

Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism: Myth or Reality

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Abstract

Islamic fundamentalism is a modern term widely used to denote the militants and extremists belonging to the Muslim world in contemporary period. The Western world and the Western writers are promoting this concept by associating the religion of Islam with extremists thinking. This paper deals with the concept of fundamentalism and identifies its historical evolution. The research will also explore that how different political reasons have contributed in the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism. The paper argues that extremism and militancy in the Muslim world is wrongly identified as the Islamic fundamentalism. It also concludes that it is not only Muslims rather many other individuals associated with different religions have fundamentalist ideology.

Keywords: Islamic Fundamentalism, Fundamentalist Ideology in other Religions, Modern Theology

Introduction:

The word fundamentalism denotes to the individual having ideology against the modern theology. Some has identified it with an individual behaviour having anti-intellectual, bigoted and intolerant thoughts. It was originally used for a particular trend in American Protestantism that sought to go back to the biblical fundamentals of the Christian faith. These trends could also be seen in Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy.¹ In the early twentieth century, the term Fundamentalism was first used to denote the American Protestant who were defending the fundamentals of the Christian religion against the onslaught of liberal and modern theological interpretation of their religion.² But in modern days, the term is used to denote reactionary trends in other religions, notably in Islam and Judaism. The some basic concepts are common in all fundamentalist approach such as rejection of modernity, enlightenment and secularism; support of conservative ideologies and fundamentalist ideas; and acceptance of inerrant scripturalism.³ Although Fundamentalism is not against the modernism or principles of modern world directly or independently yet it is always against the influence of it on its faith community. So it does not react to the crises posing by the modern world rather it reacts to the crises posed by the modern ways to the basic tenets of some particular religious entity or fundamental religious beliefs.⁴ Hence, fundamentalism is a proclamation of reclaimed authority over a scared tradition that involve; a refutation of the radical differentiation of the sacred and the secular that has evolved with modernization; a plan to differentiate this institutional bi-furcation and thus bring religion back to center stage as an important factor or interest in public policy decisions.⁵

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Lawrence pointed that “Fundamentalists are at once the consequences of modernity and the antithesis of modernism.”⁶ Hood *et al.* concludes,

“The sacred text (...) is in itself sufficient for the fundamentalists as source of life's meaning and purpose. The textual narrative provides fundamentalists with world view that allows comprehensibility and manageability to an otherwise existence (...) Textual authority, for fundamentalists, provides moral certainty and stability. Thus we have suggested that from a psychological perspective, there are legitimate reasons why a person might choose to be a fundamentalist.”⁷

The fundamentalists' struggle are seldom against the non-believers rather their battle is against the co-religionists who adopt the ways against the traditional teachings of religion.⁸ The struggle within Muslim world also depicts the same situation as people are pursuing their other co-religionists in many states.

One expert on Buddhism also argued that the term “fundamentalism” could not be applied to Sinhalese Buddhists as they did not want to implement to the traditional and fundamental textual source of their tradition unlike Christian fundamentalists.⁹ They are called radical due to their rejection of traditional ways and system and identified as the conservatives due to traditional interpretation of the theological values to guide the pattern and values of life.¹⁰ In modern world, the phenomenon of fundamentalism is also identified as terrorism or extremism.

The last decades of 20th century has seen the emergence of religious ideologies. Orthodox terrorism theory considers religion as the major driving force behind the acts of terrorism. Hoffman argued that religious motivation was a major factor in generating the international terrorism and most serious attacks in 1990s.¹¹ Moreover, half of all active international terrorist organisations in 1995 were motivated by religious ideology and majority of the terrorist events had religious dimension in that decade. Juergensmeyer supports this argument and identifies this type of violence as an expression of political power claimed to be mandated by God.¹² Some terrorist elements or groups misinterpret ‘horrible distortion of their religion to justify the murder of innocents’.¹³ These terrorist groups use violence to advance their messianic and fanatic religious agendas or more obscure pathological reasons by expressing protest and rage.¹⁴ Rubenstein sees the religious terrorists as fundamental nationalist. He argues, “Religious fundamentalism expresses widely felt longings for national redemption, national power, self-purification and revenge.”¹⁵ Freedom of thought and action presented by the liberal societies responded by religious terrorism.¹⁶ Wilkinson points out the emergence of religious terrorism from the disillusionment of the secular ideology.¹⁷ Ranstorp agrees that religion is the main root cause of religious terrorism and it creates a problem for that particular religion from secular forces but he also argues that it is not only religion and politics which are rooted in religious terrorism but other factors such as political, social and economic also play vital role in aggravating the religious crisis from

