

Globalization and the Islam-West Axis of the International System

Ozioma M. Oguine¹, Ph.D.

Abstract

This paper examined the unsavoury interaction between Islam and the West in an era of extremely pervasive and penetrative globalization. It highlighted the resurgence of Islam as an intentional consequence of a global interface and interplay that is subtly and blatantly giving an impression of the Westernization of the Islamic civilization. The sour experience of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire under the Ataturk Reforms in 1924 and the consequent desecration of the Islamic consciousness across the globe is still a signpost for the community of ardent Islamic adherents. The nature of the Islamic consciousness was holistically assessed and placed side-by-side the variegated perspectives on the concept of globalization. It was found that the penetrative nature of globalization, with its traits of Westernization, formed a body of threat to the Islamic religion. Principally, the globalization process seems to have built a certain sense of *exclusion* in Islamic circles thus rekindling a somewhat sub-conscious *revolt* or reaction from Islam and its ardent adherents. For clarity purpose, it was found that it is more of the Westernization than any other thing that comes with the globalization process that actually causes disruptions in several Islamic circles.

Keywords: Globalization, Islam, Westernization, Civilization, Third World Countries.

1. Introduction

The consistency of Islamic resurgence seeks to outweigh the conspiracy of Western indulgence. Islam is vastly a Third World phenomenon. Much as it is the second largest religion after Christianity and with about 25% of the world's population it is scarcely a religion of the West. Up until the end of the Great War, it had an astounding concentration and influence in the erstwhile Ottoman Empire but lost some steam following the abolition of the Empire in 1924 as part of the Ataturk Reforms in Turkey. The largest populations of Islamic followers are found in Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Egypt, Iran, Turkey, Algeria, and Morocco. All of these countries are non-western and are still developing. The core sharia-practicing Islamic states which include Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Mauritania, Maldives, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Yemen, etc are non-western and are still developing as well. More recently Islam has had an ultra influence in Afghanistan, Iran, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Iraq, Palestine, Pakistan; a reassuring preeminence in Turkey, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, the Gambia, Tunisia; and an accentuating influence in Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Djibouti, Comoros, Lebanon, Senegal, etc.

Albeit there is a gradual growth of Islam in Europe and America through the processes of immigration and conversion, there's been a phenomenal sweep of Islam through Africa, Middle East and some parts of Asia. While Europe and the Americas have less than 7% of their population as Muslims, Sub-Saharan Africa alone has about 30% of its population as Muslims. South & Southeast Asia and Middle East & North Africa have 24.8% and 91.2% as their Muslim population respectively. The highest concentration of Muslims in the world, which is more than 60% of the Muslim (or Islam) Ummah, is found in South & Southeast Asia.² The resurgence of Islam as a force on the world stage is as evident as it is effective.

¹ Tutorial/Instructional Facilitator, National Open University Of Nigeria, Abuja, Nigeria. EMAIL: ooguine@gmail.com
Phone Number: +234 706 777 6600

²Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_by_country.

It is somewhat reminiscent of the old North-South axis of the international system; the clear point of departure being that the North-South axis was preponderantly an economic struggle laced with political attachments while the contemporary Islam-West axis is a propelling descriptive embodiment of every aspect of human life as a consequence of the characterization and inclination of the Islamic civilization. Much as both eras define the struggle between the developed North/West and the developing/underdeveloped South, the two epochs are also clearly distinguished on the lines of dogmatism and pragmatism; while one is largely interactive the other is preponderantly fundamentalist, intolerable and offensive. The Islam-West axis of the International System is relatively organic and will for a long time keep defining and reshaping international relations in this era of globalization and subconscious Westernization.

2. The Nature of Islam

The above succinct account of its geo-existence is to highlight the *Third Worldist* inclination of Islam, and, by extension, its imperative in the study of globalization and the South. Also expedient in the consideration of the author is the fierceness of the Islam-West axis of the present international system. Nonetheless, besides the geo-strategic imperatives, it is noteworthy that Islamic consciousness transcends religion and predominantly borders as well on the political, economic, legal and socio-cultural aspects of life on Earth. It is easily a consciousness about the life of men on Earth in consonance with the dictates of God. Unlike most other religions, it is not just the *relationship* between man and God. It is even not “a religion in the Western understanding of the word. It is a faith and a way of life, a religion and a social order, a doctrine and a code of conduct, a set of values and principles and a social movement to realize them in history.”¹ It is not just the seventh day of the week event. “Islam provides guidance for all walks of life, individual and social, material and moral, economic and political, legal and cultural, national and international.”² These are clear explanations to the seemingly excruciating difficulty for the Muslim to draw a marked distinction between himself, his faith and the state.

