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THE U.S. AND WESTERN VULNERABILITIES TO A THREAT MASQUERADING AS A RELIGION

It is not simply inaccurate, incomplete or bowdlerized information about the threat posed by shariah that has left the United States floundering in its response particularly to the civilization jihad since 9/11. There is another reason. It takes the form of a collective block on reality that serves to prevent facts from influencing our reasoning – or, more specifically, to prevent facts about Islamic doctrine from influencing our strategy to defend ourselves against jihad and the advance of shariah.

POST-MODERNISM AT WORK

Truth – as supported by facts, history and logic – has been vanquished by “politically correct” efforts to impose on this country and its institutions an understanding of Islam that hides the centrality of shariah, jihad, and Islamic supremacism, even though these are defining imperatives that pose an existential threat to Western-style liberty. The Islamist networks and their modus operandi are described in great detail elsewhere in this study. This

chapter will explain the reasons why these networks and their agents have been so effective and what are the civilizational vulnerabilities that are laying liberal, democratic society open to conquest.

Our society has come to prize unquestioning acceptance as the highest possible virtue of the “post-modern” Western world. This makes boundaries and taboos, limits and definitions – anything that closes the door on anything else – the lowest of possible sins. Judgment, no matter how discerning, is now tarred as “prejudice” and, therefore, a neo-barbarous act to be repressed and suspended altogether. Patriotism has been caricatured out of polite society as jingoistic war-mongering. Western civilization itself, which may be understood as the product of both judgment and patriotism, has been roundly condemned for being both prejudiced and war-mongering. Weakened by a kind of cultural anemia, we now regard transformation of America the Western into America the Multicultural as a good, or necessary, or even just inevitable thing.

Americans, increasingly, are acting as their own enforcers, promoting adherence to the new ethical mandate of multiculturalism by means of self-censorship. It is one thing not to be well-versed enough to define the enemy; it is another thing to be unwilling or effectively incapable of articulating precise and descriptive words to do so.

Such self-censorship has been a problem for years, distinct and pre-dating the modern Islamic threat. As Western society consciously sought to move beyond its own brutal past, the mistake it made was to assume and expect that other societies naturally would do the same. Further, it was somehow believed that by setting the example of eschewing even the mention of historical *or still-extant* savagery, such restraint would encourage mirroring.

It is this sort of thinking that accounts, at least in part, for the general unwillingness to discuss – and thereby acknowledge –

shariah and particularly its stealth jihad against the West. There is, however, another, deeper motivation at work as well, one that is born of an acute consciousness of our own fortune and success – which, paradoxically, spawns an entirely misplaced guilt.

Unexamined emotions like these are prompting a misguided quest to identify with the “victim,” who seems to be just about anyone who opposes the United States and the West. Such responses, already based on emotion rather than reason, are easily magnified, and considerably so, by feelings of intimidation. Taken together, this kind of muddled mentality has induced a widespread moral paralysis rooted in our conditioned reflex to suspend judgment.

JIHADISTS AS ‘VICTIMS’

Our national lack of moral certitude – often couched in the language of “neutrality” – reserves a crucial moral space for the possibility of sympathetic judgment, perpetuating the notion that blamelessness for terrorism is just as possible as blame. This implies that terrorism is not beyond the pale.

In a civilized society, though, such a “neutral” position amounts actually to taking sides. Treating terrorism with the same even-handedness accorded to competing tax plans, for example, creates an atmosphere that is amoral to a point of immorality. Besides leaving room for approval, the act of suspending judgment – and this is what may be most significant – delivers terrorism and terrorists from the nether-realm that all civilizations reserve for taboo, anathema and abomination. This begins to explain why the practice is so dangerous.

On some level, such behavior is the latest incarnation of the age-old encounter between the West and the rest – specifically, the non-Western “Other” encountered during various periods of Western exploration, conquest and colonization. Age-of-Exploration Europeans created the image of the noble savage,

projecting a nobility onto the primitive peoples of the New World that canceled out, or at least compensated for, their obvious savagery.

Contemporary analysis of the shariah-enslaved jihadi and his assault on Western civilization reprises that mischaracterization. Just as apologists have seen in the barbaric conduct of some indigenous peoples the desperation of the primitive in the face of an advanced and encroaching civilization, apologists today see in the suicide bomber a similar desperation – a plight in which weaponization of a terrorist’s life and limbs is presented as his only option for dealing with a technologically superior and encroaching civilization. What sounds like an apology for Islamic terrorism against American, Israeli, and other Western targets also sounds like a variation on the traditional theme: Enlightened society meets primal scream; enlightened society cringes with guilt – and fear.

