The Political Economy of Terrorism

Adekunle Amuwo*

Abstract: This paper seeks to explicate the underlying structural factors that, over the past several decades, have made terrorism a more or less viable instrument of political change in an increasingly fractionalized global hamlet. Terrorism is, however, a multi-faceted phenomenon involving both a systematic and sporadic use of terror by governments and other social actors, with a view to forcing some specific or general political and related objectives. Using an implicit dialectical materialist methodology, the paper explores the international political economy anchored on an essentially Western frame of reference of interests and contradictory values that permits the US and its allies to run the globe as they deem fit-including using, misusing and abusing the rest of the world. Elements within this frame include violation of international laws; contempt for international treaties as well as for the UN when expedient to do so; selective application of democratic values and principles; support of strong-arm rulers/tin-pot dictators when they are useful and their abandonment when their nuisance value diminishes. The paper argues that the *rule of force* as against *the rule of law* has tended to radicalize the victims, admittedly in varying degrees. It suggests in conclusion, the articulation, by all stakeholders in a shrinking global ecology, of a people-friendly and people-centred ethical compass, one apt at making inter-state, inter-national and inter-people relations more humane and more human. Enlightened self-interest ought to dictate to everyone concerned that it is in their common interest to assiduously work towards this goal.

Résumé: Ce texte est une tentative d'explication des causes structurelles qui, tout au long de ces dernières décennies, ont transformé le terrorisme en un instrument plus ou moins viable de changement politique, dans un contexte de mondialisation à double vitesse. Cependant, le terrorisme reste un phénomène qui présente plusieurs facettes et qui est utilisé aussi bien par les gouvernements que par les autres acteurs sociaux, soit systématiquement, soit d'une manière occasionnelle. Mais ces différents acteurs partagent la vision qui opte pour un recours à la force pour résoudre un certain nombre de problèmes et atteindre les objectifs qui y sont liés. Tout en utilisant une méthodologie implicitement propre au matérialisme dialectique le contenu du texte permet une incursion au niveau de l'économie politique internationale bâtie essentiellement sur le schéma occidental. Tant du point de vue des références, des intérêts que des valeurs contradictoires, ce schéma favorable aux américains et à leurs alliés, permet à ces derniers de trôner sur le globe comme ils l'entendent avec leurs comportements de mépris et d'abus de tout genre vis-à-vis du reste du monde. C'est au sein de ce schéma qu'il est reporté des faits relatifs aux violations des règles internationales, le non-respect des traités parrainés par les Nations-Unies, l'application sélective des valeurs et des principes

* Department of Political Science, University of the North, South Africa.

leur sont encore utiles et l'abandon de ceux d'entre eux dont la capacité de nuisance a diminué. La contribution démontre que le recours à la force au détriment de la référence à la loi a eu comme effet de radicaliser les victimes selon le degré d'engagement des principaux concernés. En conclusion, une suggestion en appelle à un travail concerté entre tous les acteurs, essentiellement tournés vers une stratégie écologique globale fondée sur l'amitié, la solidarité et l'éthique. Ce sursaut semble être le seul scénario capable d'humaniser davantage les rapports inter-étatiques, les relations internationales et celles entre les peuples. Si l'intérêt particulier était éclairé, il recommanderait de trouver sa place dans la mobilisation pour l'intérêt général pour la réalisation duquel tous travailleraient en même temps.

The Problematique

This paper seeks to explicate the underlying structural factors that, over the past several decades, have made terrorism a more or less viable instrument of political change in an increasingly fractionalised global hamlet. That is to say, as a more or less powerful and effective weapon of the weak to get at the world's most powerful nation and the only surviving superpower. Terrorism is, however, a multi-faceted phenomenon. It involves both a systematic and sporadic use of terror or violence either by governments, political or religious groups or individuals, with a view to forcing some specific or general political and related objectives.

Using an implicit dialectical materialist methodology, we explore the international political economy anchored on an essentially Western frame of reference of interests and contradictory values that permits the US and its allies to run the globe as they deem fit – including using, misusing and abusing the rest of the world. Elements within this frame include violation of international laws; contempt for international treaties as well as for the UN when expedient to do so; selective application of democratic values and principles; support of strong-arm rulers/tin-pot dictators when they are useful and their abandonment when their nuisance value diminishes. The foregoing constitutes a warped global/public morality, a phenomenon summed up by Chomsky (2000) as follows: 'crimes are not of great consequence; disobedience is'. Nor are 'radical' international organisations spared; the ones that survive or are supported by Washington are those that toe America's foreign policy lines.

We argue that the *rule of force* as against *the rule of law* has tended to radicalise the victims, admittedly in varying degrees. Some have seized upon the use of weapons of the weak and the poor to combat structural violence in what seems to be a 'cultural war' (Hay, 2001:329). At no time in human history of hegemony construction and politics of subordination is that war more wicked and more crude - to the extent that it is essentially a war of ideas, of ideals and values. As Hay (ibid) contends, 'the end of the cold war removed political barriers to globalization, while demonstrating the ascendancy of Western values'. The West - the US in particular-could kill, maim, destroy, terrorise states and individuals in parts of the world other than the 'First World' almost with impunity as if they 'are entitled to resort to violence as they see fit' or when they 'believe it to be just'. In the words of President Clinton in 1993, the US would act 'multilaterally when possible, but unilaterally when necessary' (Chomsky, 2000:4). To be sure, we are not unaware, as Afsaruddin (1999:331) has reminded us, that the West, that is, North America, Europe and Japan, on account of their own history of numerous conflicts and wars are not an 'undifferentiated and necessarily oppressive whole', such that its impact 'on the rest of the world has been more two-sided, more contradictory'.

A way out of the moral morass, the paper suggests in conclusion, is the articulation, by all stakeholders in our shrinking global ecology, of a people-friendly and people-centred ethical compass, one apt at making inter-state, inter-national and inter-people relations more humane and more human. Enlightened self-interest ought to dictate to the US and its allies that it is in their own interest – not only that of the actually existing victims of their current values and policy matrix – to assiduously work towards this goal.

Introduction

Terrorism is not an undifferentiated mass of activity with same import to people in different climes. For much of the West, terrorism is little more than a totalitarian ideology and a barbaric political enterprise by religious zealots (Cox 2002:274). It is also conceptualised as one of the multiple manifestations of anti-systemic forces bent, amongst other things, on destroying western civilistion. Terrorism is grouped in the same league with economic crimes, ethnic conflicts, bloody civil wars and state collapse. Some scholars see Political Islam as representing,

within this ambit, a *riposte* or counter-attack by those excluded from the mainstream of globalisation against those responsible for their exclusion (Rugumamu 2001:14). For agents, that is to say, sundry suicide bombers and couriers of Islamic fundamental organisations, terrorism cannot but be an extremely desperate political act. To all appearances, it is not easy to take one's life, let alone do it in the brutal manner that suicide bombers are wont to do it in the last several years. For such people – and their benefactors – terrorism means many things: a holy calling; a shortcut to martyrdom and a blissful 'life after life' as well as an opportunity to deal a fatal blow to the US (the 'Great Satan') and its interests. Moreover, agents of terrorism may simply be using Political Islam as a façade to dissimulate private or group obsession. There is not always a correlation between social marginalisation and religiosity – as some studies on Turkey, a core Islamic country, have shown (see, e.g. Mason, 2000:59). It would also seem that agents of terrorism see themselves as militating on behalf of millions of people, globally, who are silently bearing the brunt of structural violence by the strong. Mousalli (in Abukhalil 2000:111) puts the issue graphically: fundamentalists 'have not been committing violent acts because of their theories; rather, their theories justifying violence have been derived from the real and imagined violence they have been subjected to'. Finally, victims of terrorism cannot be interested in any academic debate about the desirability or utility of terrorism to settle political scores. For such people – as several American government officials declared in the wake of the attacks of 9/11 2001 – there could be no justification for terrorism.

To all appearances, until 1993, the United States, perhaps still basking in the euphoria of having won the 'Cold War', gave only a nodding attention to the scourge of terrorism. The imperfect official alibi was that terrorism killed 'fewer Americans than does lightning'. Since conventional state violence was regarded as a far more serious and potent threat (Rose 1999:132), it received more attention from the intelligence services. Perhaps officialdom does not deserve much blame; leading American specialists were, for long, agreed that for all its rhetorics and boasts, Political Islam posed no pressing and immediate danger to the US and its interests. On the contrary, they regarded Political Islam as 'a movement that is democratic in spirit, capitalist in orientation and prepared to co-exist with the West' (Pipes 1995:63-64).