Albeit acquiescing with other writers and reechoing their positions, Jansen gave a more encompassing impression of Islam:

It is a total and unified way of life, both religious and secular; it is a set of beliefs and a way of worship; it is a vast and integrated system of law; it is a culture and civilization; it is an economic system and a way of doing business; it is a polity and a method of governance; it is a special sort of society and a way of running a family; it prescribes for inheritance and divorce, dress and etiquette, food and personal hygiene. It is a spiritual and human totality, this-worldly and other-worldly.³

Little wonder there exists a seemingly seamless interface between Islam and the contents and processes of globalization. There is therefore no doubt that Islamic reaction to the processes of globalization and Westernization is not just a *religious* reaction against an ungodly phenomenon; it is as well inclusive of a reaction against political, economic, cultural, and *civilizational* undesirables. It is remarkable that these reactions have been comparatively cohesive, with pockets of distrust and sporadic skirmishes between sects. The author will like to contend that despite any manner of internal diversities in the Islamic civilization there are, to the extent of the resistance against globalization and Westernization, the Westernized Islamists and the fundamentalists or traditionalists view the globalizing and Westernizing process in line with their scarcely disparate religious persuasions. Therefore, whatever diversities there may be in Islam, other than as above stated, do not negate nor vitiate the realities of unity of purpose in the resistance against Western confrontation. “Islam has caught the attention of the world”, wrote Hirji-Walji and Strong in their *Escape from Islam*. “The revolution in Iran, the continuing hotbed of Middle East diplomacy, the oil wealth of the OPEC nations, Muslim militancy in African politics, and the Iranian hostage crisis all have played their role in the resurgence of Islam in

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1. Ahmad, K., (1979) ‘Islam and the New World Order’. In *The Muslim World and the Future Economic Order*. Islamic Council of Europe. p. 147.
 2. Jansen, G. H., (1978) *Militant Islam*. London: Penguin. p. 1.
 3. Jansen, *Ibid.*, p.17 recent times.”¹ Giving the fact that Hirji-Walji and Strong’s account is not a contemporary one, these accounts are certainly not exhaustive of the developments that have reinvented and accentuated the strength and spread of Islam across the globe.

3. Perspectives On Globalization

Globalization is at once an element of the ancient as well as that of the modern. The formal trappings of globalization, albeit in varying characteristics, date back as far as the Concert of Europe, the Westphalia Treaty of 1648, the Berlin Conference of 1884-5 and even beyond. The anxiety and crave therefore of globalization is not a result of its contemporary nature or uniqueness. It is rather because certain contemporary international occurrences and developments have accentuated the magnitude and spread of the concept. Found is the fact that most of these international occurrences and developments are linked directly or indirectly to the end of the Cold War and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union which hitherto had been a barrier to unfettered global link, cross-border cooperation and mutual penetration due to the acrimonious Soviet face-off with the western bloc of North America and western Europe. Unlike the ancient attributes of globalization however, its modern attributes have become wider in spread, deeper in penetration and overwhelming in influence.

While the ancient form of globalization took on more of the attributes of the exchange of royal pleasantries and paraphernalia, international mercantilism, multilateral diplomatic activities, wars, treaties and peace talks, modern globalization is a process that accentuates meaningful cross-border flows of capital, knowledge, information, culture and consumer goods.² It is a process that enlarges the little and belittles the large. As Mittelman elaborates, it is “a coalescence of varied transnational processes and domestic structures, allowing the economy, politics, culture, and ideology of one country to penetrate another.”³

Just as the case with some other concepts in international relations, the concept of globalization cannot easily be particularized into a specific field of knowledge. Even when an attempt is made in such direction, there is always an eventual convergence of intellectual impressions from different fields. Globalization is a subject of an interminable list of academic fields. While it abundantly reflects in politics and economics, it evidently exists in the fields of culture, environment, sociology, information and communication, medicine and health-care, engineering and technology, religion, and of course, geography.

