find an acceptable answer to this multi-dimensional social phenomenon. I have found it reasonable to work on the subject and I want to open a new chapter in the subject of Religious Violence and International Relations. Based on the quantitative analysis of the available data, I'll try to sort out the problem but the unavailability of literature has been a hurdle for a researcher as well time management. However, by managing all the misfortunes, I'll try to prove that in absence of another balancer to unipolarity, religion will challenge the hegemony.

For the purpose of simplification, I have divided my paper into two main parts, i.e. theoretical framework and case studies. Three case studies are taken, one from each Abrahamic Religion (Religion of the Book), on the basis of which I want to support my argument. These case studies are the Jewish Violence against the Romans (Zealots), the medieval-era Christian Crusades and the Modern Muslim Jihad. Theoretical framework is of grave importance, on the basis of which I want to deviate from the existing theories of Religious Violence. The general description of violence and terrorism will be followed by religious terrorism and violence and its existing theories and then I will discuss the place of religion in the world order.

Theoretical Framework

A paradigm shift has been witnessed in the “post 9/11 world” with attacks at the “heart of unipolar world’s” leader¹⁵, USA. The logic behind the attacks at the mainland of USA has brought a lot of conspiracy theories and blame games to play their part. But the actors’ real motives can be inferred from their actions and not by the existing claims of Al-Qaeda in the “cosmic war”.¹⁶ In the following days of the attacks the claim of divine help was made by the victims also.¹⁷ The battle for God has started forming a fog of cosmic war, in which both the parties claimed God on their side. *Jus ad Bellum* is the hallmark of such a violence and such wars are going to be more severe, as the religious groups claim no worldly responsibilities but to God.¹⁸ The logic of the topic will be missing if some basic concepts and some theories of religious violence and

the framework of my main argument find no proper place. Hence, terrorism and political violence, religious terrorism and violence including its theories and the Religion's place in the World Order are worth mentioning.

Terrorism and Political Violence

The discourse of political violence is, in the words of Wendt, "what states make of it", i.e. it is the same thing but the nomenclature of political violence has divided it into terrorism, war and insurgency etc. Violence is an act of aggression against the opposing forces and is in the form of murder, plunder and destruction.¹⁹ But the word terrorism has dominated the discourse of political violence due to its complex nature. Terrorism in itself is an act of aggression which is limited not only to those affected but the aim of violence is to coerce others for specific purpose which may be political, social and religious etc.²⁰ War is also, according to Clausewitz, "the continuation of policy by other means" which is "an act to compel our opponent [to fulfill] our will".²¹ So the aim of both terrorism and war is same, i.e. fulfilling one's will. Alex P. Schmid has defined terrorism in terms of challenging the state's sole authority over the "use of force" and the promise of state as *guarantor* of security to the people, so it gains significance as a political movement even if it is primarily motivated by reasons other than politics.²² From Schmid's statement, it is clear that politics has been the dominant factor in every conflict and act of violence whether one knows or not of the political significance of that committed violence.

Terrorism, due to its complex nature, has been an imbroglio for the policy makers and academia. Every one perceives it in his/her own terms, which has caused a definitional tug of war. Gus Martin has very tacitly tackled the definitional issue, starting from extremism, which is a bridgehead to terrorism, as radical in perception about something, especially political matters.²³ Terrorism, according to Gus Martin, is the perception of people as "politically motivated violence, usually directed against soft targets (i.e. civilians and administrative targets), with an intention to affect (terrorize) a target audience (*to further his will*)".²⁴

But the controversy of naming someone a terrorist still presents a lively debate. The famous quote "one person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter" has added to the ambiguity of the term, benefiting the contesting forces in getting their overarching priorities. Terrorism, according to Schmid, is a

conflict behaviour and like war having the same goals.²⁵ Also, terrorism is always there in war, ranging from early warfare to WWI and WWII (*to war on terror in which the atrocities are labeled as collateral damages*).²⁶

Not going into the moral and legal issue of terrorism, it is obvious that terrorism has political objectives even if its objectives are what Schmid termed as other than political. Terrorism and war are two different names for the same thing called political violence, so both have same objectives of furthering one's objectives and subordinating the opponent.

Religious Terrorism (Violence)

The dawn of September 11, 2001 has witnessed a horrible and devastating blow to the World's sole super-power. The first massive attack, after the Pearl Harbour incident (1941), on the mainland of USA has shocked the security specialists and the politicians of the vulnerability of the strongest military power of the world and pinpointed the flaws of realism according to which states are the sole actors in International Politics²⁷. The new actor is Al-Qaeda which does not represent any nation-state, but it is a violent non-state actor, motivated by religion.²⁸ The new phenomenon of religious terrorism and violence has dominated the discourse of terrorism and political violence, which has hijacked the policy makers to put aside all other development activities and tackle the problem of the religious based terrorism.

Now, a question arises of why religious men go violent? But the search for causes will be unjust before the essence of religious terrorism is fully understood.