Pipes goes as far as suggesting that *The Failure of Political Islam*, the 1994 book of the French Scholar, Olivier Roy, only succeeded in deepening this sense of false security 'by assuring (Americans) that fundamentalist Islam has degenerated into a quietist movement seeking to create nothing more than "authentically muslim micro-societies"'. Few can, in good conscience, blame the US for this foreign policy stance. It is difficult for Western societies that, since the Enlightenment, have largely been organised around the separation of the Church from the State, to come to terms with organisations and movements that kill, maim and destroy lives and properties in the name of religion. In the process, it is easy to demonise Islam *qua* Islam – including Islamist moderates who are not in short supply in the Arab world and elsewhere. The problem here, though, is that, not unlike right-wing parties in Europe who did not raise their voices high and loud enough against the political projects of extreme right-wing parties until their own power base was under threat, Islamist moderates are often conspicuous for their absence. They seem to have extreme difficulty in distancing themselves from the 'radical' or fundamentalist elements in their midst.

This lukewarm policy stance towards terrorism began to change, somewhat, in 1993 consequent upon the attack, that year, on the World Trade Center (WTC) by suspected Afghan-trained Arab militants. Almost in one fell swoop, the American government was triggered out of its lethargy in relation to the abiding danger of Islamist fundamentalism (Rashid 1999:32). It was no doubt aided in this enterprise by the writings of scholars like Huntington (1999) and Ajami (2000) who tended to support the idea of a clash of civilisations and a zero-sum game between the West and Islam. In fact, in contradistinction to other scholars who see a reflection of democratic theory and practice in several Islamic procedures – *Umma* and *Dawla* (community and state), the system of the *shura* (consultation); the procedure of *Idjtiha* (intellectual speculation) and the notion of *Ijma* (consensus) (Mohammad 2000:570; Mazrui 1997) – the so-called 'confrontationalist camp' argues that Islamic civilisation, no less than its Chinese counterpart, constitutes a new threat to American hegemony.

In retrospect, however, it would seem that the incident of that year was not strong enough of a wake up call. It did not propel the US towards a sobering assessment of the content and import of terrorism by a section of the Islamic world that thinks and plans to humiliate the

second superpower, having successfully worsted the defunct Soviet Union in the late 1980s. Indeed, whilst the various and often poorly uncoordinated segments of the US Security and Intelligence Establishment – to which history and the drive towards personal fiefdoms have consigned them – could not agree on a concerted policy action, Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda 'radical' Islamist outfit were busy training a large army of sundry youths – the educated and the barely literate; the rich, the poor and the destitute as well as the employed, the under-employed and the unemployables – from the extremely dense 6,000-page *Encyclopedia of Jihad* the US and British Forces would recover in the rubbles of the defunct Taliban regime some nine odd years later. It is claimed that this manual 'instructs agents in the various arts of killing and in self-defense' (Cloud 2001:50-53).

Similarly, the time lost during the US vacillation in respect of how to respond to incipient terrorism also had the unintended consequence of fortifying the hand of self-proclaimed global Islamists such as bin Laden to give fillip to their so-called 'vision' of an Islamic super-state. Too much pre-occupation with the East Asian challenge would blind the US to 'another and perhaps even more explosive challenge… mounted by elements in Islamic civilization' (Hallmayr 2001:261). Indeed, it took the events of September 11, 2001 – the twin-attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon – for the US to finally conclude, rightly or wrongly, that 'the Islamist peril has filled the void left by the demise of communism' (*The Economist* February 2, 2002:37). To be sure, prospective 'jihadists' would not subscribe to this kind of labeling; after-all the global Islamist or jihad movement sees itself as being in the forefront of the struggle against poverty, injustice and domination world-wide. One would, within this context, better appreciate why, in January 2002, Islamic scholars who met in Mecca crafted their own definition of terrorism as follows: 'all acts of aggression committed by individuals, groups or states against human beings, including attacks on their religion, life, intellect and property' (Macleod 2002:38). This definitional rendition of terrorism seems to echo Curtis's argument (2001:36) that terrorism is nothing but 'a necessary evil' to the extent that it is a mere vehicle for the expression of injustice. He adds that it is an evil that can be attenuated by 'addressing basic human needs and grievances and reduction of political violence'.

We need to interrogate the seeming reluctance - or inability - to come to terms with Islamist fundamentalism, pre-9/11 2001. Two mutually reinforcing and related explicatory schemas suggest themselves. The first one concerns the US attitude to Political Islam as a societal project in the Middle East, the Gulf region and in several parts of Asia. In this respect, Gerges (1999) argues that whilst America's perception of political Islam since the Iranian revolution of 1979 has few redeeming features, it has managed not to demonise Islam in so far as the latter is seen as a clash of interests, not of cultures. The US interest in the Arab world is essentially to maintain a stranglehold on the region's immense oil and gas reserves, a foreign policy orientation that, over the past several decades, has translated into the US supporting the most politically closed, demented and venal kingdoms and autocracies in much of that part of the world. Principally because of Washington's multi-faceted support – including military – the civil societies and peoples of that region of the world have remained largely oppressed. It has been argued that 'for almost a generation, the region's authoritarian rulers have defied predictions of their downfall. Syria, a secular republic, has already produced a dynasty. Iraq, Egypt and Libya threaten to do so' (*The Economist* February 2, 2002 p.38). Islamists are angry that, so far, they 'have proved incapable of harnessing (their) people's frustration'. And they lay the blame, as well as seek to visit the iniquity of this incapacitation, on the United States. We return to this important issue below.

Juxtaposed against this empirical reality, the emphasis of President George Bush Jr's 2002 State of the Nation's address on an 'axis of evil' that would receive zero tolerance from the US foreign policy stance that he claims is driven by a set of 'non-negotiable demands' about values, sounds hollow. To be sure, that was a good piece of sophistry - the rule of law, respect for women, private property, free speech, equal justice, religious tolerance, etc. It was also fine on paper. But the logic of *realpolitik,* suggests a different reality, and often casts serious doubts on the US commitment to these goals. In the words of a corporate analyst, 'the application will be harder… because so many countries around the world do disagree with it, including many that now play host to American bases or acting as allies-Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Kuwait and Uzbekistan to name a few'. Worse, it adds, 'democracies that follow

these values are also capable, on occasion, of being in the wrong and even of committing atrocities' (*The Economist* February 2, 2002:14).

The second explicatory framework is the so-called ascendancy of Western values in an increasingly interdependent, if also unequal and lopsided, world. It is as if Western hypocrisy, advertised in the foregoing, does not hurt the efficacy and utility of the paradigm. Admittedly, the formal end of the Cold War has broken down much of the hitherto existing political fortifications to globalisation (Hay 2001:329). Much of what subsists is a preserve of the richest and most industrialised states in the world - both among themselves and, much more so, as we show below, in relation to developing countries. Yet the West lacks tranquility: Hay contends that the 'culture wars' in the US, with their echoes in Europe and Australia, point to the West's perennial concern about the future. And this is not for nothing; the West's prime mover, the US, is 'not innocent in provoking terrorist acts on account of her preoccupation with furthering national interest with scant regard to morality and consensus of the international community' (Curtis 2001:36).

Ironically, the same forces that animate globalisation, that seemingly make the non-western world a pawn in the US's chessboard expose the double standard and malevolence of the latter vis-à-vis the former. But as post 9/11 events so cruelly demonstrate, it certainly is not in the character of American foreign policy elite to undertake critical policy introspections and reviews when dealing with the globe's underclass. The foreign policy gospel according to the US is, to this elite, always right. In his latest work – *9/11–* a collection of interviews in the first month following the terrorist attacks, Chomsky (2002) argues that the attack itself was an indirect consequence of the US policy in the Middle East. A similar statement by a Saudi millionaire Crown Prince at the heat of 9/11 met with the wrath of the then New York City Mayor, Rudy Giuliani, who returned the Prince's $10 million donation to the victims of the attacks. Chomsky calls the US 'a leading terrorist state', condemned by the World Court in 1986, but still preoccupied with 'propping up oppressive regimes' such as Saudi Arabia, whose human rights record is hardly better than that of the Taliban. Whilst condemning terrorism and terrorists, Chomsky adds, for effect: 'There is little doubt that the perpetrators (of terrorism) come from the terrorist network that has its roots in the mercenary armies that were trained and armed by the CIA… and others'.