which religious terrorism emerges.¹⁸ It is very complex and can be misleading to identify religion as the root cause of terrorism. Although some authors have claimed the religion's role in generating terrorism yet no statistical data seems to clearly prove it. It needs further research and investigation that either it is the sole cause of terrorism or it works jointly with other socio-economic and political factors in executing terrorism. The writings of many scholars observing Islam as promoter of religious terrorism in contemporary environment can be used to propagate against religion in the absence of any empirical evidence. Orthodox terrorism theory concentrates too much on political dimensions of religion and fails to identify and investigate other possible factors and areas that might be a primary cause of terrorism. Laqueur disagrees with the religious fanaticism as the root cause of terrorism and argues that culture and tradition of violence coupled with poverty, unemployment and unfulfilled political promises as the sources and causes of violence and terrorism.¹⁹ Testas also emphasises more on the economic factors such as economic deprivation and decline for this conflict rather on religious factor particularly Islamic Influence.²⁰

The presence of religious groups are ubiquitous in every religion. It is not only some Muslims that are strict to their orthodox value but many other communities belonging to different religion are strict in the interpretation of their religious ideologies. In past some Jewish villages in Eastern Europe were existed as a separate orthodox communities governed by their orthodox Jewish laws and resisted against the secularisation, modernisation and globalisation. Similarly Ulster's conservative Protestants found the base of their political faith in the old Scots Covenants. The Rashtirya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Bhartia Janta Party (BJP) in India are also examples of modern times that are creating and promoting the Hindu brotherhood among true Hindu believers in India.²¹ These political parties also tried to change the constitution of India on the basis of "Hindu-ness". They are trying to marginalize the other communities of India such as Sikh, Christians, Muslims, Marxists, Buddhists and Jains. They changed the text books by filling them with Hindu mythology and politics to inculcate the Hindu ideology among the school going children.²² Even in the United States, the champion of modern democracy and the hub of globalization, the protestant fundamentalists argues that their law should be based on the bible, which they look upon as the word of God.²³

Islamic Fundamentalism

Although it is true that the term fundamentalism was originated from the Christianity yet in the modern world it has been associated with Islam and Islamic fundamentalism is used as a common phenomenon in the modern world. Islamic fundamentalism is considered by many western authors as one of the major factors that transformed the 20th century and 21st century politics in addition to the social, political, intellectual, cultural and economic factors and forces. Bernard Lewis clearly sum up the dilemma by describing,

“For Muslims, the state was God’s state, the army God’s army, and, of course, the enemy was God’s enemy. Of more practical importance, the law was God’s law, and in principle there could be no other. The question of separating Church and state did not arise, since there was no church, as an autonomous institutions, to be separated. Church and state were one and the same.”²⁴

Boff identifies that Islam rejects modernity in the name of religion and sovereignty of God, the basis political philosophy of Islam whereas this Islamic philosophy is denied by the societies and states of the modern day.²⁵ American Protestant fundamentalists started in a reaction of the reading and interpretation of the contents of the bible whereas, on the contrary, the term Islamic fundamentalism is used by different authors to depicts Muslims at large whereas these are very few or handful people, even not having real knowledge of Islam, who are trying to interpret the Islamic Sharia according to their own strict interpretation of Islam. These people have neither the ability to promulgate ‘*fatwa*’²⁶ due to absence of any religious authority. Ruthven argued, “Islamic fundamentalism cannot really be defined in terms of Koranic inerrancy.”²⁷ Whereas, Gellner in his work “Muslim Society” identifies the Islam as the most vigorously fundamentalists religion due to no room of modernity because it has final scriptural faith, last Prophet, and no differentiation between state and Church.²⁸ Many Western scholars and writers identified the Islam as most disruptive force among all the religions and denoted that Islam has a totalitarian view of life and culture and Islamic fundamentalists are not willing to compromise with the contemporary modern liberal ideologies.²⁹ It has been manifested wrongly by the western authors as their main assumption rests on the idea that Islamic extremism is a product of Islam as religion and the Holy Book- the Quran, was its main source and they even awfully compared it to the Mein Kampf, Hilter's autobiography.³⁰ It is very astonishing to identify the Quran as the source as the writers neither have read nor have understood the Quran. So their assumption is baseless without referring to a particular ‘*Ayat*’³¹ of the Holy book that promote Islamic fundamentalism.

