

“ENLIGHTENED MODERATION” OR ‘THE
NEW US ‘RELIGIOUS ORDER’

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By Professor Khurshid Ahmad

“Enlightenment” and “Moderation” are not just two catchy expressions; these also denote some appealing notions. The Muslim culture, society, and the Shariah if viewed from Islam’s intellectual, ideological and moral perspective, then these two attributes would stand out as the distinct features of Islam as a religion and civilization. That is the reason why Islam has decreed ‘Adl’, which stands for moderation and balance, in matters concerning one’s faith, actions, and the life of an individual in a society, his community life, worship rituals, economy and even in matters concerning friendship, war and peace. A man is accountable in Islam for all that he does. This sense of accountability depends on his awareness, his power of discretion and enlightenment. It also helps to check bias and imbalance. The Qur’an has, therefore, described the Muslim Ummah as ‘Ummatan Wasatan’ (a Moderate Community). The Holy Prophet (PBUH) also declared moderation and the middle road as the best course. He said: “Khair ul Umoori Ausatuhaa” (Moderation is the best course). Seen in this backdrop, it would sound strange if someone objects to the current talk about ‘Enlightened Moderation’. But the problem is that what is being tried to foist today as ‘Enlightened Moderation’ does not emanate from our own socio-cultural milieu, our own traditions, values or requirements. Unfortunately, it forms part of a historical process. It has assumed special significance for the world in general and the Muslim world in particular whose politico-civilizational map is being given a new contour and complexion. When we look at things in the global context, it becomes evident that the call for ‘Enlightened Moderation’ is related directly to external pressures and demands.

The new world order being currently devised is the most comprehensive and somber version of the Neo-Colonialism in which the military, political, economic and cultural aspects assume equal importance. Its objective is not just to bring all the countries and nations under the political and military umbrella of the only super power of the unipolar world, but also to impose on them a single value system, intellectually, economically, financially and culturally. The venture is intended to be a success through the use of all possible means of coercion as well as cooperation, carrot and stick. Action in fact started deftly on this multi-dimensional strategy following the end of the cold war. The post-9/11 measures are part of the same broad-based strategy. Unless we understand this, it would be difficult to exactly know the meaning and purpose of this campaign in favour of the so-called ‘Enlightenment’ and ‘Moderation’. This ‘Enlightened Moderation’ has definitely no relevance to our own needs. It is related neither to our socio-cultural moorings. It is instead a pointer to the change being contemplated for removing Islam and the Muslim society and culture from their own basis to synchronize them with the Western demands. This is not a new phenomenon. Such attempts have been there from the very first day of the imperialist incursion, which have now taken the center stage of the current imperialist blitzkrieg.

Ever since the last quarter of the past century, the US intellectuals, policy makers and the media have been engaged in a new civilizational war, with an objective to superimpose the West's liberal socio-economic order over the world at large. In this context we can quote from a plethora of publications, research papers and analytical reviews. Joseph Nye, Editor of the well-known US Journal "Foreign Policy", has without any inhibition laid bare this US strategy in his article. He says:

"The nature of power in world politics is changing. Power is the ability to affect the outcome you want, and if necessary to change the behavior of others to make this happen."

(Re-ordering the World: The Long-Term Implications of 11 September – Ed. by Mark Leonard. Foreword by Tony Blair, Foreign Policy Center, London, 2002).

For the gratification of this Machiavellian objective, war has traditionally been the most important means. It is naturally the barometer of a great power's strength. The history's lesson is also that:

"War was the ultimate game in which the cards of international politics were played and estimates of relative power were proven".

The circumstances have, however, taken a new turn with the induction of nuclear weapons as the deciding factor. Also the global politics is passing through a new phase under the impact of nationalism becoming the motivating force among the various nations of the world. Similarly, the present form of global capitalism, which is marked by the endeavors to glean maximum economic benefits, capture the world's capital markets through various means of exploitation and the predominant role of the multinational companies, has contributed in making the waging of war through brute force a much too costly affair. As a result of this, the military and economic power, which Joseph Nye calls 'Hard Power', though remains effective, there are other factors too that are now growingly playing the dominant role. Nye terms them as the 'Soft Power':

"In this sense, it is just as important to set the agenda in world politics and attract others as it is to force them to change through the threat or use of military or economic weapons. This aspect of power getting others to want what you want I call soft power. Soft power rests on ability to set the political agenda in a way that shapes the preferences of others."

For an effective implementation of this strategy the media has the pivotal role to play. The main target of the economic power of the day is to bring change in ideas, values and cultural norms. In this new kind of war, the actual forces of resistance are the opposite cultures' faith, ideology, social norms and values. In the world of Islam the Muslim masses' allegiance to Islam and their firmness regarding their traditions and values are the greatest headache for the West today. Joseph Nye admits:

“To be sure, there are areas, such as the Middle East where ambivalence about, or outright opposition to American culture limits its soft power”.