Religious terrorism, according to Gus Martin, "is a type of political violence motivated by an absolute belief that an otherworldly power has sanctioned- and commanded- terrorist violence for the greater glory of the faith."²⁹ Also, Martin adds that these violent acts are legitimate under the auspices of the over worldly deity (*god or God*), because it is the will of the deity.³⁰ From this it is clear, that when violence is committed in religious tone, the phenomenon of religious terrorism occurs which has political objectives, but again the main cause of violence in the name of religion is missing. Different scholars have forwarded their theories to understand the motivations of religious men to go violent. These theories are given in separate chapter as following.

Theories of religious violence (War or Terrorism)

Religious violence has been an imbroglio for scholars over the years. Some scholars have formulated their theories as the base for religious violence. These theories are Sacrifice Theory of Rene Girard in his book "Violence and the Sacred", Cosmic War by Mark Juergensmeyer in "Terror in the Mind of God" and the reactionary theory.³¹ Each theory is discussed below.

The Sacrifice Theory

Rene Girard in his book mentions that sacrifice is something of a hot line between the sacrificer and his deity.³² The sacrifice is done in order to bring a greater benefit or avert the worst coming scenario and Girard is of the view that the disharmony of the community can be changed into harmony because of the sacrifice.³³ The sacrificial crisis is the extinction of the very ritual of sacrifice which differentiates between the pure and the wicked.³⁴ As a result of lack of distinction between pure and impure, the whole society is corrupted and all the norms and values are lost, and this difference causes identity crisis which leads to violence.³⁵ Girard's theory applies to the globalized world in which globalization has produced identity crisis, which will be the main cause of confrontation among different civilizations.³⁶ But Heather Selma Gregg has based his theory on the basis of its inapplicability to all religions like Buddhism and its inability to differentiate the circumstances under which the sacrificial crisis emerges as a result of failure of sacrifice.³⁷

Now, to apply Girard's theory to current Islamic Terrorism, it makes sense that the current Islamic world, which is disunited as Osama Bin Laden (Late) has mentioned, so it becomes compelling to make sacrifices in order to bring harmony and unity in the Islamic society. But going the other way, the sacrifice of fellow humans instead of animals by these Jihadists has, in fact divided the community and has ensued hatred among the fellow Muslims. So Girard's theory is not logical, as the struggle is meant to overcome division, which they say it will eventually, when evil has been defeated.

Cosmic War Theory

Mark Juergensmeyer has tried to address the causes of religious wars and violence in his cosmic war theory. Cosmic war, according to Reza Aslan, is a war for religion in which God is believed to be taking side with one party or the other.³⁸ Cosmic war is basically the use of rhetoric or belief systems of certain

deity or God at war with the enemies for revenge purposes.³⁹ Cosmic war is always between the Good and the Evil and the struggle is both physical and spiritual.⁴⁰

Juergensmeyer's theory is good enough to explain the good vs. bad confrontation in which the aim is the final salvation.⁴¹ But his theory is very much coinciding with "identities at war" scenario expounded by Girard because the groups mentioned by him are separate identities like Jews, Christians and Muslims etc. within the world community and his theory fails in relation to "co-operation among civilizations", i.e. the "co-operation among civilizations" especially in War on Terror is the most challenging example.⁴²

Reactionary Theory

Reactionary theory is based on the assumption that fundamentalism is a reaction to secular worldview.⁴³ That secularism has failed to inspire people and the religious communities are trying to overthrow the secular order and replace it by a new political and moral order.⁴⁴ But religious fundamentalism is always misunderstood and is linked with violence against modernity and more often linked with Islam.⁴⁵ Fundamentalism is not the act of violence as it is generally perceived, rather it is "an identifiable pattern of religious militancy in which self-styled true believers attempt to arrest the erosion of religious identity by outsiders, fortify borders of the religious community, and create viable alternatives to secular structures and processes".⁴⁶ But to say that fundamentalism is an anti-thesis of modernity is not fair, rather the secular state has not delivered what the people had expected from it. Mark Juergensmeyer is of the view that though (the) colonialism has ended, but the systems left by the colonial legacy are inadequate to fulfill the desires of the general public, so the only alternative is the promise given to them by religion in which the promise for a just social order is very much imminent.⁴⁷ Due to the promised just order, the confrontation between the secular status-quo power holders and the religious reactionaries is likely and sometimes imminent.

But I will differ from this theory in a sense that this theory talks about all the religions while I will only discuss Abrahamic Religions, with which violence is more often associated as compared to other religions.⁴⁸ Based on the case studies of Abrahamic religion, I want to deviate from the existing theories and go in another direction of religion's relation with world order (unipolar, bipolar or multipolar), (and) the alienation of certain

religious identities in that world order and (the) violence on a large scale against the strongest opponents by these alienated religious identities. For this an overview of world order is necessary without which it would be ridiculous to talk about a duel between world order (unipolarity) and the alienated true believers.

World Order: Where the Religion Stands?