Lawrence, a widely proponent of Islamic fundamentalism literature of the modern times, admitted himself that the ruling elite in Muslim states must not be regarded as the fundamentalists because fundamentalism is an objection on any form of power that is not guided by a divine scripture. Hence, their power alienate them from the marginalised people.³² So it is not the religion rather it is the socio-economic challenges and status that compelled someone to become fundamentalist. Tibi called the some rulers such as Saddam Hussian as an example of Islamic fundamentalism particularly due to his call for Jihad in a letter.³³ Whereas Saddam urged both Muslims and Christians to fight against the conspiracy of the Zionists. He was of the opinion that Zionists were trying to annihilate the indigenous population of Palestinian. He also praised the Christians for standing up against these conspiracies.³⁴ So it is wrong to identify him as Islamic fundamentalist as he urged

the Christians, a non-Muslim community as well to fight against the illegal occupation of Israel and genocide of Palestinians in their homeland so that was a call to establish peace, justice and humanity against the aggressors. Even some academicians believe that fundamentalism is an exclusively Christian Phenomenon and this term must not be used to denote the community, organizations or people outside the Christian world. So, it is futile, for them, to identify Islam or Buddhism as fundamentalist.³⁵

Davidson describes that Islamic Fundamentalism can be identified as a meaningful cultural, political and religious phenomenon.³⁶ However this was not the case as Islam was emerged as a religious moment for the establishment of Islamic Caliphate from Morocco to the Philippines and it inspired many Muslim youth around the world.³⁷ The implementation of religious laws is not only a demand in some Muslim states such as in Nigeria and Egypt some religious parties were agreed to implement shriaa (Sunnah of Holy Prophet PBUH) in their respective states.³⁸ This is right of every political party to support any law according to its own ideology. In case of India, the RSS and BJP are in favour of implementing strict Hindu laws. Similarly all religious parties in Israel also declared their goal to form a state ruled by *halakha*-rabbinic interpretation of biblical law.³⁹ So it is not the Muslim states and Islamic parties that urged to implement religious laws but political parties in other states also want to promulgate religious laws. In Islamic societies, liberals faction is also present but in minority. It is important to note that in Muslim community, it is very difficult for a liberal and secular to openly denounce the Islam and it is always considered as a crucial and important ingredient of politics so it is very difficult to separate them.⁴⁰

The Islamic revolution of Iran is identified as the main cause in rising of Islamic fundamentalism in modern time by the western writers. Rapoport identifies that Iranian revolution is known to be the primary grounds of Islamic extremism because Khomeini's regime assisted and promoted the Hezbollah (the "Party of God") and other terrorist groups in Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Kuwait and Iraq.⁴¹ Pillar claimed that Iran was also played a role of state sponsor terrorism throughout the 1990s.⁴² According to western authors, the success of Islamic fundamentalist in Iran provided the opportunity to other Islamic movements to follow the path in other Islamic states that were also implementing and following non-Islamic ways. The modern history of implementing Islamic laws and Islamic culture starts from the 1979 in two ways; first, by the Iranian revolution and second by the Jihad against Russian invasion over Afghanistan. The Muslims from all over the world came to fight against Godless communism in Afghanistan. It is blamed always that the Muslim world, notably Saudi and Pakistan inculcated the Islam as a decisive force in 1979 Afghan war. Whereas, in Afghanistan, Islamists took up arms long before the Soviet invasion to counter the communist regime of Daud. The Islamisation of Afghanistan started in 1950s when some professors of the faculty of Theology at Kabul University, inspired by the ideas of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, started to influence their students. Later on, the students, in 60s and early 70s, denounced

the government's ties with the Soviet Union and westernization of culture, more notably un-Islamic dress of women and alcohol.⁴³ They were in favour of both Islamic culture and western science and technology. In words of Oliver Roy, "Islamism is the Sharia plus electricity".⁴⁴ So phenomenon of Islamism in Afghanistan was promoted by the Afghan students, not by Pakistan and Muslim world, particularly from rural society.⁴⁵ They declared Afghan government illegitimate and corrupt.⁴⁶ It can be said that it was not an Islamic fundamentalism in Afghanistan rather it was a socio-political reason that instigated them against the king. In Lebanon, the Hizbullah (party of God) tried to impose the Iran's model by instigating many religious groups. The Islamic fundamentalism got the first significant political success over a large scale in 1979 by overthrowing the regime of pro-US Shah of Iran in Iran. The Ayatollah Khomeini with the help of power of common man challenged the Shah of Iran due to increasingly westernization of Iranian society and aligning with Britain and US foreign policy. The main reasons behind the success of Islamic revolution was not only the religious but the people of Iran were also start feeling that the dependence over the US and west by the Shah of Iran would ultimately lead the Iran towards the colonial status and the west would steal its resources just like it did in South Asia by exploiting the Subcontinent in 19th and early 20th Century. So it was not only the religious issue but also the economic and culture reasons that created the basis of increasing anti-Western Islamic fundamentalism among Muslims of the world and they supported the Islamic Movements. The Iranian revolution of 1979 was also a step towards the implementation of Shiaa laws by toppling the pro American regime. Whereas, Vanessa Martin has rejected the term "fundamentalism" in case of Iran "as it reflects a different, Christian religio-political environment, and finds no corresponding term in Islamist vocabulary."⁴⁷ If the Iranian revolution is an example of Islamic fundamentalism and they are against the modern democratic system that how it is possible that it has been governed by the successive elected democratic governments by the vote of the people on the principle of western democracy.