This is the real dilemma! And the proposed solution is to propagate the strategy of ‘Enlightenment’ and ‘Moderation’ in the Muslim countries in such a way as to brighten the prospects of shaking them by their foundations and baptizing them on the Western lines. That is the reason why the Muslim women’s ‘Hijab’ is now being viewed as more dangerous than artillery guns and missiles. The Muslims allegiance to Islam and their love for their culture, values and traditions are the biggest obstacle in the way of the attainment of the West’s aims and objectives. Another biggest hurdle is the indivisibility of the state and religion in Islam.

The spirit of Jihad, which is the most effective weapon of self-defence, is also a pain in their neck. ‘Fundamentalism’ is no real issue. The real issue is the faith that Islam is a complete code of conduct. That is the major hurdle according to the Western perception. A German Orient list Andrea Lueg in her article, “The Perception of Islam in Western Debate” frankly states the Western intellectuals’ position as follows:

“The West concentrates on Islam as a religion which is made out to be responsible for countless political, cultural and social phenomenons in Islamic countries. And it is clearly Islam as a religion that generates such fear in Western countries, a fear of religion that we thought we had banished from our enlightened societies.”

(The Next Threat: The Perception of Islam”, ed. by Jochen Heppila and Andrea Lueg, Pluto Press, London – 1995, P.27).

The book refers to an article by J. Miller, “The Islamic Way”, which the New York Time Magazine carried in its issue of 31st May 1992. The following excerpt from this article is significant: -

“The West tends to regard the growing political popularity of Islam as dangerous, monolithic and novel. The rise of militant Islam has triggered a fierce debate about what if anything, the West can or should do about it. Some American Officials and commentators have already designated militant Islam as the West’s next enemy to be ‘contained’ much the way communism was during the cold war.”

With this backdrop, the American and European intellectuals and policy making institutions are engaged now in their concerted drive to divide the Muslim World into the two categories of

- (i) Fundamentalists and Militants and
- (ii) The Liberals, Enlightened and Moderates. Their agenda is to systematically eliminate those whom they view as fundamentalists and ‘Jehadis’ capable to resist, and replace them by those whom they think are ‘endowed’ with the

“liberal vision of Islam”. Farid Zakaria, an American of Indian origin, and Editor of the Newsweek Magazine, describes this strategy in the following words:

“First we have to help moderate Arab States, but on the conditions that they really do embrace moderation --- We can fund moderate Muslim Groups and scholars and broadcast fresh thinking across the Arab World, all aimed at breaking the power of the fundamentalists.” **(“Re-Ordering the World”, the Newsweek, Page.47)**

We may very well understand in this backdrop the far-reaching significance and relevance of President General Pervez Musharraf’s current strategy of “Enlightened Moderation”. Allah Subhanahu alone knows about one’s intentions; the human evaluation is, however, based obviously on the external factors. On assuming power, General Musharraf spoke of Ataturk as his role model. Then, under public pressure he had to check his steps. When he found the moment opportune, he started expressing reservations against the Hudood and Blasphemy Laws. Off and on he talked of a ‘Liberal Islam’. Then, he began mixing up Jihad and the popular struggle for freedom with ‘terrorism’. Now, he has openly come out as a Champion of ‘Enlightened Moderation’. He equates the upsurge for Islamic renaissance with terrorism and is apprehensive of a possible clash between the Islamic civilization and the global forces of oppression and tyranny. He is, therefore, advocating ‘enlightened moderation’ and ‘liberalism’ as the panacea for all ills of the world. He is at pains to impress that there is no contradiction between Islam and ‘Modernism – Secularism’ and the two can walk hand in hand. It is for the first time that he is now openly supporting Secularism. The cat of ‘Enlightenment’ has thus come out of the bag. It does not remain a secret anymore which way he is leading the country and to what end in view. There is nothing new as such in his advocacy of liberalism. We have been listening to such sermons since well over one hundred years. Allama Iqbal had, therefore, cautioned the Muslim Ummah to beware of those Muslim intellectuals and rulers who due to their own ideological and cultural bankruptcy have often served as the mouthpiece of the West:

Your mortal frame out-and-out a reflection of the West, for you are an edifice raised by foreign architects! This frame of clay, alas, is devoid of soul! You are naught but a sheath gilded but empty of sword!