The end of cold war brought the world off-balance leading to American hegemony in international affairs. President Bush (senior) of USA has termed the post cold era as a “new world order” which the Americans think they can shape on their own values.⁴⁹ The “new world order” will be of peace and harmony on biblical scale and is considered as a victory of liberalism and market economy.⁵⁰ But just after a decade of the announcement of “new world order”, the claims and the promises of the “new world order” flung in the new wave of violence, challenging the very essence of liberalism and “new world order”. The new challenge to the “new world order” is not posed by any alternative ideology like Communism or Nazism but by groups inspired by religious sentiments of violence against the injustices due to the world order. But before going further, it will be appropriate to define world order. A world order is “the political, economic or social situation in the world at a particular time and the effect that this has on the relationship between different countries”.⁵¹ In the light of this definition, the current world order is a unipolar world order with Western values claiming to rule the whole scene. The place of religion apparently seems nowhere in this new world order, and the domestic political systems are based on democracy and democracy is the “will of the people” and (the) secularism in true sense means the “separation of religion and politics”, not religion from private life, so the Western values claim to be those of the people and not of the states, units controlled by natural law (realist perspective). Jonathan Fox mentioned that sociologists are of the view that people always have a world view and norms which are most often influenced by religion.⁵² From this it can be inferred that the “new world order” is based on the belief systems of the people of the West with apparently no place for values of some major communities like Muslims.⁵³

The international arena has always been dominated by duels between different sets of ideologies and power sharing systems at different times over the history, ranging from multipolarity (Stable and Unstable) to bipolarity during the cold war in quest for hegemony.⁵⁴ During multipolarity and bipolarity

the contesting ideologies were in constant struggle for power and dominance but the end of cold war has marked a new era of unipolarity with USA claiming the role of a pacifier against instability.⁵⁵ Realism says that a unipolar world is a peaceful world in which states will bandwagon the super-power rather than compete with her.⁵⁶ Moreover, realism claims that a unipolar system is a stable system and peace is maintained because of the policeman role of the sole super-power.⁵⁷ Other realists have termed the unipolarity as a transitory situation and a new balancer will ultimately emerge as realism is based on balancing⁵⁸, but it has been unable to predict who would be the balancer. In addition, realism also fails to catch up with the new challenges which are posed by non-state actors having their origin in religion which has highly destabilized the world not in terms of inter-state wars but state vs. religious non-state actors. So the issue has no solution in realism because realism studies state to state relations and is all about material capabilities and the current violence is socially constructed on the basis of “dominance of the value system and alienation of the value system”.

Religion has always been an important aspect of human civilizations and in the current unipolar world with Western domination, it is obvious that other religions shall have no say in the worldly affairs, i.e. in the words of Jonathan Fox, religion is kept aside from International Politics probably because of the rejection of religion by science based rationality.⁵⁹ Science explains things on the basis of empirical evidence, whereas religion is the belief in something supernatural, so religion is out of consideration in science.⁶⁰ In International Relations, realism has been a dominant theory based on scientific methods of justification and evaluation with states as rational actors and with material quantification of power. Under such circumstances, it will be a folly to consider religion, an abstract idea, as a necessary tool in running world affairs, so the religion has no role in the international political arena.

Now comparing the above paragraphs of “new world order”, struggle for power and place of religion in that world order, it is obvious that unipolarity invites a balancer of different value system and the religion if alienated in that unipolar world order will always try to assert itself in the main political system and will try to reconfigure the world order. By alienated religion, it means that in a unipolar world, dominated by one or more civilizations having their belief systems as their overarching moral codes, the

other religions not in domination will find themselves alienated in that system and will try to reconfigure the world order.⁶¹

Case Studies

To further elaborate my main argument about a religious challenge to the world order, some historical case studies are discussed and which will go for or against my claim. These case studies are the case of Zealots' violence and terrorism against the Romans, when Rome was at the center of world power, the Medieval Christian Crusades against the Muslims, when the Muslim dominated the Middle East and Euro-Asia and the Byzantine Empire was under threat, and the current Islamic Jihad against the West where the West dominates the political landscape.

Zealots' Violence against the Romans (66-73 A.D.)

The Roman Empire at the beginning of the 1st century A.D. was a very powerful military empire with the control over South-Western Europe and some parts of West Asia and North Africa except Egypt which was subjected to the direction from Roman Empire.⁶² The whole political landscape was dominated by them including Palestine. They had complete monopoly over the known world (Europe and West Asia) and were hegemon in real sense.⁶³ Although there was another power Parthia, which was a balancer not in terms of power and military strength, but in defending against the Roman occupation.⁶⁴ So the world was unipolar as that) in the present day world, with American unipolarity in which some of the big powers can defend themselves, but are of no match to U.S. in offensive power.⁶⁵ Moreover, in those days, hegemony was gained through victorious war or surrender without fight.⁶⁶ Hegemony at classical and modern times almost refers to the same connotations in which one power has dominated the system, based on military and political power, which is in turn spurred by economics, culture (*and beliefs systems*).⁶⁷ Also, the Romans have replaced all the surrounding kingdoms by their own kings.⁶⁸ This is very much present in today's world under the name of regime change, in which a hostile regime is replaced by a friendly regime that furthers the will of the hegemon. But the Romans were opposed by Jews called Zealots.⁶⁹

Zealots were religious fanatics who wanted to liberate their land from foreign forces and were termed by the Romans as terrorists and freedom fighters by their fellow Jews.⁷⁰ The Zealots were not oriented totally by religious zeal, but there were some other causes like fairs and trade issues, as trade was done in

accordance with Roman law and traditions.⁷¹ Another factor of resentment was the adoption of Roman values by some of the Jews, who were termed as apostate.⁷² Here one can infer the tone of fundamentalism, which is a fixation of boundaries of a religion. Now comparing this with the contemporary situation, the adoption of certain values of liberalism by certain groups has caused resentment (in that group) as in the case of 1st century Jews, and the reaction is (was) imminent as history shows.