Many scholars have identified the failure of nationalism in the Islamic states resulted into the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism. Arjumand pointed out that the failure of revolution in result of President Sadat's assassination in 1981 by the most radical faction of the Muslim brotherhood produced the current violence in the name of Jihad.⁴⁸ It is again seems to be an historical error or misjudgement as the 2012 elections of Egypt provided the opportunity, to former member of Muslim Brotherhood and chairman of Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), Mohammad Mursi, to come into power by democratic process but the western world has conspired to topple up the regime by denoting his Islamic reforms as "Islamist coup"⁴⁹ on the hands of a military dictator just after one year of his election. So it was not the failure of nationalism or hate towards the democratic system that is causing the Islamic fundamentalism rather it is the social exclusion and suppression of Muslim world that igniting them towards fundamentalism or radicalism to counter the discriminatory policies of the world leaders particularly of the Western World.

Islamic fundamentalism is also identified as Islamic radicalism, Islamic extremism, Islamic terrorism and sometimes as political Islam by western writers. Some writers identify the Muslim societies as the main cause of terrorism and these are also prone to terrorism due to lack in democratization, economic liberalization and underdevelopment.⁵⁰ Piazza support this argument by exemplifying Iraq and Afghanistan.⁵¹ Contemporary scholar and writers refer to the development and examination of what is called Islamic terrorism to understand religious terrorism, alleged to be as a source and cause of terrorism during the last couple of decades. The deeper context of jihadists' terrorism involves simultaneous bursts of religious enthusiasm across the Muslim world over thirty years ago.⁵² Tibi explained that fundamentalism is nothing other than a "politicization of religion" against Western modernisation and Western Values.⁵³ The third terrorist wave identifies the religion, particularly Islamic fundamentalism, as the main cause of terrorism as the after effect of the Iranian Revolution in 1979 viz. a viz. Afghan war of 1979 simultaneously⁵⁴ while pillar identifies the collapse of the Soviet Union as a motivational force of the third wave of terror and in this phase it became more bloody than ever.⁵⁵ With the collapse of authoritarian regimes in former Soviet republics, ethnic and religious based conflict erupted and these resulted into the emergence of terrorism in many of the former Soviet republics such as Tajikistan, Chechnya, Georgia and Azerbaijan with transnational dimensions.⁵⁶ These writers and others are trying to establish link of every act of any Muslim terrorists with Islam in contemporary era particularly in the context of their hatred against non-Muslim societies.⁵⁷ In reality the statistics clearly show that Muslim countries are more victims of terrorism than non-Muslim states in the contemporary age.⁵⁸ Most of the Islamic terrorist organisations started struggle against their own government due to corruption, heavy headedness or autocracy particularly in the Middle East against their rulers.⁵⁹ Kitschelt differs from these ideas by correlating Islamic terrorism with those States which have eschewed economic globalization and failed to develop capitalist economic system.⁶⁰ If capitalist economic system is not acceptable to the people of these states then why one wants to impose that system so it is their sufferings at the hands of the rulers that turned them against those rulers.

Muler-fahrenheit has identified four important factors that contributed in the rise of Islamic fundamentalism; 1) the historical supremacy of Islam over other religion is on decline; 2) the colonial supremacy of England and France over Islamic states; 3) The Muslims consider Islam as the divine religion having political order for the whole world; 4) Islam has found no way to counter the modern phenomenon particularly secularism.⁶¹ Jihad is described by the western authors to denote the Islamic fundamentalist approach. Roy identifies that Jihad is becoming "a permanent and personal religious duty" for individual having the ideology of jihad.⁶² Jihad is an Arabic word meaning of struggle and the bigger Jihad is inner struggle with one's own desires and the military Jihad is of lesser importance in Islam. The first practical demonstration of this Jihad was in 1980s when Muslim world fought against the

Russian invasion over a Muslim country, Afghanistan. After Russian withdrawal, Bin Laden, the main instrument of this Jihad started struggle to ouster the American or non-believers from the Holy land of the Arab and declared the Islamic rules of Middle East states corrupt and un-Islamic. So that struggle was not only against the US but also against the House of Saud (the rulers of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and other Muslim rulers as well.

