

The “long war” and Islamophobia*

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The past few weeks have been marked by two important developments which forebode painful and long-lasting consequences for many people on the planet. These developments refer, first, to the evolution of the present “war” conducted by the transnational elite from a war against “terrorism” into a “long war” (the term used by the American Pentagon) and, second, to what could be the first skirmish in this long war, which developed with the Danish anti-Islamic cartoons —an event that could be an indication of the transnational elite’s intention to cause some sort of ‘clash of civilisations’.

The long war, which became known with the publication of the Pentagon’s Quadrennial Defence Review,^[1] is planned to involve not just the elites of the US and UK —the usual leading players in similar wars— but the entire transnational elite, as well as the military and intelligence forces of as many of its ‘allied’ elites as possible. The war is envisaged to take the form of an ongoing conflict unlimited by time and space, as it could be fought in dozens of countries and for decades to come, in a life or death struggle (for which the US defence budget for 2007 is estimated at \$513bn) comparable to those against fascism and communism. As Donald Rumsfeld put it: "the enemy have designed and distributed a map where national borders are erased and replaced by a global extremist Islamic empire."(!) At the same time, Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt, deputy director of US central command covering the Middle East, has been declaring in London that "an extremist ideology seeks to go back to the era of theocratic dictatorship, repression and intolerance while employing the latest technology to do so".^[2] And it is hilarious indeed that these assertions were made by someone representing one of the most religious countries on earth (not much less religious than Iran!) in which over 80 percent of its people believe in miracles and its president declares that he consults God before deciding which country to invade next!

The long war of course necessitates its own ideology to ‘justify’ it, and this is provided by the ‘theory’ of the clash of civilisations supported by the ideologues of the system —a theory which now seems to have been upgraded to become the ideological basis of the new ‘war’, in place of the ideological fiascos of the previous wars (Kosovo’s genocide, Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction etc). Within this framework, one could also explain the production and reproduction of the anti-Islamic cartoons by the transnational elites’ media as a deliberate challenge to Muslim sensitivities, rather than as a conflict between western freedom of speech and the press on the one hand and the obscurantism of Islamic fundamentalism on the other, as it has been presented by the world media —a view which, unsurprisingly, was immediately adopted by many in the “Left,” the Greens etc!

The facts, as were presented in the world press, are well known. A Danish newspaper published last September a series of supposedly satirical cartoons portraying the prophet Mohammed, which led to a storm of protest all over the Islamic world when it became widely known that the neoliberal government of Denmark refused to meet ambassadors from 11 Islamic nations who demanded an apology and the punishment of those

responsible. Of course, when an economic boycott of Danish products in the large Islamic market seemed to be looming, the good bourgeois government was compelled to perform an abrupt U-turn, expressing its regrets and admitting that the cartoons have hurt the sensitivities of Muslims worldwide, while the editor of the Jyllands-Posten, the Danish paper which had started the row, issued his own apology. However, to add salt to the previous wound, it was at this very moment that some of the transnational elite's main mass media in Europe (with the exception of the British), taking the view that the Danish apologies amounted to a capitulation, decided to intervene by reproducing the cartoons in widely circulated papers like Die Welt in Germany, France-Soir in France and La Stampa in Italy. Their aim was, supposedly, to defend freedom of speech and freedom of the press which were being threatened by Islamists. Inevitably, this caused further escalation of the conflict, leading to the burning of western embassies and mass demonstrations, with dozens of dead victims throughout the Muslim world.

However, some crucial elements, usually not mentioned by the western mass media, are missing from the above account of the recent events. It would, therefore, be worth examining them in order to form a clear picture of these events.