The reaction to the Roman legacy was in form of terrorism and wars inspired by Judaism, which has challenged the “Roman unipolarity” in the absence of another balancer. The challenge to “Roman Unipolarity” can be concluded by using Alex P. Schmid’s conclusion of terrorism for whatever cause has a political end and is a challenge to the monopoly of state. It means that though the religiously motivated warriors may not (be able to) grasp the notion of challenging the hegemon for political purpose, but their ultimate aim is to shake the bases of the existing order and try to reconfigure it in a balanced way⁷³ which may not necessarily be dominated by them, but where they can live in a more favourable environment.

Another striking feature of the Zeolots was that they were one among many factions who were against the Romans, while the other factions submitted to Roman authority.⁷⁴ This is again a commonality with the current jihadists who are violent while other Muslims tend to be non-violent. In addition to this, another commonality among Zealots and the modern jihadist is of declaring their fellows who support the hegemons as traitors.⁷⁵

The commonalities among these two groups and the international politics of the time has enabled me to conclude that Zeolots were against the system dominated by Rome, i.e. unipolar world order and had tried their best to oust the outsiders from their homeland, which is very much similar to “Osama bin Laden’s” ‘declaration of war’ against foreign forces in Middle East. Though the efforts of Zeolots ended in a failure in front of the mighty Romans, but it is of no concern in this study, rather a reality was established that the weak religious community has challenged the supremacy of the Super Power of the time militarily.

Medieval Era Christian Crusades

Another case study is about the politics of medieval era in which two major events are worth mentioning, (1) the rise of Islam, and (2) crusades. Islam arose from the desert of Arabia and spread over a vast area in a short period of time at the start of the medieval era.

The Muslims subdued the Balkans, parts of Italy and Spain by beginning of ninth century. The whole world was divided into two poles which the Christians named as Christendom and Heathendom while the Muslim named it “House of Islam (*Dar-ul-Islam*) and House of War (*Dar-ul-Harb*)”.⁷⁶ The Muslim empire was advancing every passing period in terms of territorial conquest until China, India, France and Byzantium were threatened.⁷⁷

The political landscape of medieval era was dominated by Muslims as an expansionist power. The Muslims conquered many Christian lands and sacked Rome centuries before the crusades and even there are allegations of forced conversion into Islam.⁷⁸ Europe, Christendom, mired in poverty and backwardness was undergoing constant internal feud between the Churches, and was engulfed by feudal wars for land and domination.⁷⁹ But according to Bernard Lewis, Muslims believed that Christians are infidels and as per Muslim tradition, letters to Christian rulers were sent, asking them to adopt Islamic faith and Muslim laws during the time of the Muslim Prophet.⁸⁰ So the very essence of Christianity was threatened.

A Prologue to the Crusades

Power politics started for world domination with major players between the Muslims, the Persian Empire and Byzantine Empire forming a multipolar order.⁸¹ The Muslims overwhelmed the Persian Empire and the Byzantine Empire acted as a silent spectator passing the buck to the Persian Empire, making no alliance with Persians against the Muslims to balance them. After attaining bipolarity, the Muslims now turned the tables against the Byzantine Empire, weakening it by capturing its major cities and Anatolia.⁸² As mentioned earlier that Christendom was engulfed in internal conflicts, totally ignoring the power struggle with the Muslims dominating a vast territory with their laws and values enforced in those territories.

It is commonly believed that Muslim persecution of Christians was the immediate cause of crusades but I differ from it on the following two grounds.

- i). If persecutions were the cause, then why it took centuries to help the Christians to get rid of Muslim domination and atrocities?, and
- ii). If the aim was the salvation of the Christians, then it would have been indigenous rather than global, because in insurgency, the local people rebel?

Rather it was the Muslim domination and unipolarity of which the Byzantine Empire was no match, so the Byzantine ruler called upon the Western Churches for help and the West readily replied to overthrow the hegemons.⁸³ Terry Jones in a documentary “Pilgrims in Arms” says that it was the political ambition of the Pope rather than the request of the Byzantine ruler that motivated the massive crusades.⁸⁴

The Crusaders in Action

Under the supervision and directions of the Pope, the Western Christians were directed to help their Eastern Christian brothers who were in trouble from Turks’ aggressive behaviour and called for recapturing the Christian lands.⁸⁵ The liberation of Christian land and the help of Eastern Christian Brothers seems an illusion because the crusaders could not fulfill their promise made to the Byzantine ruler regarding the return of liberated lands to the Byzantine ruler once the areas were recovered, rather they founded their own kingdom and acted as strong balancer against the Muslims for over three hundred years.