Western perception and fear from Islamic fundamentalist was deep rooted in the historical controversial relations between Muslims and Judeo-Christians.⁶³ The Judeo-Christian West anti-Islamic behaviour created the role of antagonist in the Muslim community.⁶⁴ Davidson pointed out that the mistrust among Islam and West was due to “two-way historical factors”, “If Islamic fundamentalists hostility toward the West is in good part a function of heritage of Western Imperialism, western dislike and fear of Islamic fundamentalism is also rooted in a long history of religiously based Christian hostility towards the Muslim world.”⁶⁵ Although the three religions having the same historical revelation yet the rejection of Quran as the final revelation of God and Muhammad (PBUH) as the last messenger of God created the rivalry among them.⁶⁶ The rivalry was further enhanced when Jewish refused to accept Muhammad (PBUH) as a Prophet and later on Hazrat Umar, the second Caliph of Islam declared the Arabia as a sacred land and expelled Jewish and Christians.⁶⁷

Before September 11, the scholars have identified the Iranian revolution whereas other explored the charismatic Islamic ideologues, notably Sayyiq Qutb, Mawlana Abul Ala Mawdudi and Hassan Al-Banna, to implement the new Islamic political order by challenging the Western-inspired democracy and nationalism.⁶⁸ The trends shifted to Bin Laden's al-Qaeda in the post September 11 world in result of the war on terror.⁶⁹

Post September 11 World

The twin tower attacks have changed the meanings of Islamic fundamentalism in western literature. Before September 11, Islamic fundamentalism was considered as one of the theories of religious fundamentalism but since September 11 it emerged as the fundamentalism and sometimes wrongly identified or associated with terrorism or Islamic terrorism. Some scholars have identified the role of internet in exploding the fundamentalism in the Muslim world. Whereas, Benjamin and Simon disagree with the theory that it was only the Social networking that helped the Muslims to become fundamentalist. He opined that, “Without internet, bin laden still could have taken his jihad global- videotapes and compact discs were already spreading the word before Netscape- but its growth would be at a comparative snail's pace.”⁷⁰ In response to September 11 attack, the Muslim world at large joined hands with the US against al-Qaeda to fight the extremism and terrorism hence it clearly showed their rejection of radicalism as a way to implement Islam. Many leaders of Muslim world, Islamic scholars and religious leaders vehemently condemned the September 11 attack and criticised the killing of civilians as un-

Islamic and opined that these religious zealots are misrepresenting and misinterpreting the Islam to serve their own agenda of terrorism. Forty six leaders representing different Islamists movement condemned the September 11 attack by explaining,

“The undersigned leaders of Islamic movements are horrified by the events of Tuesday 11 September 2001 in the United States, which resulted in massive killings, destruction and attack on innocent lives. We express our deepest sympathies and sorrow. We condemn, in the strongest term, the incidents, which are against all human and Islamic norms. This is grounded in the Noble Laws of Islam, which forbid all forms of attack on innocents. God Almighty says in the Holy Quran: No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another (Surah al Isra 17:15).”⁷¹

It is pertinent to mention that the parties, that are blamed to be the most fundamentalist or having the inspiration for the militant groups such as al-Qaeda, the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, Ahmed Yassin, the founder of Hamas, the amir of the jamat-i-Islami in Pakistan, were among the signatories.

The use of word ‘crusade’ by the American president Bush to denote the war on terror further ignited the Muslim population. Bush, in a press confers on 16 September, 2001 declared, “This crusade, this war on terrorism is going to take a while.”⁷² The word ‘crusade’ for Muslims has the same feeling as the word ‘jihad’ has for the West. So the use of word crusade made Muslim suspicious about the objectives of the war on terror and it also ignited fear in the Muslim world. Later on, the White house said that Bush regretted the use of term and in his address to the nation he told the Muslim world, “We respect your faith ... The terrorists are traitors to their own faith, trying in effect to hijack Islam itself.”⁷³ But he again used the word ‘crusade’ while addressing a rally of troops in Alaska by emphasising that, "I want to tell you something, we've got no better friends than Canada. They stand with us in this incredibly important crusade to defend freedom, this campaign to do what is right for our children and our grandchildren.”⁷⁴ Hence the rhetoric campaign against terrorism produced a common belief among Islamic Community that this war is against Muslims and Islam.⁷⁵ The September 11 events have trickle-down effect on the younger Muslim generation. The Iraq war, Afghan war and human rights violations against Muslims compelled the new generation to be more active as explained rightly by an American Muslim,

“I am more religious than my father...after September 11, the older generation who ran the show thought it best to lie low... As that happened, the younger generation was uncomfortable with this, especially at college and universities. We decided we must become active.”⁷⁶