The US and her allies are not interested in this kind of historical analysis. Yet it is critically important to do so in order to understand the contemporary nature of terrorism. The immediate impetus for the revival of the latter and its heavy anti-American accent came from bin Laden's resolve to severe links with the American, British and Saudi Intelligence Services, his former patrons. On return to Afghanistan in May 1996 after an absence of six years, the leader of al-Qaeda took two decisive decisions. One, he declared a Jihad against both the US and the Saudi Royal Family – the one on the grounds that her troops were occupying the 'holy lands' of his native Saudi and the other for tolerating that act (Rashid 199:32). Two, he formed the '055 Brigade' from the remnants and vestiges of Arab militants (the *Mujahideen*) that had fought alongside his organisation to vanquish the Soviets. Some scholars have held the US and Saudi Arabia responsible for the first international 'jihad' (Stern 2000:125). With no coherent post-Cold War foreign policy for neither Afghanistan nor for the entire Central Asian region, American influence would soon be replaced in Afghanistan by that of her neighbours, most of whom gave a generous supplies of arms. Terrorism, however understood, could not have had a more fertile soil to thrive on. Its subsequent internationalisation - in terms of networking across national boundaries, access to advanced technology and lack of accountability to any government (Rose 1999:131) – was a question of time. As Rashid (1999:22) puts it, 'into the vacuum left by 20 years of war and the collapse of stable government has marched a new generation of violent fundamentalists, nurtured and inspired by the Taliban's unique Islamist model'. In consequence, for as long as a conservative and well-worn understanding of national interest is pursued, in an extremely exclusionary, zero-sum game manner, the US and its often reluctant European allies would be hard put to it to get to the source of seeming rampant terrorism in contemporary times. As one commentator has put it, 'no matter how much interest...the West (has) in Middle-Eastern oil, we should criticize the unfair division of wealth in those countries... if the West does not address the poverty and despair of the masses in the Middle-East, the war against terrorism will never be won' (*Time*, December 31, 2001/January 7, 2002).

The US, the West and the Rest of the World

It is perhaps understandable that the interests of the powerful and the weak in a world dominated by the strong are essentially diametrically opposed one to the other. Motivations to act in certain ways as well as priorities in agenda setting will necessarily vary within and between states, both vertically and horizontally. In so far as the global hamlet belongs to all of us, however, the strong, powerful and rich states would be expected, some of the time, to make decisions as well as pursue actions that are not altogether antithetical to the interests of the weak, powerless and poor states. Otherwise, their parting of ways was well made! Quoting from the World Bank's *Human Development Report* of 1999 which notes that the income gap between the fifth of the world's population in the richest countries and the fifth in the poorest grew from 30 to 1 (1960), to 60 to 1 (1990) and 74 to 1 (1995), and that the poorest 20 percent of the world's population account for 1 percent of the world's GDP, Ajami (2000:33-4) contends that 'a world of this magnitude of inequality is inherently unstable. Its peace must rest, as the Arabic expression would put it, on the palm of a devil'.

The US often pursues her national interests unilaterally, with a single-mindedness that sets little store by international ethics or morality, sometimes even in relation to her European allies. She has often failed to define her national interest to include global interest. Yet, it is by so doing that she can best exploit what Nye (2002:236) refers to as her 'soft power', that is to say, 'the power of attraction that is associated with ideas, cultures and policies'. By preferring the use of 'hard power' – that is the use or threat of use of military power – Washington misses the opportunity to render the international order a public good, that is, 'something that everyone can consume without diminishing its availability to others' (Nye 2002:238). The result has been a global system increasingly unsafe both for the West and the rest of the world.

If we transpose the explication of political economy proposed by Nafzinger and Auvinen (2002:154) from the national to the global level, as meaning not only 'economic analysis, but also an examination of the interests of political leaders and policy makers who make economic decisions and members of the population who are affected by these decisions', we are confronted by a litany of foreign, economic, political

and related policy decisions that are meant to further America's national and strategic interests. More often than not, these interests are bereft of consistency and riveted by double standards and double-speak. The consequence is that America's credibility in a large segment of the globe has become highly circumscribed and tenuous. Perhaps the kinds of harvest she has been reaping are to be expected.

To understand Washington's foreign policy behaviour in the post-cold war era, Tucker (1999:15-20), Professor Emeritus of American foreign policy at the John Hopkins University at the time of writing, argues that the central issue is a pragmatic one, namely, whether the US acts alone or in concert with others. That is to say, if experience teaches the US that she obtains more and better results by acting alone, then perhaps she should not wait for her European allies to police the world as well as protect and enhance her national interests. On this score, President George Bush Sr. declared during the Gulf War that Washington's multilateralism was not a function of getting the right results; that even without the approval of the Security Council, the US would have gone ahead to dislodge Iraq from Kuwait. Tucker seems to excuse America's unilateralism on the pretext that there is hardly any viable alternative. For him, neither globalisation nor multipolarity has proved its efficacy: 'the former exists but can't ensure order; the latter might ensure order but does not exist'. It may well be that the US is exploiting Europe's understandable revulsion to war on account of its ruinous and horrendous history of bloody wars, industrial genocide and murderous ideologies. Indeed, as Elliott (2002:40) has argued, 'the legacy of all this is a deep aversion to – almost a loathing of - military force. For many modern Europeans, war is a ghastly, primitive business... War is a last resort; those ready to use it quickly-or worse, who appear to enjoy it-are not to be trusted'. Within this context, to say, following Tucker, that on the major issues of the 1990s – NATO expansion and the Balkan wars – the US's European allies were hardly offended by the threat of Washington to act alone is to be insensitive to the feelings of the European Union. As it was in 1990/91 so it is in 2002/3. The George Bush jr. administration has stated emphatically that once it was satisfied that Iraq was hiding weapons of mass destruction, it would not hesitate to use violence to disarm her, including unilaterally and without the support of the Security Council.

Washington was visibly irritated that Russia, China and France insisted it had to go through the United Nations.

The larger issue that has loomed large since the Berlin Wall came tumbling down in 1989 is a moral one: how the world's sole superpower wants to run the globe only on its own terms by being the only one to determine between right and wrong (Soros 2000:53); how it seeks to guard jealously its own sovereignty and self-interest, almost without wanting to give anything away to others. In other words, how does the US seek to be the sole purveyor of power on the global scene with scant regard to the huge responsibility attached to that position? In this respect, Rice (2000:47) misses the point by critiquing scholars and analysts who argue that the US exercises legitimate power only when doing so in someone's or something's interest. Whilst the US reserves the right, no less than other states, to protect her national interests in the course of running the globe, she opens herself up to critical assessment when her multiple external activities and policies do not 'create conditions that promote freedom, markets and peace', contrary to Rice's postulation. This is not only a moral question, it is also one that has tremendous implications for global security and stability. Whilst successive American governments, of varying ideological and policy hues, verbalise public commitments to these values, there have been too few concrete achievements to demonstrate any abiding form of America's solidarity with parts of the globe that are more of victims than beneficiaries of globalisation. Those who argue that Washington remains 'tied to a past that has become largely irrelevant, prisoners of ideas and policies developed in the long encounter with the Soviet Union' may well be correct. (Tucker 1999:15). Washington appears incapable of relearning the game of international politics, as a major power in a manner that her foreign policy would 'reflect rational calculations of power rather than a wish list of arrogant, unilateralist demands' (Huntington 1999:35-49).

And it would seem that there are several manifestations of this policy thrust that are simply out of sync with the expectations of the rest of the world. To begin with, whatever the heuristic value of unilateralism, it clearly is more useful when only narrow interests of Washington are at stake. Thus, the loud complaint of Europe, post-9/11: in the war against terror, the old continent has been unhappy that 'the US having pushed for a coalition against terror is now abandoning

some of the common principles that under-gird it' (Graff 2002:16). Weaned on the Cold War strategy of building consensus around US foreign policy preferences among its allies, Washington has little experience in basing its external policy thrusts on consensual politics with all the key players (Haas 1995:57). This palpable arrogance and disability is such that US foreign policy largely lacks a humane and humble spirit of give and take. By largely eschewing morality, Washington loses on several fronts, not least a diminished legitimacy (her right to be an impartial arbiter and interlocutor is often circumscribed by the rhetorical question, 'who makes thee judge over us?') as well as an increasingly unstable global system in which both key and peripheral allies, as the war on terror amply demonstrates, give grudging obedience just to avoid the thinly veiled bully and intimidation of Washington. On this score, President Bush's refrain echoes still: 'if you harbour terrorists, you are terrorists; if you train or arm a terrorist, you are a terrorist. If you feed a terrorist or fund a terrorist, you are a terrorist'.