Modern globalization is a tale about *victories*. It is the victory of capitalism over communism; of technology over nature; of the private sector over the public sector; of liberal democracy over authoritarianism, absolutism, dictatorship, etc. It is as well the victory of the global economy over national economies; of the economic dimension of the international system over the political, strategic, and cultural dimensions; and of course the continued victory of the North over the South. As earlier stated, the exhaustion and the eventual collapse of Soviet communism brought down the iron curtain that had for over seven decades following the Bolshevik Revolution polarized the world in the East-West axis of the last international system. The victory of Western capitalism over Soviet communism therefore effectively translated into the modern and deepened form of globalization.

The unceasing advancement in technology has as well made for the unimaginable compression of time and space, just as it has demystified extra-territorial and extra-terrestrial imaginations; making the world and the proximate planets more contracted than ever. For several and disparate reasons, the failure of states in most of the Third World, the decreasing emphasis on nationalism, and more importantly the increasing prowess of transnational corporations necessitated the filling of gap by the private sector in many countries of the Third World. To ensure reasonable stability and effective deregulation in most of the undeveloped and developing territories, liberal democracy was alongside peddled and variously enforced. And to guarantee the control of the global economy from the West and the continued domination of the South, there was an aggressive process of de-statization and the enfeeblement of the states. Of course, the pertinacious and inequitable incorporation of national economies into the global economy completed the entire process.

1. Hirji-Walji, H. and Strong, J., (1981) *Escape From Islam*. Sussex: Kingsway Publications Limited. p. 3.

2 Mittelman, J., (1997) *Globalization: Critical Reflections*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc. p.1

3. *Ibid.* p. 3 Indeed, and contrary to the prevalent but erroneous perception that globalization is all about the economy and its associated financial activities, globalization has a pervasive dominance and influence over almost every sphere of human existence and endeavour in the international system. Robertson’s definition of globalization as “the twofold process of the particularization of the universal and the universalization of the particular,”¹ seems to capture the seamless dynamism and eclecticism of this global concept. Overtly or covertly globalization assures a multiplicity of levels of analysis, which cut across economics, politics, ideology, culture, religion, etc.

4. Globalization And Islam

Principally, the globalization process seems to have built a certain sense of *exclusion* in Islamic circles thus rekindling a somewhat sub-conscious *revolt* or reaction from Islam and its ardent adherents. For clarity purpose, it is more of the westernization than any other thing that comes with the globalization process that actually causes disruptions in several Islamic circles. This is because westernization is seen not to be decent and is strongly perceived to be contrary to the teachings of the Holy Prophet and the dictates of the Holy Koran. Some of the relatively recent extreme Islamic resistances reflect in the bombing of the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, the October 2000 attack on America's USS Cole in Yemen, the 9/11 2001 bombing of the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in the US, the 9/18 2001 Anthrax attack in the US, the 2003 Marriot Hotel Bombing in Indonesia, the 7/7 2005 multiple underground train bombing in London, the 2008 multiple bombings in Indian cities by

Pakistani extremists, the 9/11 2012 attack on the American consulate in Libya's Benghazi resulting in the death of some embassy staff including Ambassador Christopher Stevens, the 26/11 2012 attack of the Hotel Taj Mahal in India's Mumbai, the 15/4 2013 bomb attack at the Boston Marathon in the US, the 21/11 2013 bombing of Kenya's Westgate Shopping Mall by Somalia's Al-Shabaab Islamist group, the endless Islamist attacks in Iraq, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, the bombing of the UN headquarters in Nigeria's Abuja, the several targeted bombings by the Boko Haram Islamist group in Nigeria, and several other terrorist activities across the globe. Some other developments that fed the strength and spread of Islam include the takeover of power in Afghanistan by the Taliban; the collapse of the Soviet Union and the consequent emergence of pockets of Islamic circles from some constituent states of the Union; Islamic militancy in Lebanon, Palestine, Sudan, Algeria, Egypt, India, Nigeria, and others; the internationalization of Osama Bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda Islamist network; etc.