Myth and Reality of Islamic Fundamentalism

Militancy and extremism are sometimes wrongly identified as a fundamentalism. Militancy is a phenomenon which is ubiquitous and common and cannot be identified on the basis of the religion. It cannot be associated with the Islam alone, as it has been associated in modern times. Assassination of Indian Prime Minister, Indra Gandhi, by militant Sikhs in 1984, Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzak Rabin, by a Jewish fanatic in 1995, and Egyptian president, Anwar Sadat, by Islamic fundamentalists in 1981; communitarian violence by militant Buddhists in Sri Lanka; anti-abortion extremism in the USA, Jewish fundamentalists in Israel's occupied territories; violence in Israel by Hezbollah (Party of Allah) and Hamas and Islamic terrorists in Algeria are the prime examples of fundamentalism and extremism from different time across all corners of the world involving persons from different religion and region. Throughout the years of colonial era, the colonial powers and western imperial intrusion over the majority of the Muslim states caused the distortion of Islamic culture, religion and values in Islamic states.⁷⁷ Mostly the fundamentalists are inevitably against the secularism and Islam is strictly against secularism so in modern days the fundamentalism is associated with Islam. The re-Islamisation is a reaction of the emergence of European and American world view and power notably over the Islamic states by making them colonies and conquering them and exploiting their resources.

American foreign policy is seen as the essence of terrorism by some academicians and governments.⁷⁸ Addison and Murshed (2006) produce a theoretical model of terrorism that explains terrorism and violence against the friends of their enemies to undermine the support of their main opponent.⁷⁹ This philosophy can be observed since the beginning of the war on terror in which terrorist violence has been used against American allies across the world in form of suicide bombing or other forms. Dreher and Gassebner point out that the political allies of US are more likely to be the target of terrorism.⁸⁰ Schneider *et al.* support this argument and denotes particularly the EU states because of their support to the US in its policy of intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq and its support of Israel.⁸¹ Barros *et al.* (2007) also provides evidence of targeting the US' citizens particular by left-wing and radical Islamic groups in Europe.⁸² In contemporary era the unilateralist hegemon policies of the US towards the world are also instigating anti US sentiments. The US has always been supporting, sponsoring and sustaining autocratic rulers, monarchs and dictators across the world to secure her own interests. The list starts from the Shah of Iran, King Faial of Iraq, Saddam Hussian of Iraq, Syngman Rhee of South Korea, Marco of the Philippines, Latin American dictators such as Pinchot of Chile, Manuel Noreiga of Panama, Duvalier of Dominican Republic, Batista of Cuba and Samoza of Nicaragua, Pakistani military dictators such as Zia Ul Haq, Ayub Khan and Musharraf. The US always supported them in the name of national interest. Military intervention by the US caused resentment and anti-US sentiments. US invaded in many parts of the world since 2nd world war, such as Yugoslavia, Grenada, Libya, Cambodia, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, Panama, Kenya, Cuba,

Laos, Somalia, Haiti, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Chile, Nicaragua, Chile, Guatemala, Honduras.⁸³ The current era is known as the American century so the Muslims across the globe see the US as a main source of their deprivation and weakness so they started to think re-emerge as a force against a global power. The US support to Israel against Palestine is the most vital source of anti- Americanism in the Muslim world particularly. Naidu exclaimed that the US is willing to alienate a billion Muslims in the world in supporting Israel.⁸⁴

It is surprising that the United States helped Muslims overwhelmingly in the Afghan Jihad and now al-Qaeda has proposed the same Jihad against US as it is a sponsor of Israel and Israel is invading on a Muslim land so the Jihad was incumbent on all Muslims against the US. The US support to Israel against Palestinians, Support of India against Kashmiris, Support for Serbian genocide against Bosnian Muslims, US invasion over Afghanistan and Iraq, support for the Philippine aggression against Muslims in the South, Silence on the genocide of Muslims in Burma, actions in East Timor and so on are the long list of American crimes in the eyes of Muslim across the world that urge them to fight against the US. So the al-Qaeda saw the only solution in sword to fight and jihad against the US and the September 11 was a defensive response from al-Qaeda to stop the US aggression against the Muslim world.⁸⁵ The negative perception about Islam and Muslim also made them alienated. According to a poll of 2004, every fourth American holds a “negative stereotype of Muslims”.⁸⁶ A Pew Survey shows that the younger Muslim generation are more likely to practise an ultra-conservative version of the faith and attended religious services more frequently as compared to their parents.⁸⁷ The perceived social exclusion and rising level of Islamophobia in the West particularly after September 11, 2001 urged the Muslim youth to study their religion. Majority of the Muslims favoured and adopted the moderate vision of Islam. It is a minority community that adopted the extremely fundamentalists Sunni sects, notably Salafism. The Salafism has not too long history rather it was emerged in 18th century.⁸⁸ The Salafism, meaning “ancient one” was the force that tried to establish the principles of Islam in the rigid way and seeks to implement the Caliphate period in the contemporary era by implementing these principles.⁸⁹ One of the reasons and justifications of the use of violence by the Salafist was the impact of newly Islamists intellectual, non-trained and self-taught with little formal training on the life of Islamic militant.⁹⁰ Initially the Salafis waged war against their own Muslim rulers notably in Egypt and Algeria.⁹¹ Later they declared ceasefire and tried to participate in main stream politics but in Egypt they were denied participation and in Algeria reintegrated the former fighters into main stream by granting them amnesty. So the members from Egypt feeling marginalised left for Pakistan and Afghanistan to work for al-Qaeda.⁹² Their focus then shifted towards the United States as most of them agreed that the United States was waging war of aggression against Muslims through its actions in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine and elsewhere.⁹³ Many scholars interpret the verses of Quran that Islam clearly forbids the killings of innocent civilians. Many scholars