Iqbal also said:

“I do, however, fear that this clamour for Modernism May be an excuse for the Orient to ape the Occident! Islam has been the target of attacks sometimes from outside, sometimes from within, sometimes covertly and sometimes overtly and often through distortions, or in the name of ‘enlightened’ re-interpretation. Sometimes, this anti-Islamic campaign takes the form of open hostility and at times it is carried out in the name of reform. As Iqbal, the great Visionary, aptly said, the ‘Mustaphawi Light’ has always and in every field been in conflict with the members of ‘Abu Lahab’. (Literally, the ‘Form of Flame’ – the great infidel leader of Quraish who left no stone

untuned to torment the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and frustrate his Mission, but then met with an ignominious end and his name became synonymous to 'Hell Fire').

The 'enlightenment' and 'moderation' that Islam stands for are those that are essentially in consonance with a Muslim's allegiance to Allah and obedience of His Prophet (PBUH). Eiman (Faith), Taqwa (Fear of God), loyalty to the Divine Law (Shariah), paying what is due to the Muslim Ummah and the awareness about the accountability of the Hereafter provide the framework for the evolution of an ideal civilization based on the Islamic system of justice, moderation and balance. This is the form of enlightenment and moderation that is rooted in the Quranic guidance and is free from the dictates of personal ego. The enlightenment and moderation, sanctioned by Islam, are based on the supplication that every Muslim makes daily in all his obligatory and voluntary prayers:

"Show us the straight way, The way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace, Those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray."

(Surah Al-Fatiha, Verse: 6 & 7)

The Quranic 'Huda' or guidance is not something vague and undefined. It means the straight way determined for us by the revelation from Allah Subhanahu wa Taala and the Tradition of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). These are the fount head of the real guidance. There can, therefore, be no other source of enlightenment for a Muslim. "Allah is the light of the Heavens and the earth", and it is His Book that takes the human beings out of darkness into the light. The Quran says:

"O mankind! Verily there hath come to you a Convincing Proof from your Lord, For We sent onto you a light (that is) manifest."

(Surah Al-Nisaa, Verse 174:4)

"Then those who believe in God and hold fast to Him, Soon will He admit them to Mercy and Grace from Himself and guide them to Himself by a straight way."

(Surah Al-Nisaa, Verse 175:4)

"Wherewith God guideth all who seek His good pleasure to ways of peace and safety, and leadeth them out of darkness by His Will unto the light – guideth them to a path that is straight."

(Surah Al-Maedah, Verse: 16:5)

Let us not forget that the 'straight path' is the path of moderation. That is why the Muslim Ummah has been described as "Ummatan Wasatan" (a Moderate Nation), (Surah Al-Baqrah, Verse: 143:2.). The qualities of equity and justice, which comprehensively include the attributes of balance, goodness, harmony and moderation, have been described as the Muslim Ummah's mission and its distinct feature (Al-Nisaa — 135:4, Al-Maedah - 8:5, Al-Aaraf - 29:7; and Al-Nahl - 90:16). The Holy Prophet (PBUH) declared for his Ummah the golden principle: "Moderation is the best

course”, which means that as Muslims we are required to follow the middle road and observe moderation in all that we do.

The actual enlightenment and moderation for a Muslim are to follow the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in letter and spirit. These are in fact built-in in our social order as a Muslim community and there is no need for importing it from elsewhere, or for any process of pick and choose to suit others’ whims and demands. As we all know, there is no room for any additions or omissions and rejections or acceptance in Allah’s Deen and there can be no crime bigger than any such attempts, about which we have been warned of the disadvantages in the worldly life and the worst punishment in the Hereafter.

The Islamic concept of enlightenment and moderation is part of the overall Shariah paradigm. It cannot be separated from this Whole. The parameters laid down by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to keep the Muslim Ummah always on the right track determine the boundary lines of the enlightenment and moderation. He declared:

“The torch bearers of this (Islamic) knowledge will in every generation be those who are upright and just, who will resolutely resist all attempts of subversion by the extremists, wrong doings of the wrong-doers and misinterpretations of the ignorant.”

This is the straight ‘expressway’ of Islam. But the liberalism, modernism, enlightenment and moderation, of which the US intellectuals and policy-makers are the exponents today and which are being re-echoed in the writings and speeches of some of our rulers and intellectuals, and the enlightenment and moderation of Islam definitely remain poles apart.

The enlightenment and moderation that emanate from the ‘Mustaphawi Light’ (Prophetic guidance) stand for uninhibited following of the Islamic Shariah. The ‘Embers of Bu Lahab’, on the other hand invite us to accept the way of life and the value system of the hegemonic and ruthless forces of the day. Just as Emperor Akbar ventured to devise a new religion with the name of “Deen-e-Illahi” to win the favours of those who were opposed to his rule, similarly a new version of Islam is being attempted at the behest of America and the West, with the aim of decentralizing the Muslim Ummah and bringing it round their narrow local interests. This ‘new Islam’ aims at practically suspending the Shariah and paving the way for Westernization through the separation of the state and religion and modernization. Islam may thus be retained in name while a secular order actually promoted so as to win the US and Western approval for an ‘enlightened’ and ‘moderate’ religion that may be to them free from the elements of fundamentalism and extremism. Rather in such an Islam they could see and reflect their civilizational values and traditions and also bear the stamp of authenticity.