One striking feature of the crusaders was that they behaved in a very unChristian way and massacred Jews and Muslims and looted every valuable thing.⁸⁶ Another striking feature was the murder of Christians who were not willing to go for crusades.⁸⁷ The factor of irrationality which is often attributed to modern terrorists was also there as the crusaders are termed by many renowned historians and religious scholars.⁸⁸ The atrocities of the Crusaders were, in a more humane way, acts of terrorism and are very much in resemblance with today’s terrorists’ attacks.

In medieval Europe, there were knights and a feudal system with no central authority of the state but of the king of the feudal system. Every knight had his own army and they acted as bands rather than regular armies of (the modern) nation-states.⁸⁹ But the problem is that subjugation is against human nature which wants freedom, then if a feudal knight is strong enough why would he not revolt against the king?. So, there is possibility that these knights could revolt and act as independent entities. The most striking example as of peasant crusades under the French monk Peter de Hermit, who launched an attack in 1096 on the holy land.⁹⁰ By this, I want to claim that crusaders did not belong to the state army and whatever actions done by them came into the category of terrorism as per modern state system.

Islamic Jihad against the West

“I think it is wrong to speak about fundamentalism as the restoring of some religion that was genuine and is only now being put back to what it was several centuries ago. Rather, it is actually an attempt to ideologize religion and use it for political purposes, by people who have deliberately incorporated a lot of ideas from extremist, political ideologies.”-(Francis Fukuyama).

The end of cold war compelled Fukuyama to conclude that Western liberalism has won over all the opposing ideologies and the Western system is absolute in a sense that it still exists despite the opposition from different ideologies which waned away due to their incompatibility.⁹¹ In Mearsheimers’ realm, the unipolarity was gained with American supremacy as there is no Waltzian balancer to maintain the old status quo. But the dawn of 21st Century engulfed the whole circle of realists in flames of terrorist attacks by violent non-state actors under the banner of God (Al-Qaeda), waning the promise of offensive realism. The strongest military power of the world in terms of offensive power and military capabilities was mourning the devastating (the) terrorist attacks and its causalities. With all sympathies with the victims, the terrorists’ motivation as it seems to be is not religious but political according to Fukuyama’s quote. But going further in this debate, the prevailing conditions of the world politics needs to pay attention.

The end of the cold war started a debate about the “would be” world, multipolar or unipolar, as the cold war bipolarity was history now, and the assumption of multipolarity with China, Japan, Germany or Europe, and Russia as major players, was primarily a myth and the World was unipolar with American supremacy furthered by its Western allies.⁹² The other powers were not in a position in terms of offensive capability and power accumulation to match the might of USA and the world tilted in favour of the West.⁹³ Though I agree with all other scholars on the proposition of American military superiority, but I differ from them on the basis of its invulnerability and invincibility. The invulnerability myth was shattered with the sad occurrence of 9/11 as well as the invincibility myth, not about the military defeat of the American forces but the failure to achieve their objectives, which is termed as a failure of the whole campaign or operation.

The religious challenge to American unipolarity released its fury by hitting the core values of the unipolar world, i.e. “World Trade Center” and Pentagon. The attack on “World Trade Center”

can be viewed as an attack on market economy, the liberal values of capitalism and Americanism. Similarly, the attack on Pentagon was an attack on the world's strongest military, the US military, as Pentagon is the headquarter of US Military) i.e. the targets have their symbolic values.

The cause of these terrorist attacks was primarily highlighted by Osama bin Laden as a reaction to the foreign occupation of Islamic lands by USA and Israel.⁹⁴ But I differ from this assumption, because if occupation was the cause then what bared the Muslims from attacking Great Britain and France which held these areas for centuries during colonial era. Though, there were skirmishes between the occupiers and the occupied but the attack on the heartland of the opponent never took place. The power politics of that time were what Martin Kaplan has termed as multipolarity. Secondly, the Saudi Government requested USA to intervene in the Gulf affairs in 1990s, so it was not US occupation but a rescue operation in a real sense. The real cause was the political cause what President Bush inferred from the terrorist attacks as the destruction of US economy and social values, as they "hate our existence".⁹⁵ About fifteen percent of the Americans, as mentioned by Max Abraham, agreed upon the fact that US foreign policy has partly motivated Al-Qaeda's attacks.⁹⁶ The "hate our existence" phrase and the public polls depict, that religion has challenged the Western unipolarity in absence of another balancer. Adding to this, not all the Muslims are at war with the West, but a faction of Muslims is against the US, rather some Muslim countries are co-operating with the West, especially in the War on Terror, so the "clash of civilizations" is not a matter of attraction.

Using President Bush's inferences (as a correspondence of) on the 9/11 incident, the challenge to US hegemony (not Mearsheimers' definition of hegemony) as an attempt for the destruction of their economy is very much apparent. The US economy has been inflated by this prolonged warfare against these non-state Islamic terrorists, and the Western value system of free culture is now fading away with the enactment of Homeland Security Acts and scrutiny at Airports.