First, the cartoons' target was neither religion nor God in general –something that could indeed raise the issue of defending the principles of the Enlightenment from the theocratic obscurantism of religious bigots all over the world. Not only did the Danish cartoons have as their target one particular religion and one particular deity but, also, in showing the prophet Mohammed with a bomb in his turban, they identified Islamism with 'terrorism'. As Robert Fisk aptly pointed out, "had that cartoon of the Prophet shown in-stead a chief rabbi with a bomb-shaped hat, we would have had "anti-Semitism" screamed into our ears"». ^[3] Furthermore, when the British political journal The New Statesman published its front page in January 2002 displaying a shimmering golden Star of David impaling a union flag with the words "A kosher conspiracy?," the cover was immediately condemned as anti-semitic. What followed draws some very interesting comparisons with the present situation. Peter Wilby, the then editor of The New Statesman, promptly apologised and, as Gary Younge stressed, "I do not remember talk of a clash of civilisations in which Jewish values were inconsistent with the western traditions of freedom of speech or democracy. Nor do I recall editors across Europe rushing to reprint the cover in solidarity". ^[4] It is, therefore, clear that the aim of the cartoons was to identify with 'terrorism' all those among the 1.5 billion Muslims across the world who do not adopt the New World Order and who, consequently, do not submit to the transnational elite. In other words, the aim was to enhance further the Islamophobia presently cultivated by the western mass media, given that it perfectly suits not only the Zionist plans unilaterally to impose a 'two-state' solution involving the creation of a 'Greater Israel' (taking into account the demographic constraints) and a Palestinian Bantustan ^[5] but, also, the transnational elite's plans to integrate as fully as possible the Islamic countries into the New World Order and also to coerce into submission the millions of Muslims living in the metropolitan centres, who increasingly challenge the role of the transnational elite in the Muslim world.

Second, Flemming Rose, the cultural editor of the Danish paper whose initiative it was to publish the cartoons, is a self-declared supporter of the 'theory' of the clash of civilisations. In addition, it is not accidental that Jyllands-Posten has been accused in the past by the European network against racism for its frequent negative treatment of ethnic minorities. Furthermore, Denmark has been moving, for several years now, towards xenophobia and

racism –especially with respect to its Muslim inhabitants; inevitably, it has been transformed into a country of “intolerance and a deep-seated belief in its cultural superiority”.^[6] This has been a slow process which began with the social democrats in the 1990s who, seeing the change in their electoral clientele brought about by neoliberal globalisation, quickly realised that the rhetoric of solidarity and social reforms no longer impressed its mainly middle-class voters. This process was accelerated in this decade by the present neoliberal government, which has been relying on the support of the xenophobic and anti-Islamic Danish People's party which openly promotes the view that “the issue is not one of cartoons, but concerns rather a titanic struggle of values between totalitarian, dogmatic Islamic regimes and the freedom and liberty beloved of western democracies”.^[7] No wonder the 200,000 Muslims living in Denmark still do not have a single Muslim cemetery in the country and have been denied a permit to build a mosque in Copenhagen!

Third, it is simply a joke to talk about freedom of speech and freedom of the press when the international mass media are completely controlled by political and economic elites which systematically manipulate public opinion in the West, so that a consensus can be manufactured for the launching of the repeated wars of the transnational elite. And it is an effrontery to talk about such freedoms when in several western countries (e.g. France, Austria) even the historical questioning of the Holocaust is penalised, while in others (e.g. the UK) the support for resistance against the occupying powers in Palestine, Iraq or Afghanistan is considered ‘a glorification of terrorism’ and penalised as such ...

* The above text is based on a translation of an article which was first published in the fortnightly column of Takis Fotopoulos in the mass circulation Athens daily *Eleftherotypia* on 18/2/06

[1] Simon Tisdall et al. ‘America's Long War’, *The Guardian* (15/2/2006).

[2] Simon Tisdall, ‘[Washington digs in for a 'long war'](#)’, *The Guardian* (7/2/2006).

[3] Robert Fisk “Don’t be fooled, this isn’t an issue of Islam versus secularism”, *The Independent* (4/2/2006).

[4] Richard Norton-Taylor, “Does the right to freedom of speech justify printing the Danish cartoons?”, *The Guardian* (3/2/2006).

[5] See Takis Fotopoulos, ‘[Palestine: the hour of truth](#)’, *The International Journal of INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (January 2006).

[6] Kiku Day, «Denmark's new values», *The Guardian* (15/2/2006).

[7] Ibid.