The analogy of Islam versus Akber's 'Deen-e-Illahi' and the eternal conflict between the 'Mustaphawi Light' and the 'Bu Lahbi Embers' remind us of the post-9/11 scenario in which the Muslim world as a whole and Pakistan in particular have become the major target of the US machinations. The US domination that started in the form of military 'cooperation' and political subjugation has now expanded to cover such important areas as the country's ideology, education and culture. For this, a conceptual framework is being attempted and our President Pervez Musharraf has been assigned a definite role. He began with advancing his nebulous ideas and 'a new vision' in his speeches and talks with his political allies. Then, he used the forum of the OIC Summit in Kuala Lumpur for formally presenting his strategy of 'Enlightened Moderation'. Now, on June 02, 2004 he ventured to present his formulation in the form of an article in the mass-circulated US daily 'Washington Post'. This article was also prominently carried by the Pakistani newspapers. The Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers in Istanbul later adopted his 'Enlightened Moderation' as its own strategy for the Muslim world. It is, therefore, imperative to objectively review the conceptual framework of this strategy and scientifically analyze its negative positive aspects so that the Muslim Ummah may be saved from its negative fall out.

The reason advanced by General Pervez Musharraf for his strategy of 'Enlightened Moderation', was spelt out thus: "The world has been passing through an extremely precarious situation since the beginning of the 1990's. There are no signs of any improvement in this alarming situation. The innocent people, especially my co-religionists the Muslim brethren, are passing through a tragic situation at the hands of the extremists, terrorists and militants. This has compelled me to play my role for the betterment of this chaos-filled world".

Through his 'incisive vision' he could also see that: "Those involved in the criminal acts of terrorism and extremism are Muslims and the unfortunate targets of their criminal acts also belong to the Muslim community."

He is, therefore, of the view that as the natural corollary of the situation, "the Non-Muslims growingly feel, though due to misunderstanding, that Islam is a religion of intolerance, extremism and terrorism".

The General is so much over-awed by these baseless apprehensions and accusations that he is virtually willing to surrender. He declares: "We can not succeed through our arguments in winning the propaganda war to dispel the impression rooted deep in the minds", because according to him, "the Muslims in the world today are the poorest, the most illiterate, the most helpless and the most unstable and disunited lot".

On the basis of his analysis, General Pervez Musharraf asserts that the solution to this problem is that both the Muslim and the Non-Muslim worlds in their common interest should accept his strategy of "Enlightened Moderation".

Addressing the West and especially the US, General Musharraf surmises: "All the political problems facing the Muslim world will have to be resolved justly and in a well-coordinated manner and full cooperation is needed for the 'socio-economic' uplift of the deprived and the backward world of Islam".

The main thrust, however, of his prescription is the 'reformation' of Islam and to bring about change in the Muslims' attitude and perceptions. The central idea of the 'vision' that the General presented of Islam and the Muslims is as follows:

"We will have to follow the path of moderation and promote broad-mindedly an attitude which may dispel the notion that Islam is a militant religion and opposed to modernism, democracy and secularism."

In spite of all his demands from the Muslims to reform themselves and their religion, the General, nevertheless, cautions:

"While doing all this we will have to keep in view the fact that the world in which we live may not always deal with us in a manner that may conform to the principles of right and justice".

General Pervez Musharraf has declared the 'Jihadi Movements' of the Muslim world, in a camouflaged style that reflects his mind set, as an offshoot of the resistance movement against Russia's colonial attack on Afghanistan. He views the post-1990 phenomenon of the so-called terrorism as part of the same development. He does not bother in his article to reflect upon and explain the difference between Jihad and the freedom movements and the phenomenon of terrorism and instead declares the new 'trinity' of 'fundamentalism', 'extremism' and 'terrorism', devised by the US intellectuals and propagandists, as the root cause of all problems. While championing the cause of enlightenment and moderation, he tries to impress that the Muslim world's salvation lies in following his prescription. He has devoted a paragraph to pay tribute to the earlier phase of Islam, with the Holy Prophet (PBUH), as the Role Model. Subsequently, however, he has analyzed neither the causes of the Muslims' emergence as a world power, nor their decline to the present level of degeneration. He bemoans that the Muslims have been left behind in the field of economic progress, science and technology and were incapable now to compete with the West. Then he suggests the panacea: "The root cause of our malaise is fundamentalism, extremism and terrorism and we are left with no option for our salvation but to be in conformity with the West and promote broad-mindedly an attitude which may dispel the notion that Islam was an aggressive religion and was opposed to modernism, democracy and secularism."