America's arrogance also comes to bold relief via a series of controversial decisions that appear contemptuous of other players in the global system. The examples are many: the sabotage of the Comprehensive (Nuclear) Test Ban Treaty; the global ban on land mines and the UN negotiations on limiting international commerce in small arms; the walk-out on the conference on strengthening the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention, and the official withdrawal in December 2001, at the time she was canvassing for a global coalition against terror, from the ABM Treaty in order to accelerate the development of her own National Missile Defense. In the same vein, the US stalled the constitution of a global War-Crimes Court perhaps because she has many things to hide. Most importantly, Washington snubbed the Kyoto Protocol on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, with Bush invoking a pristine national interest argument: 'we will not do anything that harms our economy, because first things first are the people who live in America, that's my priority' (Lobe 2002:20). To be sure, the terrorist attacks of 9/11 would, too naturally, be exploited to give a fillip to either unilateralism or 'multilateralism a la carte'. Thus the official declaration, that the US will cooperate with other countries so long as neither her interests nor her freedom of action is compromised (ibid.). A surrealist self-assessment makes the US vulnerable, leading her to see herself differently from the way much of

the rest of the world sees her. As an analyst has contended, 'to fight an axis of evil, even a superpower needs an axis of its own' (*The Economist* February 2, 2002:14).

There are more foreboding indices. America's towering military arsenal that, since 1992, has accounted for almost 40 percent of global military expenditure, three times as much as anyone else, has placed her in a class of her own. Similarly, she accounts for half of global arms, which amounted to about $55 billion in 1998. She is also the biggest manufacturer of conventional weapons and boasts of the biggest military R & D, with France a distant second (Cox 2002:268). The shifting foreign policy options of the US lead, some of the time, to self-immolation, by arming, today, groups and states considered as allies and friends who, by tomorrow, may have declared Washington a public enemy. As we have shown, there is perhaps no better contemporary example than pre-Taliban Afghanistan. Quoting Milt Bearden, CIA station chief in Pakistan between 1986 and 1989, Stern (2000:121) reports that, with the aim of dislodging the Soviet Union from Afghanistan, Washington and its leading Gulf ally, Saudi Arabia, pumped some $3.5 billion into that country and Pakistan. Moreover, the Taliban was trained and supported by both the CIA and the SAS. And Washington's contempt for the democratic principles and values it claims to hold dear in foreign policy comes into sharp focus here: one of its diplomats was quoted as saying that 'the Taliban will probably develop like the Saudis did...Afghanistan will become a US colony; *there would be huge profits for the West, no democracy and the legal persecution of women. We can live with that*' (Asman 2001:31, emphasis mine).

The unintended consequences of that policy decision have been far-reaching. For one, the 'international jihad' created to fight the Soviets encouraged old and new jihadists to want to fight the US to a standstill. For another, in the Central Asian region, jihad, guns and drugs have become the most lucrative business. Again, between February and August 2001, the White House held unsuccessful discussions with Kabul on how the former would have suzerainty over the region's enormous oil and gas reserves. According to an analyst 'at one moment during the negotiations, the US representatives told the Taliban "either you accept our offer of a carpet of gold, or we bury you under a carpet of bombs", thus the argument that the war against terror in Afghanistan was nothing but a means to an end' (Asman 2001:31). The offer was the

construction by Washington of an oil pipeline from Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and Kazakstan to Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Indian Ocean. The point to emphasise here is that had the Taliban played along, the US would, in all probability, have, at worst, approved economic assistance to Kabul and, at best, given it political recognition.

Similarly, inconsistent foreign policy forays for which Washington either lacks the will or the capacity to finish off have often resulted in the creation of a huge gap between theory and praxis. Bengio (2000:101) invokes, in this respect, America's repeated policy declaration in the last decade or so about the imminent ousting of President Saddam Hussein of Iraq from power. As the latter waxed stronger, Iraqis came to believe that the main interest of the US in their country was their huge oil reserves. But that impression does not help Washington's global image. Policy inconsistency is but a short step away from a double standard and the fight against terrorism has all but brought this phenomenon to the front burner. Witness: since there are pockets of terrorists inside Europe and the US itself, one wonders why, for instance, non-Islamist terrorists like members of the historically notorious Irish Republican Army (IRA) have not been arrested. Again, since there is a large Irish community in Boston that raises funds for the IRA, Chomsky (in Thalif 2002:19), queries why Bush did not start his offensive against terrorism by bombing Boston. Osman (2000:4) also indicates that the Kach movement 'an extremist Zionist group' regarded as 'terrorist' even in Israel, is off the hook, not held on 'secret evidence' (see below), 'even though it is known to have connections, no less than the IRA, in the US'.

We also find the double standard in terms of the shrinking province of the rule of law when dealing with suspected non-Western or non-American terrorists. Foreign nationals, suspected of terrorism may now be judged, at the discretion of the American President, by special military tribunals. Proceedings may be secret; guilt does not have to be proven beyond reasonable doubt; verdicts need not be unanimous; there may be no provision for appeal and, finally, executions are allowed. Were these draconian provisions entirely novel, one may understand John Ashcroft, the US Attorney General's argument that the American Constitution is not meant to protect foreign terrorists who commit war crimes against the US. But there are similar laws in the US statute books that also run counter to the tenets of liberal democracy. To cite just one example: a section of the 1996 Anti-

Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act permits the US government
to withhold evidence against a suspect on the grounds that exposing it
may pose a threat to national security. The Act has been criticised for
admitting no more than a cocktail of rumour, innuendo and hearsay
from foreign intelligence services and unproven assertions by security
agents. Many of the victims of 'secret evidence' are Moslem Arabs who
have lived for several years, if not decades, in the US. According to
Osman (2000:4) 'the fact that almost all of those detained under secret
evidence are Muslim or Arab, predominantly from the Middle East,
gives credence to the speculation that the practice and its specious legal
underpinnings amount to a form of ethnic and religious discrimination-
an anti-Muslim and anti-Arab inquisition'. On the face of it, there seems
to be no basis for this apparent racial profiling: of the 169 anti-
American attacks around the world in 1999, only 11 occurred in the
Middle East. Perhaps all of this is a failure of international governance.
It is also the triumph of the rule of the thumb and the justice of the
powerful. Terrorism, however much loathed from the perspective of
the great powers, may have come in to fill a gap. 'The most compelling
incentive for broader and deeper supranational governance', writes
Wright (2000:68), 'may come from terrorism and crime'.

Perhaps by far the most pernicious structural element of
contemporary international political economy, with largely negative
effects on the underclass, is the West's trade protectionist policy. The
poverty it has engendered has become, in the hands of Islamists, a
weapon of war against the US. International Financial Institutions
(IFIS) constantly assert that protectionism and nationalism hurt
globalisation and advise, if not coerce, developing countries to accept
trade liberalisation as a policy virtue. But nothing better demonstrates
Western hypocrisy and the use of the World Bank and the IMF as
instruments of Western global hegemony than the reluctance of the
West to abide by those tenets of globalisation that do not square up
with its own interests. The worry is that neither the Bank nor the Fund
can call the rich nations to order. The reason for this is not hard to find.
Minton-Beddoes (1995:123-4), an employee of IMF between 1992 and
1994, states that 'there is a gulf between the rhetoric and reality of the
IMF's role, a gulf that has been emerging since the fixed exchange rate
system broke down in the early 1970s, but which is proving increasingly
hazardous. The growth of capital markets has rendered the organization

impotent in industrialized countries; the world's richest economies neither borrow from the IMF nor are they required to follow its policy advice'. In relation to the developing world, the verdict is that the Fund's role is getting increasingly unclear: 'in the world's poorest countries, it has effectively become a development institution with a narrow macroeconomic focus. This role is a far cry from the original notion of providing countries with temporary financial support and raises the question of overlap with the World Bank'. The conclusion is that 'the IMF is floundering as it looks for a role', which explains why Minton-Beddes argues that the institution needs to be reformed.