Indeed Islam and Islamic consciousness vastly task the wisdom and aptitude of Western strategists. What with its increasing population in the world. With a population of over one and half billion and a consciousness that is vastly unflinching and scarcely wavering, Islam is understandably a worrisome concern to any phenomenon that it perceives as undesirable and resistible. Such is the predicament of globalization and the West.

True to type, scholars of divergent persuasions have proliferated the comments and counter-comments on the seemingly intractable interface between Islam and globalization. Discourses on this issue have been variously captioned Islamic Revolt; The Resurgence of Islam; Islam: Deadly Duel with the Zealots; Roots of Muslim Rage; Jihad vs. McWorld; Awaiting God's Wrath: Islamic Fundamentalism and the West; Political Islam: Beyond the Green Menace; Islam and the West; The Failure of Political Islam; etc.

In his *The Clash of Civilizations* Huntington bravely envisioned a clash between the West and the Islamic-Confucian alliance. Prior to this conclusion, Huntington had outlined some positions of cultural disparities and collisional tendencies along which conflict lines will be drawn. The first is his assertion is that the disparities among civilizations are not just real but basic as well. "Civilizations are differentiated from each other by history, language, culture, tradition and, most important, religion."² Peoples perceptions about life and everything preponderantly run on such disparate lines; therefore, any imposition of homogenization and/or universalization will fiercely be at variance with the realities of those basic disparities. Secondly, consequent upon the time and space compression of the world, Huntington argues that the increasing interactions of civilizations will "intensify civilization consciousness and awareness of differences between civilizations and commonalities within civilizations"³

1. Robertson, R., (1992). **Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture**. London: Zed Books. p. 177.

2. Huntington, S. P., (1996). 'Clash of Civilizations?' In Rourke, J. T., (ed.) **Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in World Politics – seventh edition**. Connecticut: Dushkin Publishing Group/Brown & Benchmark Publishers, p. 328.

3. *Ibid.*

Thirdly, the processes of economic modernization and social change in the present world system are such that increasingly make for de-statization and the consequent loss of 'longstanding local identities' by the people. With the increasing weakening of the state in these processes, "religion has moved in to fill the gap, often in the form of movements that are labeled 'fundamentalist.'"¹ This new role of religion evolves and engenders an identity and commitment that transcend the borders of nation states and strengthens civilizations on religious platforms.

Fourthly, and contrary to what seemed to be the trend, there is an increasing de-Westernization and indigenization of the elites in non-Western nations; occurring “at the same time that Western, usually American, cultures, styles and habits become more popular among the mass of the people.”²

It is the view of the author of this article that the increasing consciousness for de-westernization and indigenization is partly, if not wholly, a consequence of a reaction to extreme and excessive Westernization as perceived in Islamic circles across the globe. The author’s contention therefore is that the concurrent existence or manifestation of both phenomena is not merely coincidental; rather, one is a reaction to the other on the stark realization of an impending loss of identity and, probably, a suspicion of the encroachment of a disintegrating homogenization.

Huntington’s fifth position contends that cultural characteristics and differences seldom give in to change, thus not often easy to give in to compromise as with political and economic ones. Huntington’s brilliant and explicit analogy is that “in the former Soviet Union, communists can become democrats, the rich can become poor and the poor rich, but Russians cannot become Estonians and Azeris cannot become Armenians.”³ Finally, Huntington asserts that the increasing spate of economic regionalism has the tendency of reinforcing civilization consciousness, while, on the other hand, its (economic regionalism) success is rooted in a common civilization.

Much as there is an impressive brilliance in Huntington’s contentions, the author contends that the scarcely culpable religious impression that equates the West with Christianity, more than anything else, excites Islamic revolt against Westernization and globalization. For clarity purpose, the author wishes to immediately state that this factor does not enjoy a sole status; several other factors exist that as well excite Islamic revolt against Westernization and globalization. Highlighting the Christian-West connection and its repulsion to Islam Fukuyama had as well stated that “thinkers from Kant and Hegel to Nietzsche and Weber have noted the close historical relationship that has existed between Christianity and liberal democracy, and it is certainly no accident that the Middle East (and the Muslim world more generally) possess the smallest number of democracies.”⁴ Liberal democracy of course is one of the most remarkable attributes of the globalization process whose imposition on Islam would be more repulsive than attractive, at least in the foreseeable time ahead.