His three-point programme of action for the Muslims in Pakistan and the world at large is as follows:

1. Give up anything that the West views as 'fundamentalism', 'Extremism' and 'Terrorism' and follow the course of 'Enlightened Moderation'.
2. Concentrate all energies on economic development, education, elimination of poverty and advancement in the fields of health, justice and fair play and with this end in view, follow the path of 'Modernism', 'Democracy' and 'Secularism'.
3. The OIC should be made more effective and dynamic so that the Muslim world may be able to face the challenges of the 21st century.

General Pervez Musharraf's article contains the following two points which we think are positive — The one when he says, though in a subdued way, that "the West and specially the US will have to resolve all the political issues facing the Muslim world in a just and equitable manner and support this destitute and backward world in their economic development." The second when he asks the Muslim world to put its own house in order, for which it is counseled to spend "all its energies for eliminating poverty and developing its human resource through a pragmatic system of education, health care and social justice". There can be no two opinions on these points. But the background and the arguments on the basis of which he has floated his strategy of 'Enlightened Moderation' remain crude and based mostly on misinterpretation of facts. The fact of the matter is that he has miserably failed to present the Muslim Ummah's case. His write-up practically helps directly or indirectly in lending support to all the wrong and unjustified claims and reservations of the West against Islam and the Muslims. We would, therefore, like to submit the following for all the right-thinking and well-meaning intellectuals and scholars, including those from the West, to reflect and ponder:

1. The phenomenon of terrorism started neither during the 1990's, nor it is concerned entirely with the Muslims as has been reflected in the article under discussion. First of all, it is imperative to define what terrorism is? Every attempt at the use of force cannot be called terrorism. Secondly, the acts of terrorism are committed not necessarily by individuals and organized groups alone — the governments too are involved in such acts. Today, such terrorist activities are those committed mostly by the governments. In fact, the incidents of terrorism committed on the peoples'/individuals' level are generally due to the blockade of all the avenues of peaceful political change and because of the indiscriminate and unjustified use of brute force by the 'higher authorities' and the state machinery of oppression and tyranny. The type of repression, which the governments and state agencies are perpetrating to crush the so-called terrorist activities of individuals and groups remains the worst form of what is being labeled today as 'Terrorism'. Terrorism is in fact the product of the state repression and the ruthless moves by those wielding power to elevate themselves above the dictates of law, justice and democratic norms, with a view to crush with heavy hands their own oppressed and tyrannized masses. It is the natural corollary of

shying away from serious endeavours to resolve the political issues politically and instead resorting to use brute force to silence public reaction.

It appears from the article contributed by Gen. Pervez Musharraf that what he and the United States view as terrorism originated in 1990 due to the Jehadi Forces' struggle in Afghanistan and the Russian retreat, coupled with the US indifference. The ground realities, however, speak otherwise. The Jehadi Movement started in Afghanistan neither with the Russian invasion, nor the phenomenon of terrorism emerged from the Muslim World. Terrorism has essentially been viewed as a form of popular reaction against the colonial and fascist European Governments during which the non-state elements were compelled to launch their struggle, with political objectives. At the various stages of human history, especially during the last century and a half, different movements rose in the countries of the West and elsewhere and followed the violent course to resist the colonial powers.

The recent upsurge of 'terrorism' is a special feature of the modern day history, which has no relation whatsoever with any particular religion or territory. Hundreds of books and thousands of articles have been contributed on different aspects of this phenomenon. We would refer here to just one book, compiled by Martha Crenstard and published by Pennsylvania State University Press, "Terrorism in Context". The Book appeared six years before the 9/11 episode and provides detailed history of the dozens of terrorist movements of the West and the East. It also describes how political thinkers, particularly from the West and Latin America and the intellectuals from Africa, justified the armed struggle against imperial governments and oppressive rulers. In the historical context of Europe and America, such armed struggles have been discussed under the following two categories: 'Revolutionary Terrorism' and 'Anarchist Terrorism'. There is perhaps no region in the world, which may not have witnessed during the last 150 years more than one such movements, which are now being labeled as terrorism. Without sufficient awareness about these movements — how they started, who lead them, what was the result, how the leaders of these movements emerged not merely as the national heroes but the history making personalities — Gen Pervez Musharraf should not have taken upon himself to write on such an important topic.