One important aspect is the lack of alliance of any major power with these terrorists as was the case in Crusades and Zeolots wars though there are some non-state groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda but all the major powers have opposed Al-Qaeda. The surprising nature of these terrorists is due to advent of more sophisticated weapons and new strategies, greatly indebted to the progress of science and technology of warfare. Our's is the cyber

age and in the face of modern military technology, it is very difficult for the terrorist to operate in an organised way like its predecessors did. So, as a part of military strategy, asymmetric warfare is the right choice. From this, it is clear that terrorism is a part of strategy used by Al-Qaeda to challenge the mighty super power which otherwise would have destroyed Al-Qaeda if it were organised in a centralised, hierarchical manner.

Conclusion

The relationship of religion and politics has been quite complex throughout history. This ambiguity has caused puzzle among academia and politicians who are unable to find sound answers to why religion sometimes goes violent while sometimes it is peaceful. The reason seems to me the distribution of power in the international arena. Many people blame religion as responsible for violence but the reality is that religion is a victim of violence as it is manipulated by its followers.⁹⁷

The modern nation-states are based on the principles of secularism since thirty years war ended up with the treaty of Westphalia, if it is true and real, as it is claimed that states have nothing to do with the religion and religion has no role in international politics. Applying “relative deprivation theory” on the deprivation of religion in international arena, it can be concluded that the religious violence is a reaction to deprivation. But the problem is why religion has been silent for a long time? Particularly, in case of Muslims, who do not have a share in world affairs since last two to three centuries with the exception of the Ottoman Turks. My answer to this mystery is, that the world system was multipolar or bipolar during most of the times and the system swung in a tug of war for power. Another question arises of why Muslims are against the unipolar world led by USA? Why not Christians or Jews or Hindus are against the USA? The causes of Muslims against the unipolarity are of course multiple, but it seems convincing that the West is mostly populated by Christians and the US supremacy is like Christian supremacy because democracy, a core Western value, is the will of the people. Regarding other religions, the universality of a religion is far more important. Christianity, Islam and Judaism are the three largest and Abrahamic religions and now Judaism has shared interests with Christianity the wake of US-Israel relations. So Islam is the only alienated religion which is trying to diminish the Western unipolarity.

The commonality among these three case studies is that all these events took place under same political conditions, i.e. unipolarity in terms of a major power dominating all other powers. Another important commonality is that though these groups in have alliances with their fellow groups but they have no support from any major power who want to use these forces as proxies against their mighty opponent. The motivation as a reaction to the occupation of lands by their opponents seems to me *prima facie* absurd because the reaction in such cases is immediate rather than after centuries.

Although the violence under the veil of God is reactionary, but it is not in reaction to domination rather when one power dominates the whole system because, as mentioned earlier, according to “Newton’s Third Law of Motion”, “for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction”, the reaction would have been immediate. But the reaction after a long time, keeping in view the political conditions of the world, has some other objectives. In a nutshell, violence in the name of God on biblical scale is committed when the system is unjustly dominated by one power. And in the rest of the time, God’s name is used for *Jus ad Bellum* and winning public support as President Lincoln used the “emancipation of slavery” during the “American Civil War”.

Notes & References

- ¹ By World order, I mean a particular system at a time, though it is a new term but the concept is as old as human life is. The world order not only extends to New World Order (Post- Cold War), Post-WW II bipolar order, or Post-Westphalian order. Rather it extends to the Roman order of the 1st century and Islamic order in early Medieval era.
- ² Mont Judd Hermon, *Political Thought: From Plato to Present* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 222-23.
- ³ *Ibid.*, pp., 396-97.
- ⁴ Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, (Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970), 22-58.
- ⁵ Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 18, No. 4, (Spring 1988): 619.
- ⁶ Mont Judd Herman, *Political Thought*, op.cit., 220-32.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State and War: A theoretical Analysis*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 27.
- ⁹ Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, op.cit., 37-45.
- ¹⁰ "Colonialism", Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Available at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/colonialism/> (Accessed on October 15, 2012)
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ Fabio Patito and Pavlos Hatzopoulos. ed. *Religion in International Relations: A Return from Exile*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 2.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ Unipolar in traditional sense, i.e. the strongest military and economic power of the world after the "end of cold war", bipolarity and the dismissal of USSR as a balancer.
- ¹⁶ A "cosmic war" is a "religious war" in which God is believed to be siding to the right against the wrong. See also, Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, (California: University of California Press, 2000), 145-148.
- ¹⁷ Amy E. Black, "With God on Our side: Religion in George W. Bush's Foreign Policy Speeches", Presented at annual meeting of American Political Science Association (Chicago, Illinois, September 2-5, 2004). Available at: <http://www.ucs.louisiana.edu/~ras2777/relpol/bushreligion.PDF> (Accessed on November 12, 2012).
- ¹⁸ Monic Duffy Toft, "Getting Religion: The Puzzling Case of Islam and Civil War", *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (2007): 102.
- ¹⁹ Jochen Hippler, "War, Repression and Terrorism: Political Violence and Civilization in Western and Muslim Societies". Available at: <http://www.tni.org/sites/www.tni.org/archives/archives/politicalviolence.pdf> (Accessed on November 22, 2012).