In a counter-thesis to Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilizations*, Kurth, in a subtle confutation, traced Huntington’s “Western Civilization” to Christendom. “Three hundred years ago, no one knew there was a Western civilization, not even those that were living within it. The term then, and the one that would be parallel for Huntington’s terms for other civilizations, is Christendom.”⁵ Contrary to Huntington’s envisioning of a clash between the West and the Islamic-Confucian grand alliance, Kurth’s conclusion is that the ‘real’ clash of civilizations will take an intra-west form and not the West against the rest. Rather than fear a clash from Islam, Kurth envisions a clash against Western civilization from the multiculturalities especially within the US: African Americans, Latino Americans, and Asian Americans, as well as the feminist movements that are increasingly becoming stronger and relevant in the US. To Kurth, Islamic civilization is largely a legacy of weak and fragmented states. Since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire following the Atatürk Reforms there is hardly any single strong Islamic power. Kurth precariously dismisses the dreaded potency of Islamic prowess and its challenges to Westernization and globalization:

1. Huntington, *Op. Cit.*, p. 328.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*, p. 329.

4. Fukuyama, F., (1993) ‘Liberal Democracy as a Global Phenomenon’. In Charlton, M. and Riddell-Dixon, E., *Crosscurrents: International Relations In the Post-Cold War Era*. Ontario: Nelson Canada. p. 88.

5. Kurth, J., (1996) ‘The Real Clash’. In Rourke, J. T., (ed.) *Taking Sides: Clashing Views On Controversial Issues in World Politics – seventh edition*

Connecticut: Dushkin Publishing Group/Brown & Benchmark Publishers. p. 342.

The closest approximation today to a core state for the Islamic civilization is Iran, but it is largely isolated from the rest of the Islamic world by either its Shi’ite theology or its Persian ethnicity (and, temporarily at least, also its dismal economy). It is virtually impossible for Iran to become the core state for the Islamic civilization; it is, however, also virtually impossible for any other state to become so.

The other large states who might seem to be potential leaders (Egypt, Turkey, Pakistan, and Indonesia) are so different from, and so contemptuous of, each other that no concerted policy toward the West or toward the rest (e.g., Orthodox, Hindu, or Confucian civilizations) is possible Rather, it (clash) will more likely take place between western societies and Islamic groups, as a long series of terrorist actions, border skirmishes, and ethnic wars.¹

Much as Kurth's accounts and assertions may reside in the extremity of lucidity, it is, nonetheless, misleading that Kurth seems ignorant of the potency of unity across territorial confines, especially in an era of globalization which is increasingly despising borders and boundaries. Defying the imperatives of territorial contiguity, as well as the hamstringing effects of inconsistencies and disparities in perception, communism and its appurtenant consciousness grew, became a reliable counter-force, remarkably altered the course of international politics, and held the West ransom for over seven decades. Today, the world is more globalized and de-stated, with an increasingly decreasing relevance of the state apparatus in global affairs. Secondly, religious consciousness is stronger, more passionate, less mutable, and effectively excites ardent adherents than political and ideological consciousness. Thirdly, there is an increasing preference for secondary associations over such primary associations on communal, kinship, and ethnic lines. People tend to associate and fraternize more on professional and religious lines than ever. Fourthly, there has been a recent intensifying of efforts by many Muslims across the globe to get back to their roots. Fifthly, there is no doubting the level of wealth and relevance petroleum has brought most of the Islamic countries of the world. Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Libya, UAE, etc are significantly endowed with oil.

The unceasing insistence by Muslims on the sabbathification of Fridays, just as the Jewish Saturdays and Christian Sundays, is quite instructive and heavily pregnant with significance. The sense of common history is as well a viable factor that makes Islamism formidable and significant. The common history of greatness and superiority and that of an eventual decline as a result of the belligerence from a common enemy will continue to inspire the spirit of Islamic collectivity. Another point of pertinence is the fact that despite the West's concerted efforts at decimating or influencing Islamic 'fundamentalism', the Muslims are increasingly taking on Islamist practices which are inherently linked to vigorous ideas pertaining to Muslim identity and the confirmation of same.