THE ENEMY WITHIN

There is a crucial difference in the contemporary incarnation of this “Noble Savage Other,” however: Where the Other of yesteryear used to live vividly imagined, if dimly understood, in the Western imagination, the contemporary Other now lives, quite literally, in the West itself.

Indeed, a massive demographic shift has brought adherents to shariah – a doctrine that, by definition, opposes all others – deep into the non-Islamic world. The Other is still vividly imagined, if dimly understood. But where he once provided intellectuals with a theoretical foil against modernity, the Other – in this century, in the collective form of practitioners of shariah – now manifests itself as a concrete bloc.

'SUBMISSION'

The historical, Other-inspired tradition of self-criticism is no longer deemed adequate in these circumstances. Instead, the Other demands and receives a kind of cultural accommodation – submission – that is the 21st Century echo of the centuries-long subjugation of our European ancestors to Islamic conquest and domination. In the real-life endgame of multicultural “inclusion,” left unchecked, this impulse would seem to make the West’s renewed dismantlement inevitable.

Such a fate could only happen in an era of Western identity-decline, a time in which cultural relativism has wedged itself between the West and its original and defining beliefs. The spreading contagion of Western self-excoriation leads inexorably to a willing suspension of critical thinking that encourages – indeed, *demand*s – that value-based distinctions between Western and non-Western civilizations be abolished.

In other words, “diversity” is automatically “good,” as long as the “diversity” being embraced is non-Western and the distinction being denied is Western. But it is “bad” when discrimination of the intellectually honest kind concludes that shariah-inspired savagery is actually savage. Western society is left in a state of moral, cultural, and political paralysis.

Under sway of the multiculturalist credo, notions of the superiority of Western culture are heretical, an imminent threat to the leveling arrangement that makes the European Union’s so-called “meeting of different civilizations” possible. As the bureaucrats in Brussels see it, the “values of Europe” disallow consideration of Western civilization as superior to another. In other words, any tendency that threatens to restore the traditional hierarchy that put Western civilization at the pinnacle for having enshrined liberty and human rights must be disavowed, shamed and rejected outright.

IN DENIAL

Such submission abounds in the media and in politics, where discussion of doctrinal links between Islam's shariah and terrorism has been considered out of bounds at least since the George W. Bush years. This logic blackout is now reaching levels of absurdity as "rage over the health care bill" was seriously debated by reporters as a potential motivation for the Times Square bomber, Faisal Shahzad, and as Attorney General Eric Holder balked repeatedly at considering even "radical Islam" as a possible rationale for such terrorist attacks.

The unmistakable trend is to deny shariah's doctrinal association with terrorism in a strange public display of "sensitivity." The collective striving to be sensitive has, paradoxically, deadened our senses and blunted our logic – a condition resembling not just appeasement, but surrender.

As charges of "religious defamation," "racism," "bigotry," and "blasphemy" have become, like Pavlovian gongs, instant conversation-enders, Islam has become in the West increasingly insulated not just from criticism, but also from the poking and prodding of analysis – from reality itself. This may be precisely the kind of "protection" from secular "blasphemy" (read, criticism) that shariah has long maintained it requires, and, indeed, is pursuing in the international arena with anti-blasphemy resolutions at the United Nations. The more challenging question is, Why are non-Muslims so obsessively doing everything they can to help suppress debate about shariah and related subjects?

DHIMMITUDE

The answer is complicated. Certainly one of the forces at work is the West's crisis of confidence in its own value, which indeed, defines the identity crisis of the West itself. But there is something else, as well. That something else is the age-old relationship, not between the West and the rest, but between shariah

and the rest – namely, the relationship between its adherents and the *dhimmi*, the millions of non-Muslims through the centuries who have lived in Islamized societies.

To live as a *dhimmi* is to have an inferior legal status under shariah, a codified condition as old as the first Islamic conquests of non-Islamic peoples. The Muslim-to-*dhimmi* relationship is, at best, a master-servant relationship, pitting an identifiable authority figure against an identifiable supplicant.

This was often literally the case since, in many historical contexts, *dhimmis* were required by shariah to be recognizably inferior as evidenced by their clothes, the size and color of their homes, modes of transportation and overall public subservience to Muslims. The relationship's "core element," explains Bat Ye'or, the leading modern scholar of the *dhimmis*, "pertains to the premise of Muslim superiority over all other religious groups."⁴²⁰

Made explicitly clear in shariah, and to those conquered by its adherents, was the abject reality that *permission to continue living* rested completely in the hands of the Muslim overlords, whose slightest displeasure could result at any moment in withdrawal of that permission. Fear thus formed the essence of the *dhimmi* system.