Nothing demonstrates this lacuna better than the IMF's inertia. Against this backdrop, the West sinks deeper into the murky waters of protectionism, characterised by the antimonies of the West's diminishing engagement with the world, and more and more extensive global interests. The US, for instance, has been progressively decreasing her spending on international affairs: from 4 percent of the budget in 1960 to less than 1 percent in the 1990s. Contrary to what the American public believes, the foreign aid budget of the US is no more than 0.1 percent of her GNP, about a third of what her European allies offer (Nye 2002:242). Hence, the submission that 'aid is not sufficient for development...opening our markets, strengthening accountable institutions and discouraging corruption are more important'. The Bush administration has, perhaps predictably, indicated a reduction in US bilateral aid to Africa – less $5million from 794 million. More specifically, West protectionism vis-à-vis the developing world has had such negative effects precisely because they deny market access to poor countries. According to Collier and Dollar (2002:19) of the World Bank, 'rich countries maintain protections in exactly the areas where developing countries have comparative advantage and there would be large gains to poor countries if these were reduced'. These areas are agriculture and labour-intensive manufactures, and the cost to developing nations is more than $100 billion per year - twice the total volume of aid from the North to the South (ibid, p.8-9). By the same token, whilst poor countries are asked to remove subsidies from agriculture, subsidies for farmers in rich countries are worth $1 billion a day, representing six times as much as the rich countries' total foreign and aid budget. In relation to Africa, the situation is worse. Even on policy matters that have no more than symbolic value, commitment is

conspicuous in its absence. A single illustration suffices: it took a year for the decision, in March 1999, of the US-Africa Ministerial Committee consisting of representatives from 50 countries, working through the White House and allies in the Congress, to get the latter to pass the African Growth and Opportunity Act. The Act grants improved US market access to Africa's textiles and other products. It was interesting to observe the resistance of US textile groups to a decision that would only double Africa's miserable 0.8 percent of imports to the US (Stremleau 2000:121). Within this context, the President of the African Development Bank (ADB), Omar Kabby (in Awvonda 2002:32-33) has been very forthcoming: 'if all the rich countries could raise their Overseas Development Assistance to 0.7 percent of Gross National Product, if they can open up their markets and also cancel the debts, these measures alone could release enough resources for revitalization of Africa's development'. Much the same thing could be said of the rest of the developing world. The net effect of the foregoing is that the political economy of globalisation has, in poor countries, spawned more victims than beneficiaries.

Poverty Writ Large

If IFIs, the UN system and donor countries are to be believed, poverty alleviation is the globe's primordial preoccupation. No theme of analysis has, in the last two decades or so, commanded as much attention and reflection as poverty. At the World Economic Forum in New York in February 2002, Kofi Annan referred to poverty as 'the greatest threat to global security'. Malloch Brown, the UNDP administrator, regards it as 'an unmanageable problem in a single global economy'. The World Bank's 2000/2001 *Report on Poverty* defines it as including four elements hitherto thought far-fetched: powerlessness, voicelessness, vulnerability and fear. All of these must have combined to push the Bank to problematise the war on poverty in *Can Africa Claim the 21ˢᵗ Century?*. The document proposes the halving of the number of people living on less than $1 a day by 2015, and the passing of the ownership of development decisions from leaders and donors to the policymakers of recipient governments. The Bank was sanguine enough to announce a militating factor: the exclusion of two billion people from globalisation. The inference is that the latter phenomenon is a failure. With 2.8 billion people living

on less than $2 a day and another 1.2 billion on less than $1; with some 150 million East Europeans forced to join the poverty market in the aftermath of the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the 1990s; with the debt burden of developing countries standing at some $2.2 trillion, two-thirds of which is long-term public debt; with Africa, alone, transferring four times more money to institutional creditors than she spends on basic health care and education, it was almost an understatement for the Bank to have declared in its 2000/2001 *Report on Poverty* that, whatever the gains of the 20th Century, 'poverty remains a global problem of huge proportions'. As Gardner (2000:2) suggests, the global war to reduce poverty and save the environment is being lost.

The explanation is not far-fetched; the IFIs and their principals have paid scant attention to the important issue of moral economy. Defined by Wilkin (2001:187-8) as 'a concern with bringing ethical questions back into our understanding of how economics are to be organised', moral economy is all about what Amartya Sen's *On Ethics and Economics* (1987) refers to as the 'ethical wing' of economics. The latter, as summarised by Wilkin (ibid.) is concerned to underline 'ideas of the good life' as well as answering the question how we should live. On the contrary, too much store is set by the 'engineering wing' of economics that is related to the nitty-gritty of production, wealth creation and profit making. Wilkins (ibid.) concludes that the latter is what 'contemporary economics has become', thus 'losing sight of the ethical claims that are at the heart of classical political economy'.

By paying only lip service to giving a humane face to globalisation, the West and the agencies it controls risks the wrath of hundreds of millions of men and women who, in order to make a living as well as fighting crass and gross injustice, would live *hors la loi*. In the process, they would 'hurt' globalisation. UNDP's Brown should know what he was talking about when he contended that poverty is a breeding ground for international pathologies: support for terrorism, narco-trafficking, massive migration flows, the spread of infectious diseases, in so far as 'poverty and its discontents have a habit of slipping out of their natural habitat' (Elliott 2001/2002:81). By the same token, having not spread 'the benefits of globalisation more widely' and for supporting many of the political leaderships of both 'failed states' and 'impoverished economies', the West can hardly be 'immune from the effects of

poverty and political collapse halfway around the globe' (*The Economist,* February 2, 2002:63).

Political Islam

If we define Political Islam, following Ghadbian (2000:77), as 'those Islamist individuals and movements who actively seek to implement Islam in the public as well as private realm' and as those who desire and are working towards increased visibility for Islam 'both as an ethical system and as a political ideology' (Afsaruddin1999:331ff), we find a highly differentiated array of individuals and movements with diverse agendas, memberships, ideological orientations, political methods and styles, running through the whole gamut of hawks, doves and moderates. For instance, in Egypt, whilst the Islamic Group and Jihad believe in the instrumental use of violence, the Muslim Brotherhood and other smaller groupings opt rather for peaceful means. Indeed, their larger memberships seem to suggest that many a self-defined political Islamist may be a political moderate. Moreover, more radical Islamist groups have often visited violence on more dovish and liberal fellow Muslims (Van den Berg 1999:99). As a political instrument, it seems plausible to argue, based on actually existing political reality in several Arab and Asian states, that the closer politico-Islamic movements are to gaining or sharing political power, the less radical they often appear to be (Anderson in Sullivan, 1999:109ff). In consequence, we can explain the difference between the moderate character of Islamism in, say, Jordan, Kuwait, Yemen, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Indonesia, etc where some Islamic groups are in formal opposition and more radical ones - as in Libya, Syria, Tunisia and Egypt - by virtue of the latter's non-recognition as legal parties. In Yemen, for instance, whilst since 9/11 President Ali Abdullah Saleh has, perhaps by *force majeure,* become increasingly pro-American, cracking down on Islamists, the latter do not appear troubled politically. Not only is their party - *Islah* - the country's largest opposition party with 64 of the 301 seats in Parliament, they also have a military wing and some of their members belong to the Intelligence Service (*The Economist,* February 16, 2002:39-40). The suggestion is that in contradistinction to the 1980s when Iran, the first contemporary Islamic revolutionary success, held sway among Islamists, we have, since the 1990s, witnessed a more variegated

approach to state-religion *rapprochement*. This is a reflection of 'a rich diversity of peoples, governments and interests...found in the Muslim world and within Political Islam' (Esposito 1997:8).

In other words, Political Islam, no less than Islam *qua* Islam, is neither monolithic nor undifferentiated. On the contrary, both as a civilisation and a way of life it is multifaceted (Mazrui 1997:18). It is a tool for nationalism. It may also be a revolutionary ideology or set of ideas and programmes for the moral purification and reconstruction of perceived degenerate states. As Zubaida (2000:60) has indicated, at the Iranian revolution, Political Islam was perceived as 'an alternative idiom and impetus of opposition and the construction of alternatives'. For Islamists of this genre, there is nothing *sui generis* about their missionary zeal. For them, they are simply following in the footsteps of the forebears of Islam who conceived of the extermination of 'unbelievers' or infidels as an article of faith as well as a compelling religious obligation for the faithful (Kelsay 2002:34-38).