These and more are certainly of fortuitous propensities to Islamic consciousness in its poise against the globalizing Westernization. The author therefore persistently contends that the opposition, admissible or inadmissible, by the Islamic civilization to the processes of Westernization and globalization is real and reasonably incontestable. Discourses are replete with facts, historical and contemporary, that will remain convincing, revealing and inexhaustive in the calculations of Islamic potency in the Islam-West axis of the international system.

Apparently, Kurth seems to imagine that a clash should necessarily 'take place at the level of conventional or nuclear wars' between the Western and Islamic states. Nay. Not necessarily. The overthrow in 1979 of the pro-Western Shah of Iran by the charismatic Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini undoubtedly has a place in the reckoning of the clash between the West and Islam. So also are the subsequent hostages, sieges at embassies and the often precarious hijackings. Also an evidence of the clash is the victory denial in Algeria in 1990 of the fundamentalist party, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), through the schemes and machinations of the West. Still talking about clashes, what can one say about the Palestinian struggle against Israel and its western allies? What about Operation Desert Storm? What about the invasion of Afghanistan? What about the murder of Osama bin Laden? What about the western connection in the Arab Spring? What about the upstaging of Mohammed Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood by the SCAF in Egypt? What about the West and Assad's Syria? What about the Western blockade of the recognition of the state of Palestine at the UN? What about the Western confrontation on Iran's uranium enrichment? What about the increasing spate of terrorist attacks on Western installations and sympathizers across the world? What about several other Islam-West conflicts in the Middle East crises and across the world? By every effective and honest extension, those were clashes between Islam and the West. The 9/11 bombing of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the US and the 7/7 bombing in London were major Islam-West confrontations. The list is indeed interminable.

1. Kurth, *Op. Cit.*, p. 339

Following his propositions, contentions and assertions in his *The Clash of Civilizations* Huntington admonished the West 'to limit the expansion of the military strength of Confucian and Islamic states.' This was informed by his perception of the implications of the clash on Western policies. Years later, apparently on the glaring realization of likelihood in consonance with Huntington's hypotheses, the US government vigorously began to press for the destruction of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) in Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

After several years of diplomatic maneuverings, the US invaded Iraq in a war whose Justice of the War and Justice in the War have remained embarrassingly suspect. Islamic Saddam Hussein has been ousted and killed, and the US has since embarked on an intense, blatant and precarious ‘Westernization’ of Iraq that has proved extremely difficult; almost impossible. The bloody and unflinching resistance of ISIS and other pockets of pro-Islamic sects eventually turned Iraq to an inhuman theater of war. This has been a raging clash between Islam and the West.

There is no gainsaying the fact that despite an institutional separation between religion and politics in Islam, there was indeed never a cultural separation between them. Therefore, the existence in Islam of cultural coincidence or inseparability between religion and politics explicitly accounts for the vigorously political nature of the Islamic faith. It is on this ground that it is often convenient to expressly whip up sentiments with political import at religious gatherings of the Islamic faithful. Likewise, it explains, with confirmatory relief, why political leaders of Islamic persuasion often seek counsel, intercession and endorsement from religious leaders for political expediency. And in some orders and countries “elections have even to a considerable extent been directed by the Sufi leaders’ commands to their believers and religious authority is similarly used to help the economic and religious elite make deals with the government.”¹