- ²⁰ “Terrorism”, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Available at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/terrorism/> (Accessed on November 20, 2012).
- ²¹ “War”, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Available at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/war/> (Accessed on November 20, 2012).
- ²² Alex P. Schmid, “Framework for Conceptualizing Terrorism”, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 17, No. 3, (2005): 201.
- ²³ Gus Martin, *Essentials of Terrorism: Concepts and Controversies* (California: Sage Publications, 2008), 3.
- ²⁴ Ibid., 6. Italic mine.
- ²⁵ Alex P. Schmid, “*Framework for Conceptualizing Terrorism*”. op.cit., 202.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 203. Italic in brackets mine.
- ²⁷ Gultekin Sumer, “9/11 and Its Impact on Realism”, op.cit., 5.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 7-8.
- ²⁹ “*Religious Terrorism*”, op.cit., 130.
- ³⁰ Ibid. Italic in brackets mine.
- ³¹ Heather Selma Gregg, “The Causes of Religious Wars: Holy Nations, Sacred Spaces and Religious Revolutions”, (Ph.D diss., Department of Political Science, MIT: February 2004). Available at: <http://dspace.mit.edu/bitstream/handle/1721.1/16639/56191324.pdf?sequence=1> (Accessed on September 20, 2012).
- ³² Rene Girard, “*The Violence and The Sacred*”. trans. Patrick Gregory (London, New York: Continuum, 2005), 6.
- ³³ Ibid., 8.
- ³⁴ Ibid., 51.
- ³⁵ Ibid., 51-52.
- ³⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations”, *Foreign Affairs*, (Summer 1993), 25.
- ³⁷ Heather Selma Gregg, op. cit., 62.
- ³⁸ Reza Aslan, “*How to Win a Cosmic War: God, Globalization and the End of War on Terror*”, 5. Available at: <http://www.rc.vt.edu/pdf/faculty/gabriele/Aslan%20-%20Cosmic%20War.pdf> (Accessed on November 12, 2012)
- ³⁹ Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in The Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (California: University of California Press, 2000), 146.
- ⁴⁰ Reza Aslan, “*How to Win A cosmic War*”, op.cit., 5.
- ⁴¹ Heather Selma Gregg, op. cit., 63.
- ⁴² Sundeep Waslekar, “War on Terror: Clash of Civilizations or Civilizations vs Chaos?” (Princeton University: 2004), 2.
- ⁴³ Mark Juergensmeyer, *Global Rebellion: Religious Challenge to the Secular State, from Christain Militias to Al-Qaeda* (California: University of California Press, 2008), 2.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., 3.

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- ⁴⁵ Bernard Couapel, "Religious Fundamentalism or Anti-modernity", Available at: http://merciber.free.fr/telechargement/essay_fundamentalism.pdf (Accessed on November 27, 2012).
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., 3.
- ⁴⁷ Mark Juergensmeyer, "Global Rebellion.", op.cit., 9-11.
- ⁴⁸ Monica Duffy Toft, *Getting religion: The Puzzling Case of Islam and Civil Wa*", op.cit., 99.
- ⁴⁹ Lawrence D. Freedmen, "Order or Disorder in the New World", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 1, (1991-92): 20.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., 21.
- ⁵¹ MacMillan Dictionary, "World Order". Available at: <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/world-order> (Accessed on November 29, 2012).
- ⁵² Jonathan Fox, "Religion as an Overlooked Element of International Relations" *International Studies Review*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Autumn 2001), pp., 59-60. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3186282> (Accessed on November 29, 2012).
- ⁵³ The New World Order has been founded on the basis of liberalism (International Institutions) and market economy in which Muslims are far behind the West and in market economy the West has dominated.
- ⁵⁴ Glenn H. Snyder, "Mearsheimer's World: Offensive Realism and the Struggle for Security", *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 1(2002): 167.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid., 168-69. The role is like that of a policeman of the world where the peace is maintained by this (US) pacifier.
- ⁵⁶ Thomas S. Mowle and David H. Sacko, *The Unipolar World: An unbalanced Future* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 65.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid., 54.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid., 1-2.
- ⁵⁹ Jonathan Fox, "Religion as an Overlooked Element of International Relations", op.cit., 54.
- ⁶⁰ Religion and Science, "Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy". Available at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/religion-science/> (Accessed on November 30, 2012).
- ⁶¹ Though their effort may result in a failure but we have to discuss the cause not the result. Ignoring the results, the main argument in this paper is the religious violence on biblical scale is due to the unipolar world in which certain religions (Religion's followers) have not their due share.
- ⁶² "History of Rome". Available at: <http://legvi.tripod.com/id27.html> (Accessed November 30, 2012).
- ⁶³ R. James Ferguson, "Rome and Parthia: Power Politics and Diplomacy Across Cultural Frontiers" (2005). CEWCES Research Papers. Paper 10. Available at: http://epublications.bond.edu.au/cewcес_papers/10 (Accessed on November 30, 2012).
- ⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ The advent of nuclear weapons has made it very difficult for the modern day nation states to be a sole hegemon. In Roman time, the Parthians were of no match in offensive capabilities but were able to defend themselves from being overrun by the Romans due their combination of force (archers, cavalry) and the use of terrain.