have quoted the speech of Hazrat Abu Bakr (R.A), first Caliph of Islam during the battle against Byzantine Empire in Syria,

“Stop, O people, that I may give you ten rules for your guidance in the battlefield. Do not commit treachery or deviate from the right path. You must not mutilate dead bodies. Neither kill a child, nor a woman, nor an aged man. Bring no harm to the trees, nor burn them with fire, especially those which are fruitful. Slay not any of the enemy's flock, save for your food. You are likely to pass by people who have devoted their lives to monastic services; leave them alone.”⁹⁴

But in response to that al-Qaeda's also quote that Quran clearly mentioned that “And fight in the way of Allah with those who fight with you, and do not exceed the limits, surely Allah does not love those who exceed the limits.”⁹⁵ So al-Qaeda is getting sympathies and new recruits from all over the world because US policies appears to be anti-Islamic. US invasion of Iraq on the pretext of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) is an example where after invading and killing thousands of Muslims, the US administration admitted that there were no WMD.

Many young generation designed non-violent campaigns to counter the Islam phobia and to promote the image of Islam as a peaceful religion.⁹⁶ Whereas on the other hand, growing anti-Muslim and discriminating policies against Islam is dragging a number of young generations towards militant thoughts. According to a Pew research, almost one in every four Muslim of age 18 to 29 in America, France, Germany, Britain and Spain believe the justification of suicide bombing against civilian targets in certain cases.⁹⁷ The US invasion over Afghanistan and Iraq on the pretext of weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), that later proved wrong information, are helpful in creating such thoughts. The killing of thousands civilians by US on wrong information is leading to further enhanced this thinking. The Muslims then starting to think that it is necessary to counter the US power by showing them power. The pro-Israeli sentiment against the Palestinians, pro Indian sentiments against the Kashmiris and pro-Russian thinking against Chechens are fuelling the anti-US in Muslim world and resulted in the hatred of the United States among militant extremists.

The rise of anti-American and pro-Islamic thoughts can be observed clearly in Muslim world in modern days. The Islamic parties have never been able to secure countable size of seats in the electoral politics but due to increasing anti-US sentiments in the 21st century, candidates from the Islamic parties increased their influence tenfold in Pakistan and threefold in Morocco. Justice and Development Party (AK) in Turkey formed the government whereas Islamic candidates secured nineteen out of forty seats. This was not new trend, however the seats are increased manifold due to pro Muslim sentiments in result of the anti-Muslim US policies. In 1980s and 1990s, the candidates with Islamic orientation were also elected as member of parliaments in many Muslim countries across the globe, notably in

Lebanon, Turkey, Kuwait, Pakistan, Bahrain, Malaysia, Egypt and Indonesia. Many of them reached to the cabinet level including prime ministerial position.⁹⁸ Even surprisingly in Pakistan, the alliance of mainstream religious political parties, Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, (MMA) became third largest parties by winning 30 seats in the October 2002 election. The main reason was a reaction of people against Pakistan's involvement in the US war on terror because this alliance of religious parties had anti-war campaign.⁹⁹ The election of mainstream religious parties in the Islamic states showed two trends; one that other secular political parties fails to deliver hence the people transform their affiliations towards Islamic parties, and secondly, Islam still remains a potent force in the mainstream politics of Islamic states. It is also commonly misperceived that the low level of education and socio-economic conditions lead the Muslim towards militancy. In fact, overwhelming majority that conducted the September 11 attacks were Saudis and mostly graduated from the prestigious institutions not from the madrassas of a backward area. They were highly educated. The recognition of Taliban by Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Pakistan were always seen with scepticism by the world as they were supporting the militant factors. Whereas the reason behind their acceptance was the stability of the Afghanistan and pace in the region. As it is an admitted fact the Taliban brought peace to that part of the World that was devastated since 1970s, first by pro-Communist rulers, then by ten year Afghan war and in the end, by different warring factions for establish rule in the Kabul.