Several other accounts chronicle the confrontation of Islam by the West, the consequence of which has been, unsurprisingly, a reactionary and militant Islam in defence of faith, hearth and home. The exhaustion and the eventual collapse of the Ottoman Empire after the Ataturk Reforms of 1924 epitomize the inception of another phase of Western confrontation against Islam. The exit of the Ottoman Empire made room for the inconsiderate scramble and irresponsible balkanization of the Middle East by the Europeans along perpetually evanescent and non-coincidental border lines that only suited the latter’s economic interests. While guaranteeing the economic interests of the West (Europe) this irresponsible balkanization and delineation bore the subconscious venture of decimating the Islamic consciousness, annihilating the Ummah, and negating the likelihood for resurgence. And even since the sixteenth century, a decade or even half a decade scarcely passed without a Muslim area somewhere fighting and struggling against encroachment by a Western power or the other. Dispelling the pervasive impression of an Islam-West confrontation Esposito asserts that the resurgence of Islam is less a product of an Islam-West confrontation than “a global reassertion of Islam that had already been underway....”² Esposito would want to trace Islamic resurgence to several other factors which according to him differ from one country to another. Central in the causes however is the general failure of governments in those Islamic countries to achieve economic sufficiency, provide a sense of national identity, and produce strong and prosperous societies. These governments have not been able to establish their political legitimacy. Esposito confidently concludes that “Islamic-revivalism is in many ways the successor to failed nationalist programs. The founders of many Islamic movements were formerly participants in nationalist movements Islamic movements have offered an Islamic alternative or solution, a third way distinct from capitalism and communism.”³

1. Hunwick, J., (1997) ‘Sub-Saharan Africa and the Wider World of Islam’. In Westerlund, D. and Rosander, E. E. (eds.) *African Islam and Islam in Africa: Encounters between Sufis and Islamists*. London: Hurst & Company.

2. See Bernal V., (1994) ‘Gender, Culture and Capitalism: Woman and the Remaking of Islamic “Tradition” in a Sudanese village’. In *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. Vol. 36, No. 1, p. 42.

3. Esposito, J. L., (1996) ‘Political Islam: Beyond the Green Menace’. In Rourke, J. T., (ed.) *Taking Sides: Clashing Views On Controversial Issues in World Politics – seventh edition*. Connecticut: Dushkin Publishing Group/Brown & Benchmark Publishers. p. 77.

Indeed, it is of nil significance that Esposito's account is Islamically apologetic; of evident significance, rather, is that Esposito, having traced Islamic resurgence to a reassertion in response to the failure of governments, became disinterested in the root causes of the failure of the governments of those countries in the first place. It is a widespread belief in Islamic circles, and indeed the developing world as a whole, that fact records are replete with instances of Western involvement in the failure of the Third World Countries. An unreserved excoriation is due the West for the failure of the South, so the impression holds. Only dishonesty and feigned ignorance would exonerate or exculpate the West from the woes of the Third World Countries, Islamic ones inclusive. Equivocally and otherwise, in speech and writing, in private and formal circles, great people of reputable standing have proved the negatively domineering influence of the West over the Third World, with its consequence of incapacity and deterioration.

Remember that Budhoo, former senior World Bank manager, stated that "everything we did from 1983 onwards was based on our new sense of mission to have the South "privatize" or die; towards this end we ignominiously created economic bedlam in Latin America and Africa."¹ Stiglitz, former cabinet member of the Clinton Administration and once chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, and as well a former senior vice president of the World Bank and a Nobel Prize winner in Economic Science, stated that "unfortunately, though hardly surprising, in my time at the White House as a member, then a chairman, of the Council of Economic Advisers ... and at the World Bank, I saw that decisions were often made because of ideology and politics."² Indeed Stiglitz gave an insightful expose into the workings of the World Bank and the IMF, especially as they affect the developing nations. And as a result of such ideologically- and politically-driven decisions, "many wrong-headed actions were taken, ones that did not solve the problem at hand but that fit with the interests and beliefs of the people in power."³ Albeit references abound, these suffice to inform everyone's knowledge that the failure of those governments is really not the making of the leaders who, even if they wanted to succeed, would be handicapped and frustrated by an already laid out international system with a seemingly selfish and brutish orchestration from the West. Islamic resurgence therefore is not a consequence of the *failure* of governments in Islamic countries as Esposito would want to think. Lightly however, even if Esposito's position is admissible, it can as well go that Islamic resurgence is a response to the failure of governments brought about by Western machinations and manipulations.