Bat Ye'or has introduced a term to the lexicon to describe a mode of behavior or state of mind fostered by shariah-sanctioned religious inferiority: *dhimmitude*. Forbidden to possess arms, own land, criticize shariah or defend themselves either in a fight or in court against a Muslim (among many, many other prohibitions), *dhimmis* developed cross-cultural, cross-continental survival strategies that ensured survival not of the fittest, but rather of the most deferential – self-abasement as self-preservation.

A good example of this phenomenon can be found in the fact that, since criticism of shariah was severely punished, *dhimmis* "adopted a servile language and obsequious demeanor for fear of retaliation and for their self-preservation."⁴²¹ In this struggle to

survive were lost precious markers of the self: history and identity, truth and tradition. What was left were self-censoring societies, stunted by fear, compromised by fearfulness.

'POLITICAL CORRECTNESS' AS DHIMMITUDE

Certain similarities between *dhimmi* life under Islam and “politically correct” life in a multicultural world are striking. We have long lived in such a self-censoring society, stunted by a kind of fear that political *incorrectness* would result in opprobrium, ostracism or professional failure. Traditionally (because multiculturalism, as noted above, has been with us long enough to be characterized as a tradition), this has had nothing to do with Islam or the *dhimmi*. But this now-well-established practice does help explain the seamless compatibility between *dhimmitude* and the multicultural mindset that flourishes in our post-modernist world.

Importantly, Bat Ye’or has demonstrated that actual *dhimmi* status under shariah in Islamic societies is by no means a prerequisite of *dhimmitude*. Indeed, definite patterns of *dhimmi* behavior exist not only in the shariah states, but throughout the Free World. In the current context, one aspect has particular resonance, or, rather, non-resonance: the silence of *dhimmitude* regarding shariah. It is the silence of the insecure society.

CONFORMING TO SHARIAH 'BLASPHEMY' CODES

It is easy to see why *dhimmi* populations in Islamic lands would collude in “protecting” Islam from “offense” or criticism; they rightly and understandably fear the consequences under shariah. But why do *Westerners*, in academia, the media, Congress, the White House, or the United Nations collude in these same “protections”?

For that matter, why the reluctance to acknowledge patent differences between shariah and the West? Why the refusal to ex-

amine whether shariah plays a central role in the so-called “war on terror” – now even more euphemistically known as a fight against “extremism”? Why the failure to study whether the “war on terror” is a defensive response to the latest manifestation of 13 centuries of jihad? Why the cold-sweating fear over even asking the questions?

Bat Ye’or has described Western silence on Islam – today’s gruesome human rights violations, yesterday’s bloody conquests – as “the politics of *dhimmitude*.”⁴²² The term is provocative, describing a framework of concessions to Islam that goes far beyond multicultural theorizing in a lecture hall or PC politesse in the public arena.

Indeed, the whole concept of *dhimmitude* – predicated on the historic abasement of non-Muslims in Islamic society – envisions a conception of world affairs that pre-dates the Cold War, let alone the post-modern era, by many centuries. Gone are the paradigms of the great powers and bipolar rivalries familiar to recent generations. In their place, a complex power struggle between the West and shariah plays out on a deeply psychological level where Western strengths are checkmated by the machinations of an enemy at once more determined to prevail than we, and more confident in its own superiority.

Whether characterized as a courtesy, a favor or appeasement, every Western wince – from, to cite but a few examples, Margaret Thatcher’s concessions to the ayatollahs, to George W. Bush’s retreat on “crusade,” to Barack Obama’s pledge to free *zakat* from the prohibitions on material support for terror – are seen by our enemies as a form of *dhimmitude*. They are, after all, clear manifestations of shariah’s influence over the West. Such behavior indicates, as Bat Ye’or writes, an “implicit submission to the shariah prohibitions of blasphemy.”⁴²³

FEAR AS THE NEW REASON

Shariah demands that Islam must not be “disrespected.” And Islam is *not* “disrespected,” according to Western practice. There is more than etiquette at work here; there is fear. And where there is fear, there is silence. Of this silence – this tacit, non-comprehended acceptance of shariah’s dictates – Bat Ye’or writes: It “puts the Western public sphere in the position of conforming to one of the basic rules of *dhimmitude*: the express prohibition of Christians and Jews to criticize Islamic history and doctrine.”⁴²⁴

That inescapable fear is the fear of confronting the reality that some belief systems and some cultures prey atavistically on others. It would mean admitting that there are others out there who are not like us – and that no adjustment to our own behavior will change their determination to subjugate or kill us. And that is a terrifying reality. Fear has become the new reason.