In contemporary times, this religious act has acquired a decidedly political orientation for several reasons: the success of the 1979 Iranian revolution; Islamist fundamentalism (the Taliban) in Afghanistan; the negative fall-out of the US-led Gulf War in 1990-91; and the appeal of Political Islam since the formal end of the Cold War. Some scholars have argued that even before 1979, certain factors had aggregated to give the political project of Islam a boost. Mohamad (2000:567) cites in this regard the discrediting of post-1967 pan-Arab nationalism and socialist ideologies and the increasingly lack of economic development on the part of several Arab states. Other factors include deep-seated grievances concerning America's Middle East foreign policy, in particular her open support for Israel in the latter's troubled relations with the Palestinians; the perceived American support for decadent Arab (and, to a lesser extent, Asian) leaders that have clung on to power notwithstanding their failure to deliver on promises of economic development, political democracy and observance of human rights, etc. Political Islamists also point to the International War Crimes Tribunal (IWCT) as an instrument of institutionalisation and hegemony of the West. For some, the tribunal is meant to punish the West's enemies - in particular global Islamic movements. Global Islamists visit the iniquity of their leaders on the support of the US for what they regard as conservative, corrupt and hardly Islamic governments in their home

countries. As the crisis of oppression, lack of freedom, non-competitive elections, poverty and unemployment deepen in their countries, Islamists become more psychologically alienated from mainstream Islam. They tend to resort easily to a radical and fundamentalist interpretation of their religion. Their objective seems to be to draw attention to their unenviable plight with a view to eventually contributing to ending the misery of their people. But they also go beyond this by a call to arms: 'the first step to reversing this hegemony of satanic *kurf* is recognizing and rejecting the façade behind which it hides and the instruments through which it operates' (*Crescent International,* January 16-31, 2001:1).

Radicalising the Victims

A combination of existential factors caused by an unequally globalised world have combined to yield an unstable world, both for perceived beneficiaries and for victims. These factors include regime repression and autocracy often occasioned by highly centralised states with weak systems of transparency and accountability; economic disparity; rising poverty and increasing unemployment amongst 'the bold, the thoughtful and the young' (*The Economist* 02/9/2000:19) as well as among the semi-educated and young people. These factors push the victims to seek means, fair or foul combined, to throw away their chains. In the process, they jeopardise the comfort and prosperity of nations and peoples who benefit from the actually existing global order and disorder.

We have earlier remarked that the events of 9/11, 2001 startled the US foreign policy elite out of their deep slumber and false sense of security in relation to Political Islam. After the events, President Bush jr. promised tighter measures to guarantee the internal stability of the American nation. The 342-page US Patriot Act, passed and signed to law by Bush on October 26, 2001, not only established a military tribunal order, but also gave wide-ranging powers to the executive. This prompted Timothy Edgar, the American Civil Liberties Union's legislative Counsel, to state that 'the scope of the executive order is so broad as to undercut basic international and constitutional ideals of fairness and justice'. He also called for 'clear regulations' capable of guaranteeing 'that no innocent person (is) prosecuted, incarcerated or executed by these tribunals' (Ewewu 2002). The point to be underlined

here is that the rather unintended consequence of the war on terror and the crackdown – via new immigration rules, financial controls, etc – on real, perceived and imagined terrorists may be the hardening of positions by the latter and a recrudescence, not decline, of terrorism. According to a perceptive analyst, 'confronted with a global crackdown for the first time, the Jihadi movement is likely to lie low for months. But silence does not mean defeat. Bin Laden has succeeded in recapturing the imagination of the Arab street. For years, observers had written off Political Islam as a spent force without the know-how to run a state, or the organisation to mount an effective challenge. The ability to strike at the heart of America has confounded the doubters' (*The Economist* February 2, 2002:37). Similarly, the appeal of Islamism seems to be directly proportional to the deepening oppression of iron-fisted and venal Arab governments and the surprising inability of the US to understand the nature and character of the global political economy that has engendered so much love-hate for Washington.

To all appearances, it is the US that stands between Middle East, Arab and Gulf states on the one hand and democracy on the other. It is a foreign policy behaviour that is comparable, almost in all material particulars, to Washington's foreign policy vis-à-vis its Latin and Central American neighbours (Chomsky 2000). In this respect, we can read Zanoyan (1995:2-7) with much profit. Writing specifically on the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Zanoyan argues that after the oil boom of the 1970s and the ensuing welfare state of unearned income during which there was no serious social contract between rogue and all-powerful governments and the people, citizens have waited, since 1986, for democratic reforms and a redefinition of the role of governments. Save for isolated pockets, such as Kuwait and Oman, no serious reforms have taken place. Rather than help find solutions, Washington has been more interested in the politics of denial. It claims that the alternative to the status quo is radical politics that may unsettle the entire region. For the governments in question, Political Islam is presented to the US as an alibi for their political illiberality. (Zanoyan 1995:5-6). The result is that, against the wishes of the mass of the people, the Arabs inhabit 'the least democratic patch in God's earth' (*The Economist*, February 19, 2000:19).

According to the *World Bank Annual Report* (2001) on the MENA region, far-reaching economic reforms meant to restore macro-economic balances and promote private sector-led development that started in the late 1980s have started to yield positive results. Annual GDP growth increased from 2.4 percent in 1981-90 to 3.1 percent between 1991-2000. Similarly, by the late 1990s, improvements for the average gross annual income per capita for the region augmented from $1,800 (1985) to $2,060 (1998-1999). Notwithstanding improved performance, however, the disaggregated economic and human development indices are in the main gloomy: regional unemployment averages 15 percent – and this is particularly acute among the young and educated. Twenty-nine percent of the population lives on less than $2 per day. Moreover, most of the governments have large public sectors, highly centralised administrations, overstaffed civil services and weak systems of accountability. By the same token, poverty is a common denominator in the region. It has been relatively easy to proselytise one form or another of Political Islam as the solution.

Indeed, support for Islamist movements seems to correlate closely with the lack of economic opportunities. Ignatieff (1995:133-4) is forthcoming on this issue, albeit in a general sense. For him, 'to the disoriented, individualized urban dweller of the Third World-living through the chaos of urbanization, underdevelopment and the botched modernization of weak post-colonial states-Islam offers a sacred code that provides metaphysical reassurance and the detailed regulation of private behavior once offered in tribal society'. He should have added that this phenomenon is much more so in developing countries – as in the MENA region and Central and South/South-East Asia – where the strategic and related interests of the US loom very large, and where the latter are perceived by local populations to be detrimental to their own well-being. Where this phenomenon is absent, as in much of Africa, Political Islam, however boisterous, tends to have a limited reach. It often ends up taking the backseat to a secular (re) construction of the civil society as a counter-poise to the overbearing weight of the state (Amuwo 1998).

Social Islam, the practice by jihadists of taking care of the families of martyred members, has, undoubtedly, made Political Islam more attractive. With a huge cash flow from Iran, Islamic charities and wealthy private backers in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, the Hamas

in Palestine, for example, is in an advantageous position to make a big difference in the lives of many Palestinians. It spends over half of its impressive annual budgets – between $20 and $30 million comes from Iran alone – on building and maintaining schools, mosques, orphanages, clinics, youth clubs and libraries in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Beneficiaries of this huge networking have risen from less than 4,000 to over 7,000 since late 2000. Major components of the financial package include life-long sustenance of families of suicide bombers and highly subsidised students' hostels (where room board and utilities cost a mere $40 a month). It is not surprising that as the Middle-East peace process flounders and as the US appears increasingly as a hostage to her Jewish lobby group – despite some occasional flashes of wise and neutral policy declarations – a conception of war of liberation is engendered amongst Palestinians. Whilst a good number of Palestinians remains averse to Hamas' genocidal policy vis-à-vis Israel, many have, in the last two years or so, become reconciled to the fact that suicide bombings may be the only viable instrument to reclaim their freedom and restore their self-dignity (McGeary 2001:23-26).

Whilst it is true, as Zanoyan (1995:2) has argued that 'the slow but sure decay of the economic and political structures of the US' key regional allies' in the MENA region as well as Washington's support that delay key reforms make resort to violence easy, and equally true that 'insurgency is more likely if the less advantaged can identify the perpetrators of their suffering' (Nafziger and Auvinen, 2002:158), there is no-to-one relationship between Political Islam and violence. Islam is neither violent nor pacifist; rather political and socio-economic conditions dictate the use or renunciation of violence (Ghadbian 2000).