⁶⁶ David Wilkinson, "Hegemonia: Hegemony, Classic and Modern", *Journal of World-Systems Research*, Vol. XIV, No.2 (2008). Available at: <http://jwsr.ucr.edu/archive/vol14/Wilkinson-vol14n2.pdf> (Accessed on November 30, 2012).

⁶⁷ Ibid. Italics in brackets mine.

⁶⁸ Flavius Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, Trans. William Whiston. Chapters 10 & 11. Available at: <http://www.becomingjewish.org/pdf/the-war-of-the-jews.pdf> (Accessed on November 26, 2012).

⁶⁹ "Jewish Religious Groups". Available at: http://www.tere.org/assets/downloads/secondary/pdf_downloads/GCSE/JewishGroups.pdf (accessed on November 26, 2012)

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Lief E. Vaage, ed., *Religious Rivalaries in the Early Roman Empire and the Rise of Christianity* (Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006), 77.

⁷² Ibid., 54-57.

⁷³ Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998). Quoted in "Religious Terrorism", op.cit., 131.

⁷⁴ Encyclopedia Britannica, "Zeolots". Available at: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/656131/Zealot> (Accessed on November 30, 2012).

⁷⁵ "Jewish Religious Groups", op.cit., 4. See also, Amy Zalman, "Sicarii: First Century Terrorists", available at:

<http://terrorism.about.com/od/groupsleader1/p/Sicarii.htm> (accessed on November 30, 2012). See also, Hanna Rogan, "Jihadism online: A study of how Al-Qaeda and other Radical Islamist groups use internet for terrorist purposes", (FFI/RAPPORT- 2006/00915), 8. Available at: <http://95.211.138.23/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/2007-jihadism-online.pdf> (Accessed on November 26, 2012)

⁷⁶ Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (London: Phoenix Press, 2003), 59-60.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 61.

⁷⁸ "Muslim Crusades Started Four Centuries Before the Western Crusades". Available at: <http://factreal.wordpress.com/2010/02/12/muslim-crusades-started-four-centuries-before-the-western-crusades/> (Accessed on November 30, 2012). The term allegation is used in a sense to differentiate between what Islam says and what its followers make of it. In Islam, forced conversion is prohibited but those who use Islam for its political purposes may do so. So the blame goes not to Islam but to Muslims.

⁷⁹ Bernard Lewis, "Europe and Islam", The Tanner Lectures on Human Values, delivered at Brasenose College, Oxford University (February 5, March 5 and 12, 1990). Available at: <http://tannerlectures.utah.edu/lectures/documents/Lewis98.pdf> (Accessed on November 28, 2012)

⁸⁰ Ibid., 88.

⁸¹ Ibid., 89.

⁸² Ibid., 90.

⁸³ "The Crusades and Jihad". Available at:

http://frontline.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=570:the-crusades-and-jihad&catid=27:islam-cat&Itemid=196 (Accessed on November 27, 2012)

⁸⁴ Terry Jones, "Pilgrims in Arms", A video documentary. Available at: <http://www.veoh.com/watch/v18707282J5dG7ASE?h1=Crusades+-+Episode+1+-+Pilgrims+In+Arms> (Accessed on November 15, 2012).

He also adds that the Byzantine ruler demanded only few thousand fighters to avert the ultimate danger but the pope called for a holy war. (*It means that religion was put into action to erase unipolarity and re-write the order*). Italic in brackets mine.

⁸⁵ "The Crusades", op.cit. The same document also states that the crusaders promised to liberate the occupied lands to be amalgamated into Byzantium. Available at:

<http://www.schoolhistory.co.uk/year7links/crusades/crusades.pdf> (accessed on November 28, 2012).

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Terry Jones, *Pilgrims in Arms*, op.cit.

⁸⁸ "Greedy Barbarians in Armour?". Available at:

http://www.wtsbooks.com/pdf_files/9780061582615.pdf (accessed on November 29, 2012).

⁸⁹ George N. Njenga, *The Feudal System in Medieval Europe* (7th -14th Century A.D.), 2-3. Available at:

<http://www.digital.library.strathmore.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/1164/Feudal%20System%20in%20Medieval%20Europe%20GN.pdf?sequence=1> (Accessed on November 30, 2012)

⁹⁰ "What were the Crusades", op.cit.

⁹¹ Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History", *The National Interest* (Summer, 1989): 1.

⁹² Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment Revisited", *The National Interest* (Winter 2002/03): 5.

⁹³ Ibid., 6.

⁹⁴ "Jihad against Jews and Crusaders", World Islamic Front Statement. (February 23, 1998). Available at:

<http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa.htm> (Accessed on November 29, 2012).

⁹⁵ Max Abrahams, "Why Terrorism Doesn't Work", *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Fall 2006): 69.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 70.

⁹⁷ The essence of every religion, i.e. Christianity, Judaism and Islam etc. is based on peaceful co-existence but every religion is used by its followers to further its political aims and justify its actions. So religion is a victim at the hands of its manipulators.