We fear more fatwas, more rage, protests, assassinations, and boycotts. We are afraid of more violence, more burning flags, more gutted embassies. Afraid of more bomb threats. Afraid of more bombs. And so we close our eyes and close our circle, pretending ourselves into a status quo of our own imagination, a condition dependent on our own delusions: Moderate Islam is emerging as an antidote to shariah. Democracy is the answer. And don’t ask any questions. Because there is something else our culture fears more than anything else. We are afraid to *do* anything about our fears – even to name them.

The growth of Muslim populations in the West augurs the inexorable spread of shariah into Western societies – less by violence than by dint of natural procreation, unchecked immigration, and the incessant demands of an aggressive minority that refuses to assimilate. Logic should tell us, then, that the growth of shariah in the West threatens Western-style liberty: threatens freedom of expression, freedom of conscience and upends religious and sex-

ual equality. But we are at a point where we, the children of Athens, fear and deny that logic.

We do so because logic would lead ineluctably to the perception that the beliefs of shariah Islam and the beliefs of the West are at irreconcilable odds. It is not just shariah's place in the West that would then become an acknowledged threat to the survival of the West. The multicultural mirage of interchangeable diversity and "universal values" necessarily vanishes as well.

In its place would arise an inevitable hierarchy of differentiation: Not all religions are equally benign; not all religions are equal. Not all cultures have made equal contributions; not all cultures are equal. To our elites, this would be a bad thing because it would set into motion a rite of passage – a painful, difficult awakening from a dream world of sunny universalism and pale indecision into a stark reality of black and white, good and evil, win or lose, do or die.

Thus, our continued inaction – the Muslim Brotherhood's near-term, tactical goal – depends on our continued silence, just as avoiding clashes depends on our own self-censorship. As a culture, we ignored Ibn Warraq's plea in 2006 for "unashamed, noisy, public solidarity"⁴²⁵ with the Danish cartoonists as a means of safeguarding freedom of expression. We also ignored his warning that from our silence, "the Islamization of Europe will have begun in earnest."⁴²⁶

We have comforted and deluded ourselves by calling our self-censorship the silence of respect. In reality, it is the silence of *fear*. We have called it the silence of tolerance; actually, it is the silence of cultural acquiescence. There has been no clamor to defend the public square from religious tyranny. There is only shame, a shame without justification in reality, but a smothering shame all the same.

STANDING UP FOR THE WEST

The West is the source of the liberating ideas of individual liberty, political democracy, the rule of man-made law, human rights and cultural freedom. It is the West that has raised the status of women, fought against slavery and defended freedom of inquiry, expression, and conscience. The West needs no lectures on the superior values of societies that keep their women in subjugation, cut off their clitorises, stone them to death for alleged adultery, throw acid on their faces, or deny the human rights of those considered unacceptable to a savage, omnipotent deity.⁴²⁷

Ibn Warraq's catalogue of Western treasure – onto which an American appendix might include the Founding Fathers, Mark Twain, Thomas Edison, Irving Berlin, Ella Fitzgerald, Watson and Crick, Laurel and Hardy, Ted Williams, Jonas Salk and the 82nd Airborne – is indeed something to be proud of, to derive strength from, and guidance, too. It gives the lie to wishful notions about non-existent “universal values.” The end of shariah denial in the West points the way to the end of multiculturalism in the West, too, iconoclastic though that prospect may be to some.

We need to come to grips with the dread reality that ours is not only a time of transformative modernization and heretofore unimaginable affluence, but also a time of supreme, even ultimate struggle. Ours is an age marked by the startling confluence of devalued Western models faced with the unthinkable threat of cultural obliteration via Islamization that is all-too-familiar to those who know history. Arrayed against this looming fate stands but a thin line of courageous Americans and their counterparts in Europe and elsewhere – non-Muslims, former Muslims and a few courageous practicing Muslims whose ranks are much weakened by the cowering *dhimmi*s and their willingness to submit to shariah.

There is only one thing that can begin to save us, without which even the rich trove of information and revelation in this

study will be of little use: Free speech. Free, unfettered, politically incorrect, informed and precise speech about shariah and the threat it poses to America.