2. To ascribe the 'Jehadi Movement' to the developments in Afghanistan betrays ignorance of the basic facts of history or could it be an attempt to confuse the real issue! The 'Jihad'; or the organized struggle by the Muslims in their self-defence, is part of the same 'model' which Gen Musharraf discussed in passing as the earlier period of Islam. Every Muslim country of the modern-day, including Pakistan, resisted the imperialist powers through the weapons of 'Jihad'. That is the reason why it has been the special target of denigration by the West, so much so that in our part of the world the Imperialism had to install a false 'Prophet', and an Imposter, to pronounce the "cancellation" of this basic pillar of Islam. Algeria's freedom movement is yet another bright chapter of the modern day's jihadi history. The Palestinians' Jihad against the Zionists began in 1948 and not from the Intifada (Uprising) of the 1990s and the struggle is going on. Similarly, in

Kashmir, Jihad has begun not with the Soviet repulse in Afghanistan; it has been an ongoing struggle since October 1947 when the Indian occupation forces landed on the Srinagar airfield to assist the oppressive Dogra Rule. Our Northern Areas and Azad Kashmir got their liberation from the Indian occupation not due to any political charity or just by the stroke of chance. It goes to the credit of an indigenous well-organized and heroic Jehadi struggle of the Kashmiri people that the people today enjoy their freedom in the liberated areas.

The historical perspective offered by Gen Pervez Musharraf is not based on facts. There can be nothing more cruel than holding the entire Muslim community responsible for what is being labeled as 'Terrorism'. He has described neither its global perspective, nor analyzed the actual historical, political and civilizational causes and factors or has even a word for the role played by the West in the current global scenario. I wish, he may have read at least the German Research Scholar Andrea Lueg, who in the last chapter of her book 'The Next Threat' while, summing up the result of her research, admits:

"Many of these terrible things have little to do with Islam but have other origins; and quite a few of these shocking phenomena also exist in 'modern' Western societies. Fanaticism, for example, can have secular roots even when its bearers might deny this. Before we get hit up about the fanaticism of others, we should not deny the fanaticism of our own culture. When German Youth want to burn down the refugees hostels, this also has to do with fanaticism and irrationality, not just with alcohol and a lack of perspective. Yet few of us would think of suggesting these crimes had religious roots, or that they spring from Christian Traditions of the West. Thus, the fanaticism and irrationality of people in the Middle East are not always connected to religion. This is not only superficial and arrogant but also amounts to a mystification of social correlations."

(The Next Threat, P. 157)

One would only wish that those of us who wield the pen should also have the guts to go deeper into the facts and review the important issues in their correct political, sociological and psychological perspectives. Gen. Musharraf's article from this point of view may at best be called lopsided, superficial and self-tormenting.

3. Gen. Pervez Musharraf has held the Muslims responsible for 'Fundamentalism', 'Extremism' and 'Terrorism' and has also tried to discover a 'causal relationship' between them. First of all, it is a known fact of history that 'Fundamentalism' is a vague and purely American concept, having no connection with Islam or the Muslims. It was the offshoot of a Christian Missionary Movement, launched at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, which is now being very conveniently thrust upon the Muslims since last few years. Gen Musharraf should have at least looked before he leapt.

Extremism is a human weakness, which may also be there among those in the West, among their politicians, military men and within their certain groups or individuals. Rationally, there is no justification for linking it with the so-called 'Fundamentalism' and 'Terrorism'. Terrorism has its own causes, while 'Extremism' is an entirely different phenomenon. 'Terrorism' may not invariably be the result of 'Extremism' and 'Extremism' may not always lead to 'Terrorism'. The entire formulation by Gen. Pervez Musharraf is based on fallacies and is responsible for misrepresenting Pakistan and Islam. It is strange that he did not reflect for a moment what role the West and the US intellectuals, specially the Zionist writers, have played in ascribing 'Fundamentalism' and 'Extremism' to Islam and Muslims and the interests they have in such a malicious propaganda. He did not bother to consider for a while how the Western political observers, writers, journalists, their electronic media, including the Hollywood films, are engaged in denigrating Islam, Arabs and the Muslims in order to divert the world public attention from the Israeli atrocities. Somebody having no grasp of even such elementary facts of the modern day history can hardly be qualified to dilate on such subjects! The following excerpt may be of interest from the book by Joshen Heppler and Andrea Lueg about the role played by the West in attributing to Islam their own precepts and ideas with a view to vitiating the atmosphere:

“This book will not examine Islam but the West’s hostile view of Islam (or the perceived Islamic threat). One of our Theories is that current vogue of popular literature about the Islamic threat has little to do with the supposed threat itself – Islam - and more to do with the Western thinking, with a lacuna in our identity due to the end of the cold war. It is this aspect that interests us.” **(P.1)**