Suicide terrorism is also a phenomenon that is attached with Islam in modern days. Whereas, Naidu clearly identified that "total alienation and hopelessness can drive individuals to a state of mind that looks at life as a living death. Such alienation and desperation could be the product of suffering dehumanization, caused by unending violence, political persecution, economic suffering, religious or racial oppression, ethnic cleansing or neo-colonialism."¹⁰⁰ The suicide bombing in Pakistan in retaliation of drone strikes is very best illustrated example of Naidu's theory. The suicide bomber never means that it is the religion that instigating the individual for sacrifice their lives. It may be because of a fanatical faith (like religionist or racism), an irrational ideology (like fascism, imperialism, or communism), or a commitment to liberty (like anti-colonialism or anti-despotism).¹⁰¹ Even former American Governor of Virginia, Henry Patrick, once urged the colonists to take up arms against the British by proclaiming that, "I know not what course others may take; but as for me... give me liberty or give me death!"¹⁰²

Davidson pointed out that the Islamic fundamentalism was emerged in the contemporary era due to the failure of both Islamic modernists and the Westernizers in resolving the problems of the Muslim world.¹⁰³ The fear and suspicion of the West was rooted in the emergence of modern Islamic forces. It was not only the western world but the modernist forces within these Islamic states saw these emerging Islamic movements and Islamic forces as a danger and identified them as Islamic fundamentalist forces. The West was fearful because the emergence of Islamic powers in the globe would threaten the political and economic interests of the

Western world. The Western world is mainly concerned about the three issue of Muslim fundamentalism and that are violence, democracy and women's rights. Instead of this disagreement and problems between West and Islam, many Western states still hold good relations with the Islamic states. The Saudis relations with the US and with the other European states are the best example. The Saudi Arabia bears the philosophy of interpreting the Islamic sharia Laws and it is promoting the cultural and political Islamisation across the Muslim world. However it also maintained good relations with the Western world. The European, Russian and American policy makers criticise the Islamic fundamentalism and Muslim fundamentalist groups but ignore their own attitude regarding Muslim colonization and intense torture in the past. French invaded and annexed Algeria in early 1830s, the Dutch colonised the Indonesian islands, Russian annexed Central Asian Muslim States of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan. These all colonial powers later on granted independence due to international pressure or internal economic pressure. Some of these colonised states were engaged in barbarism to get independence such as Algerians against French.¹⁰⁴ In the presence of the UN Charter that has declared occupation illegal, the conquest of Muslim land by the colonial power.¹⁰⁵ Islamic movements are the significant force inspite of their little success in the main stream politics of the 21stcentaury from Marocco to Indonesia.¹⁰⁶

Conclusion:

Whether it is Christian west or the Islamic state, if they are challenged, they started to restore unitary religious states to counter that. Islam is a religion of peace and love. It has liberal ideas on many issues. It is evident that even many rap artists were converted into Islam.¹⁰⁷ It was not only the western world but many of the Islamic states and their inhabitants are also afraid from the Islamic radicalism. Western perception of Islam as a fundamentalist religion is due to some anti-Islamic programmes and anti-Muslim statements in the leading newspapers and mainstream media of the world that is portraying a negative image of Islam and Muslims. The America must understand that it is necessary to get support of Muslim world to fight against militants and fundamentalists within Islam and US has to understand the real issues of Muslim Ummah such as Palestine, Kasmir and Chechnya to resolve the problems of the Muslim world. The Muslim world and population will cooperate the US only when the US will realise and take steps to resolve their intense problems. The Islamic states are ruled by the secular self-interested politically motivated elite that are aligned to the west to secure their self-interest rather to secure public's interest at large. Some fundamentalists may seek to re-Islamise the Islamic states and societies according to the interpretation of the Shariaa according to their own interpretation of Islam but the Muslim world at large is free from this ideology. These internal and external problem and struggle between different actors result into a cycle of violence and Islam was associated by this violence to identify it as the religious violence by western world. It is not correct to identify Islam as the

fundamentalist religion. In fact, the individuals belonging to different religion has caused violence such as Jewish has killed Prime Minister of Israel, Sikh and Hindu extremists have killed two prime Ministers in India. So it is better to see the act of extremists and fundamentalists as acts of individual rather than associating with any particular religion.

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