By extension therefore, Islamic resurgence is a reaction to the deleterious activities of the West that led to the failure of governments in those Islamic countries. Seriously anyway, the author will like to contend that Esposito's account or assertion is a panoramic impression of the Third World. Failure of governments is not a *particular* with Islamic states. The failure of governments is more or less a feature of the Third World; and the worst situations of government failure in the Third World will not be found more in the Islamic countries. Contradictorily however, Esposito as well stated that "calls for greater political participation and democratization in the Middle East have been met by empty rhetoric and repression at home and by ambivalence and silence in the West."⁴ This is convincingly confirmatory of the allegation of Western domineering manipulation of the South when its interest has to be taken care of. 'Ambivalence and silence' is to maintain the status quo which guarantees the West's access to oil and provide assurance for other issues of relevance to their interest. And, to extend Esposito's position, this mechanism weakens the economy, engenders illiteracy, makes for unemployment, undermines confidence in government, leads to frustration and bitterness against the root perpetrator (the West) and culminates in reactionary activities. Esposito even made reference to the selfishly precarious response of the West "to the Algerian military's intervention and cancellation of the election results"¹ convincingly and surprisingly *won* by the Islamic Salvation Front. He further stated that "thwarting participatory politics by canceling elections or repressing populist Islamic movements fosters radicalization."²

1. Esposito, *Op. Cit.*, p. 77

2. Stiglitz, J. E., (2002). *Globalization and Its Discontents*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. p.x

3. Esposito, *Op. Cit.*, p. 77

4. *Ibid.*

Indeed, Esposito's accounts are convincingly reflective of internal factors that necessitate fundamentalism in several Islamic states. By and large, his accounts trace these factors to be associated, directly or indirectly, with the failure, malignly or benignly, of the governments. However, Esposito was misleadingly prudent with the fact that these failures are outwardly orchestrated by the West either in concert with their stooges that run those states or oppositions that are used by the same West to scuttle affairs, handicap and frustrate committed leaders. The failures are as well ensured through international organizations and rules that operate in negation of any form of growth in the developing nations.

5. Conclusion

In concluding the review on the clash between Islam and the West's globalization regime this article contends that the tendencies and the threats therein are real and will undoubtedly be continuous so long as there is a conceited, pretentious, and amoral persistence in the processes of Westernization and universalization that is blatantly contemptuous of the basic elements of the Islamic civilization, and indeed any other civilization.

More than ever, people shall be willing to rise and die in defence of their civilization. As earlier stated, Stiglitz was a cabinet member in the Clinton administration and once a chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers to the president. He was also a senior vice president and chief economist of the World Bank. Stiglitz is a winner of the 2001 Nobel Prize in Economic Science. The preface to his *Globalization and its Discontents*, summarily encapsulates the entire scenario with an endearing sense of frankness and prophetic finality:

The barbaric attacks of September 11, 2001, have brought home with great force that we all share a single planet. We are a global community, and like all communities have to follow some rules so that we can live together. These rules must be – and must be seen to be – fair and just, must pay due attention to the poor as well as the powerful, must reflect a basic sense of decency and social justice. In today's world, those rules have to be arrived at through democratic processes; the rules under which the governing bodies and authorities work must ensure that they will heed and respond to the desires and needs of all those affected by policies and decisions made in distant places.¹

“International civil servants assure us that ‘many of the facets of the economic order as it has prevailed up to now are in need of modification, even from the point of view of the developed countries.’”² Writing on the Left's impression about the Islam-West face-off, Pipes highlighted the imperatives for dialogue and understanding from the West: It helps us understand their legitimate concerns, signals that we mean them no harm, and reduces mutual hostility. Beyond dialogue, the West can show good will by reducing or even eliminating our military capabilities. American liberals believe that mankind is by nature peaceful and cooperative; when confronted with aggression and violence, they tend to assume it is motivated by a just cause, such as socio-economic deprivation or exploitation by foreigners. Anger cannot be false, especially if accompanied by high-minded goals.³

Pipes' assertion is indeed factual and it inclines one to reminisce on the US embassy hostage of 4th November, 1979 by the Islamic revolutionaries in Iran. Five months into the hostage, the Carter administration decided to take a military action by employing a tactical commando force for a rescue mission in Tehran. The mission of course ended up in a disaster and cost Carter his second tenure. Reagan came and took seriously the path of dialogue and ‘within minutes of President Reagan's inauguration, the fifty-three US hostages were on their way out of Iranian airspace. Carter had paid for “his sins” In the end, the economic and political, not the military, card proved to be the key to the hostage resolution.’⁴

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