According to authors Andrea Lueg and Joshen Heppler, the entire debate about 'Fundamentalism' needs to be reviewed, as they believed:

“We argue that although fundamentalism is bad, its critics are not automatically good, and some may will have ulterior motives.” **(P.3)**

Isn't it surprising that while the impartial scholars and intellectuals from Europe are ready at least to review their stance, our own rulers feel no prick of conscience as they indulge in parroting their mentors in the West? And how logically, these formidable mentors behave can be gauged by the President Bush responded to the US Commission Report on 9/11 that confirmed finding no evidence of cooperation between Al-Qaeeda and Iraq in attacks on the US. His statement below is worth recording in the Guinness Book of World Records:

“The reason I keep insisting that there was a relationship between Iraq and Saddam and Al-Qaeeda is because there was a relationship between Iraq and Al-Qaeeda.”

(Time Magazine, 28 June 2004)

There is no difference between the line of arguments advanced by our own General Pervez Musharraf and those by George Bush to prove that there was a strong link between the terrorists and the Muslims.

4. General Musharraf's article fails also to make even a passing reference to the phenomenon of state terrorism. No attempt has been made either to objectively reappraise the US role in promoting and patronizing terrorism and terrorist's activities. General Musharraf has neither a word of censure for the US orgy of violence and terror in Afghanistan and Iraq. Since his article was essentially addressed to the US readership, it could have very well been used to apprise the US public of the factual position.

There is now a growing segment of the US intelligentsia who are openly critical of the US policies of terrorism. Intellectuals like Noam Chomsky are already of the view that the United States has become a "rogue state". The former US Attorney General Ramsay Clarck has also contributed a number of books exposing America's inhuman brutalities. There is also international tribunals' report on the US war crimes before, during and after the first Gulf War of 1991. Based on this, Ramsay Clarck brought out a comprehensive document with the name of "War Crimes", duly supported by legal texts and necessary evidences. Dozens of books have since appeared world-wide providing irrefutable evidence of the role America has been actively playing to promote terrorism the world over. General Pervez Musharraf's article, nevertheless, does not find it fit to make even a passing reference to this. It may be appropriate here to quote the following two excerpts from Chalmers Johnson's book "Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire":

"One man's terrorist is, of course, another man's freedom fighter, and what US officials denounce has unprovoked terrorists attacks on its innocent citizens are often meant as retaliation for previous American imperialist actions. Terrorists attack innocent and undefended American targets precisely because American Cruise missiles from ships at sea or sitting in B-52 bombers at extremely high altitudes are supporting brutal and repressive regimes from Washington seem invulnerable. As members of the Defence Services Board wrote in 1997 report to the Under Secretary of Defence for Acquisition and Technology: 'Historical data show a strong correlation between US involvement in international situations and an increase in terrorist attacks against the United States. In addition, military asymmetry that denies nation-states the ability to engage in overt attacks against the United States denies the use of trans- national actors'." **(P-9)**

"Terrorism by definition strikes at the innocent in order to draw attention to the sins of invulnerable. The innocent of the 21st century are going to harvest unexpected blowback disasters from the imperialist escapades of recent decades. Although most American may be largely ignorant of what was, and still is, being done in their

names, all are likely to pay a steep price- individually and collectively – to their nations’ continued effort to dominate the global scene”. **(P-33)**

One would only pray that the Muslim Leaderships might one day be in a position to tell the US leadership that the acts of terror being committed in the world today are the consequence of the policies and actions of the US administration in different parts of the world.

5. Referring to the historic role played by Islam, Gen. Musharraf dilates upon the Muslim Worlds’ current state of affairs and then advances his theory of “Enlightened Moderation” as a way out. He also speaks of the need for the Muslim world’s economic and academic progress. Undoubtedly, advancement in the fields of economy and education is a must for the Muslim Ummah’s progress. But the Ummah’s rise and fall has not merely been due entirely to the material reasons. Islam’s strength lies in its universal message, its benign call, its golden principles and their practical models provided by our illustrious ancestors. Their moral strength was their real capital. The secret of our strength then lay in the unity of the state and religion, human equality, supremacy of the law, accountability of the rulers, allegiance to Shariah, prevalence of justice, social and economic equilibrium, the dependability of characters and institutions and an effective system of socio-economic accountability. When these principles and values were set aside, the luxuries of life and affluence started ruling the roost, Jihad, or the perpetual struggle against the inimical forces, both within and without, and Ijtihad, or the scholarly endeavors for the reinterpretation and application of the Divine Law, were given up, it was only then that the Muslim Ummah became an easy prey for others. We went down from weakness to weakness and were subjected to the level of servility and subjugation to which we find ourselves today. It is because of this that Allama Iqbal said:

“The reason is something else of which you are aware yourself; The Believer’s decline to the present level is not due to the lack of material resources.”