In the final analysis, only a handful of people lead the self-imposed revolutionary crusade of Political Islam. It does not seem to need a motley crowd to achieve its objectives. On the contrary, what Islamic fundamentalism seems to have in abundance is a thick crowd of recruits, young men – and, as one has observed in the Palestine in recent times, young women – who are ready to die for the cause espoused by their principals and in which they perhaps believe. And it would seem that as the credibility of the US in the Middle East wanes, Political Islam increasingly finds it easy to recruit more candidates for martyrdom. When the Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah retorted to a question on the standing of the US, that 'to be frank with you, how can

we defend America?' (*Time* February 11, 2002 p.7), that may well have been an understatement of popular opposition to the US even in his own kingdom. A Saudi Intelligence Survey of educated Saudis, aged between 25 and 41 years, carried out in October 2001, shows that no less than 95 percent of them supported bin Laden's cause – and yet Saudi Arabia is not usually regarded as a fundamentalist Islamic state (*The Economist* February 2, 2002:14-15). The same story is related amongst Palestinians. Observing that 'before volunteers needed indoctrination, today Hamas and Islamic Jihad are swamped with volunteers who need little indoctrination', Biema (2001:25) indicates that whereas in 1996 only 20 percent of Palestinians supported suicide bombings, by 2001 that figure had risen to 70 percent. Whatever the protestations of the US foreign policy elites to the contrary, for as long as Washington continues to deny any linkage between the nature of her foreign policy in the Middle East and the Arab World and the character of resistance against America, contemporary forms of terrorism as perceived by the US and its allies are likely to intensify, not diminish.

Conclusion

A commentator recently catalogued US atrocities during the 1980s. These included the training and equipping of death squads by the American military and the CIA and the indiscriminate dropping of napalm on Vietnamese civilians and the illegal bombings of Cambodia. He then posed the question: 'Will President Bush's pledge to eradicate terrorism allow for a fresh examination of America's misdeeds? Or are acts of terrorism committed only by men with beards who speak a foreign language?' (*Time*, December 31, 2001/January 7, 2002). Another analyst contends that even if bin Laden were to be killed, that would not mean the end of al-Qaeda, let alone global terrorism (Ratnesar 2001:49). This is because with multiple global networks, its ideological and religious passions, as well as more 'successes' since 9/11 2001, it will not be easy for al-Qaeda to close shop. On the contrary, the organisation may do one or two things or both: become more anti-American and seek to further attack her and her citizens and interests and also 'direct their anger toward the homegrown grievances that so radicalized them in the first place' (Cloud 2001:50). In view of the fact that 15 of the 19 hijackers on September 11 were Saudis, Cloud (ibid.) asks whether they 'would have tried to battle their

kingdom's supposed Islamic impurities-its corrupt princes, its hosting of US soldiers – if bin Laden and his men hadn't given them another avenue for their rage'. We have attempted to show in this piece that, for now, this is a remote possibility. Fighting corrupted Islam in their countries is for Islamists a second order task; the primary task is to bring down the 'Great Satan' after which it may be easier to get at her clients who hold the reins of power in those countries.

There is little doubt that terrorism poses a grave danger to our global village, even though, for all its potency, the danger of Islamism can easily be exaggerated. Scholars who make this kind of argument believe, following Van den Berg (1999:99ff) that 'fundamentalists are far too divided by ethnic and sectarian hostilities to constitute a replacement to Western-dominated world politics' After all, the argument continues, 'Sudan and Iran, despite their fundamentalist ideologies, have not exhibited international behaviour inconsistent with that of other states uncomfortable with American hegemony'. In view of the events of 9/11, the latter part of the argument has become obsolete. But the principal issue here is straight forward enough: so long as the policy choices and decisions of the US and the major IFIs she controls impact negatively on the world's huge army of poor, unemployed, dispossessed and disinherited people, those amongst the latter who occupy parts of the globe where these policies and decisions appear most nefarious and who have access to weapons of violence, will respond as they deem and see fit. In other words, if terrorism is a menace to our globe, no less dangerous are the structural and contingent factors that create and sustain them.

So what is to be done? The response, in the light of our analysis, should consist of sets of policy decisions and concrete actions that would effectively reduce global inequalities, iniquities and inequities multilaterally as well as diversify instruments of counter-terrorism. In other words, the fight against terrorism has to be waged, first, at the structural, economic level. It should begin as a war against poverty by the putting in place of a less iniquitous and more people-friendly global system. It also has to be a war that frontally tackles the poverty of Third World countries by addressing their specific cultural and socio-economic realities and needs. This can be done by tearing down all structural barriers to their penetration of Western markets; by writing off all dubious and unverifiable debts – much in the same way the US

cancelled Cuba's debt to Spain, her former colonial power over a 100 years ago (Chomsky 2000:102-103). The globe's axis of poverty and inequality needs drastic redress - and very urgently too.

Collier and Dollar (2002) are very conscious of the need to make this composite proposition a reality. The Report authored by them speaks, for instance, to the need for developing countries to have a 'sound domestic financial system', without which 'integration with global capitalist markets' is capable of leading to disastrous consequences as happened in 1997 to Thailand, Indonesia and South Korea (p.10). More specifically, the Report argues that 'without policies to foster local and other cultural traditions, globalisation may indeed lead to a dominance of American culture' (p.15). To be sure, this is not novel straight talk from the Bank. The question is how the countries in question would successfully formulate and implement such policies in view of the pernicious and persistent onslaught against them by IFIs to implement only such economic blueprints as the latter put in place for them. Neo-classical macro-economic reforms that do not put the people in the driver's seat of development; that do not treat them as subjects of development; that have not, over the last several decades, helped substantially shore up their claim to citizenship, would have to give way to reforms that are people-driven and people-friendly.

In this respect, a commentator talks of the need to help developing countries to stand on their own feet, arresting and trying corrupt Third World rulers as international criminals. He reasoned that by so doing, the Great Powers would have given a 'new meaning to the concept of pre-emptive strike' (*Time,* November 25, 2002:.8). Enlightened self-interest ought to teach the West, in particular Washington, that the time to act on behalf of the globe's poor is now. Elliott, (2002:17) puts the matter succinctly. 'Global leadership... requires that the rich countries of the West look beyond themselves. After September 11 many fine words were spoken about the need to prevent the poorest nations from becoming breeding grounds for extremists. The US was committed not only to fighting terrorists, but also to battling the poverty and hopelessness that help breed anger. Oh really? In that case it is worth asking why the Bush administration has done its best to sabotage the UN's Financing for Development Conference in Monterrey in March (2002) that would oblige it – and other rich countries – to put its money where its mouth is'.

Within this context, the fight against terrorism must be as multifaceted as terrorism itself (Pillar 2001:10). Military warfare is certainly not enough – insofar as violence, legitimate and illegitimate, often breeds more violence. First things first: run a fairly effective ethics-driven world where people, not things, have the first order priority (Amuwo 1995). In the more specific context of the Middle East, it is high time the US recovered the missing second pillar of her policy in that region, namely the peace process, in order that the first one – Arab oil – does not, itself, become endangered. In other words, a more balanced and more equitable policy that treats both Israel and Palestine as equal partners is a social *desideratum* (LaFranchi 2001:2) To be sure, no one can guarantee that even if the US and many of her allies replaced a crudely hegemonic, realist foreign policy by a benign and benevolent one that the world would be perfectly safe for them. But the likelihood is that the global village would be a safer and better haven for all.

References

Abukhalil, A., 2000, 'Review of A.S Mousalli, *Moderate and Radical Islamic Fundamentalism: The Quest for Modernity, Legitimacy and the Islamic State* (1997)', in *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Autumn, pp.110ff.

Ahmed, A.S., 1999, Review of B. Tibi, The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the New World Disorder, (1998) in *International Affairs*, July, pp.694ff.

Ajami, F., 2000, 'The New Faith', *Foreign Policy*, Summer pp.30-34.

Amuwo, 'K., 1995, 'A Political Economy of Human Rights Violation in Africa', *Annals of the Social Science Council of Nigeria*, 7, January-December pp.23-39.