Our Holy Prophet’s prophetic insight into the causes of the Muslim Ummah’s decline and decay was so revealed to us through his golden words:

“The time will come when other communities will collectively fall upon you the way the hungry falls upon the banquet.” Some of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) asked: “Shall we be small in number then?” The Holy Prophet (PBUH) replied: “You will be great in number, but will be like the froth floating on the surface of the storm water. Allah Subhanuhu will take away your awe from your enemies’ hearts and would inject ‘wahn’ within your own hearts”. They asked, “What is this ‘wahn’ O, Prophet of Allah?” The Holy Prophet (PBUH) replied: “Love of the worldly life and dislike for death.”

Any reappraisal of the history of the Muslims' rise and fall and the vicissitudes of life they have passed through that does not take into account this aspect cannot be called objective and realistic.

6. Gen. Musharraf has also talked of the economic progress, availability of justice, progress in the field of education and democracy. But can we ignore the basic question about the reasons for the Pakistani nation's backwardness and the ultimate responsibility of the self-seeking privileged classes who have all along held the national resources in their hands and kept the nation deprived and hostage to their own whims? The biggest hurdle in the way of democracy and progress have been the same elements, including our military rulers themselves. Who has prevented the nation to get justice? What is the obstacle in the way of the stable institutions? Have the country's ruling classes followed the path of moderation?

When we look at the Muslim World today, we see that the forces causing the greatest damage everywhere are no other than those known for being 'Liberal' and champions of 'Modernism' and 'Secularism'. It is this very class of the Muslim Ummah that has all along been hand in glove with the imperialist powers and who embarked upon sucking their own communities' blood after independence. 'Modernism' and its champions did some positive things in Europe. In the Muslim World, however, the secular and liberal leaderships have been responsible for its abject failure. Kamal Ataturk and Reza Shah of Iran were the symbols of this 'Modernism'. Gamal Abdel Nasser, Hafiz Al Assad, Habib Bouraqiba, Hourri Boumediene, Saddam Hussain and Muammar Qadhafi have been the models of liberal and secular leaderships and all of them contributed in varying degrees to the debasement and disgrace of the Muslim World. The same is the case with Pakistan and its liberal and secular leaderships — from Field Marshall Ayub Khan to Gen. Pervez Musharraf! How apt was what Allama Iqbal said:

“How can it resuscitate Iran and the Arab World — The Western civilization that itself is in its death throes!”

7. Gen. Musharraf also says that to eliminate terrorism the factors responsible for injustice and leading the people to extremism would have also to be looked into. Can the Gen tell us what efforts he himself has made to find out the causes leading to what he describes as extremism and terrorism and to remove from the country all the injustices and deprivations? Is he not pursuing, like George Bush, the policy of uprooting these menaces just by the use of force, whereas the solution lies only in providing the people with the basic rights, establishing the system of justice and strengthening of the democratic institutions through dialogue and political process.

8. Gen. Musharraf believes that secularism is not opposed to Islam, whereas it is contrary to the Islam's philosophy of life and negates the very *raison detre* of Pakistan. In case his statement is due to ignorance about the concept of secularism and its implications, it is an ignorance that cannot be “a bliss”. But if it is part of a deliberate maneuver, then the Gen should remember that whosoever amongst his predecessors from Iskandar Mirza to Ayub Khan has ventured to toe this pro-West

approach has eventually had to lick his own wounds. The Muslim Ummah will never accept the secular approach to life. The real objective of the 'New US Religious Order' is to introduce in the Muslim World a system based on the division between the spiritual and the temporal and the religion and politics. This 'New Religious Order' seeks to promote an ascetic view of Islam, that restricts religion to homes and mosques, while the entire affairs of life are run according to the precepts and ideologies suited to the West. It is an order that aims at holding the Shariah in abeyance and Jihad abrogated. Such a development would however, mean an open declaration of war against Allah (swt) and his Last Messenger (PBUH).

During the colonial days, a series of all similar attempts by alien rulers met with failure. The attempts have been on subsequently to get the job done through their native cohorts. But In shaa Allah all such attempts would meet their ignominious end. Neither Emperor Akbar, could succeed in imposing his version of Secularism with the name of "Deen Illahi", nor George W. Bush of America would ever be in a position to get through with his dream of a new religious order. The best course left for us is to strengthen our own Islamic values and traditions and sincerely try to improve the socio-economic lot of the Muslim masses according to the models available with us for a multi-dimensional progress and development in this world and the Hereafter.

PROF KHURSHID AHMAD