Amuwo, 'K., 1998, 'Limits of Political Islam in Nigeria', *The Nigerian Journal of Politics and Public Policy*, 2, 1-2, December pp.17-27.

Asfaruddin, A., 1999, 'Fundamental Misunderstandings', Review of B.Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism, in Review of Politics*, Spring, pp.331ff.

Asman, F., 2001, 'The War in Afghanistan is a means to an end', *Mail and Guardian* (Johannesburg) November 30 to December 6, p.31.

Awvonda, M., 2002, 'ADB battles for funds for Africa', *West Africa*, 28 January–3 February, pp.32-33.

Behera, A.D., 1999, 'Review of B. Tibi *The Challenge of Fundamentalism*', in *Contemporary South Asia*, November, pp. 406ff.

Bengio, O., 2000, 'How does Saddam Hold On?', *Foreign Affairs*, July/August pp.90-103.

Biema, V., 2001, 'Why the Bombers Keep Coming', *Time*, December 17 p.25.

Chomsky, N., 2000, *Rogue States: The Rule of Force in World Affairs*, London, Pluto Press.

Chomsky, N., 2002, *9/11*, Johannesburg, Mail and Guardian Books.

Cloud, J.,2001,'What is al-Qaeda without its boss?', *Time,* November 26 pp.50-53.

Collier, P. and D. Dollar, 2002, *Globalization, Growth and Poverty: Building an Inclusive World Economy,* Washington, World Bank and Oxford University Press.

Cox, M., 2002, 'American Power, before and after 11 September: dizzy with success?'. *International Affairs,* 78, 2, April, pp.261-276.

Curtis, J., 2001, 'Terrorism: Its Cause and Cure', *American Diplomacy,* Fall.

Elliot, L., 2002, 'Davos Circus Must Find A Ringmaster', *Mail and Guardian,* February 8-14 p.17.

Elliot, M., 2001/2, 'After the Guns Are Silent', *Time,* December 31-7January pp.80-81.

Elliot, M., 2002, 'Camp X-Ray', *Time,* January 28 pp.21-22.

Esposito, J.L., 1997, 'Claiming the Center', *Harvard International Review,* Spring, pp.8ff.

Ewewu, I., 2002, 'US Patriot Act and Human Rights', *This Day Online* (Lagos), 22 March.

Gardner, N.R., 2000, 'The One Percent Solution: Shirking the Cost of World Leadership', *Foreign Policy,* July/August pp.2-11.

Gerges, F.A., 1999, *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests?,* New York, Cambridge University Press.

Ghadbian, N., 2000, 'Political Islam and Violence', *New Political Science,* 22, 1, March pp.77-88.

Graff, J., 2002, 'The Quality of Justice', *Time,* January 28 p.16.

Haas, R.N., 1995, 'Paradigm Lost', *Foreign Affairs,* January/February pp.43-58.

Haas, R.N., 1999, 'What to do with American Primacy?', *Foreign Affairs,* September/October.

Hallmayr, F., 2001, 'Review of Daniel A. Bell, *East Meets West: Human Rights and Democracy in East Asia,* (2000)', in American Political Science Review, 95, 2, June, pp.460-61.

Hay, W.A., 2001, 'America, the West and the World', *Orbis,* 45, 3, Summer pp.329-332.

Huntington, S.P., 1999, 'The Lonely Superpower', *Foreign Affairs,* March/April pp.35-49.

Ignatieff, M., 1995, 'On Civil Society: Why Eastern Europe's Revolutions Could Succeed', *Foreign Affairs,* March/April pp.128-136.

Kelsay, J., 2002, 'Speaking of Islam', *Christian Century* 119, 19, pp.34-38.

LaFranchi, H., 2001, 'Will pro-Israel Stance Hinder War On Terror?', *Christian Science Monitor,* December 6, p.2.

Lobe, J., 2002, 'One Year of Bush II', *West Africa* 28 January-3 February, pp.20-21.

Macleod, S., 2002, 'After the Fall', Time, February 4 p.38.

Mason, W., 2000, 'The Future of Political Islam in Turkey', *World Policy Journal* 17, 2, Summer pp.56-66.

Mazrui, A., 1997, 'Islamic and Western Values', *Foreign Affairs,* September/October pp.118-132.

McGeary, J., 2001, 'Radicals On The Rise', *Time,* December 17 pp.23-26.

Minton-Beddoes, Z., 1995, 'Why the IMF Needs Reforms', *Foreign Affairs,* May/June pp.123-133.

Mohamad, H., 2000, 'US Policy Towards Islamists: A Review of Recent Debates', *Third World Quarterly,* 21 pp.567-580.

Nafziger, E.W. and J. Auvinen, 2002, 'Economic Development, Inequality, War and State Violence', *World Development,* 30,2, February pp.153-163.

Nye, J., 2002, 'The American National Interest and global public goods', *International Affairs,* 7, 2, April, pp.233-244.

Osman, K., 2000a, 'Opposition Mounting Against US's Use of "Secret Evidence" Against Muslims', *Crescent International*, July 16-31, p.4.

Osman, K.,, 2000b, 'Greedy 8 leaders ignore problems of world poverty while spending $1billion on 3 days in Okinawa', *Crescent International*, August 1-15, p.3.

Pillar, P.R., 2001, 'The Instruments of Counter-Terrorism', US Foreign Policy Agenda: Electronic Journal of the US Department of State, 6, 3, November.

Pipes, D., 1995, 'The Good Ayatollahs', Review of Olivier Roy, The Failure of Political Islam, translated by Carol Volk, 1994 in *Commentary*, June, pp.63-64.

Pipes, D., 2001, 'War, Not Crimes', *National Review*, October.

Quandt, W. B., 1995, Review of Augustus R. Norton, Civil Society in the Middle East, (1995) in *Foreign Affairs*, September/October p.180.

Rashid, A., 1999, 'The Taliban: Exporting Extremism', *Foreign Affairs*, September/ October pp.22-35.

Ratnesar, R., 2001, 'The Hunt for bin Laden', *Time*, November 26 p.49.

Rice, C., 2000, 'Promoting the National Interest', *Foreign Affairs*, January/February pp.45-62.

Rose, G., 1999, 'It Could Happen Here: Facing the New Terrorism', *Foreign Affairs*, March/April pp.131-137.

Rugumamu, S. M., 2001, 'Globalization and Africa's Future: Towards Structural Stability, Integration and Sustainable Development, Harare, African Association of Political Science', *Occasional Paper Series*, 5,2.

Soros, G., 2000, 'The Age of Open Society', *Foreign Policy*, Summer, pp.52-53.

Stern, J., 2000, 'Pakistan's Jihad Culture', *Foreign Affairs*, November/December pp.115-126.

Stremlau, J., 2000, 'Ending Africa's Wars', *Foreign Affairs*, July/August pp.117-132.

Sullivan, A., 1999, Review of J.L Esposito (ed.), 'Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism or Reform', (1997), in *Arab Studies* Quarterly, Fall, pp.109ff.

Thalif, D., 2002, 'Terrorism and the Rule of Law', *West Africa* 28 January-3 February, p.19.

Tucker, R.W., 1999, 'Alone or with others: The Temptations of Post-Cold war Power', *Foreign Affairs*, November/December pp.15-20.

The Economist, 2000, 'Iran, Islam and Democracy', 19 February p.19.

The Economist, 2002, 'The dangers of leaving it to Sharon', February 2, pp.14-15.

The Economist, 2002, 'George Bush and the Axis of Evil', February 2, p.14.

The Economist, 2002, 'Globalisation: is it at risk', February 2, p.63.

The Economist, 2002, 'Yemen and its Islamists: Could Yemen's calm be threatened?', February 16.

Van den Berg, 1999, Review of B. Tibi, 'The Challenge of Fundamentalism', in *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Fall, pp.99ff.

Wilkin, P., 2001, Review of Sarah O. Vanderslvis and P. Yerus (eds.) Poverty in World Politics: Whose Global Era, (2000), in *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 39, 1, March, pp.187-8.

Wright, R., 2000, 'Pax Kapital', *Foreign Policy*, Summer p.67-69.

Zanoyan, V., 1995, 'After the Oil Boom: The Holiday Ends in the Gulf', *Foreign Affairs*, November/December pp.2-7.

Zubaida, S., 2000, 'Trajectories of Political Islam: Egypt, Iran and Turkey', *Political Quarterly* 71, 3, August pp.60-78.