ELIE KEDOURIE MEMORIAL LECTURE

Imagining Pan-Islam: Religious Activism and Political Utopias

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IT IS A GREAT HONOUR to have been invited to deliver this lecture in memory of Elie Kedourie, whom sadly I never met but whose ideas and approach have indisputably pushed my own thinking, at times along paths I would perhaps have hoped to avoid. His questioning of every assumption and conventional wisdom may not have always provided great comfort to the more complacent among us, but he helped us to clear out the useless cobwebs and to stretch the intellectual muscles, quite like no one else in the pantheon of modern Middle East scholarship. I hope it is appropriate for me to take up a theme on which Professor Kedourie wrote so passionately, and whose contributions in this regard continue to challenge and inform current academic and policy discussions of Western approaches to Muslim societies. I confess to doing so with some trepidation, however. Mindful of his having bested luminaries like Gibb, Toynbee, Gellner, and Geertz, one dreads to think how a typical Kedourian judgement might hit its target in this lecture, namely that 'knowledge of prosody unfitted [the lecturer] for the writing of poetry'.[1] Fortunately, Elie Kedourie set high standards of scholarly tolerance as well.

The discussion that follows is in the nature of an overview. The first part details the emergence of a political symbol, pan-Islam, and the second indicates how Muslim politics today is in part, though by no means wholly, pre-occupied with contestation over this symbol.

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[1] E. Kedourie, 'Foreign Policy: A Practical Pursuit' in Kedourie, *The Crossman Confessions and Other Essays in Politics, History, and Religion* (London, 1984), p. 134.

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Islam and international relations

Islam's place in international relations is a subject that has generated periodic and fierce controversy. The debates centre on 'Islam's' relations with 'the West', and we today are the inheritors of a viewpoint that, in the modern era, took concrete form from the nineteenth century. In a back-handed compliment, Palmerston, fearing Russian designs on the Ottoman empire, spoke in 1853 of the then 'dormant fanaticism of the Musulman race',[2] and some twenty years later Thomas Carlyle, who is often credited with a sympathetic depiction of the Prophet Muhammad, juxtaposed the 'unspeakable Turk' with the 'honest European'.[3] The supposed fanaticism of Muslims became more apparent from the 1880s as nationalist movements stirred in Egypt and Mahdism appeared in the Sudan.

The rise of the Third World in the mid-twentieth century and claims to distributive justice in the 1970s set the stage for more recent doubts about non-Western compliance with the norms of international order. The advent of the Iranian revolution intensified the arguments over whether Islam, or specifically Shi'ism, was revolutionary by nature and subversive of international rules. To some extent, this mirrored mid-century Cold War fears of secular Arab nationalism in the Middle East, but Islam was thought to be an especially inflexible and demanding ideology precisely because its core was religious. The then American Secretary of State, Cryus Vance, said: 'Khomeini and his followers, with a Shiite affinity for martyrdom, actually might welcome American military action as a way of uniting the Moslem world against the West.'[4] Since the demise of the Cold War, the debate has built on these earlier precedents and many observers, as we readily know, unhesitatingly speak in terms of civilisational conflict and hegemonic globalisation.

As important as these issues are, my aim is to look at their complement: not to examine the nature of the Islamic-Western encounter per se but, rather, to look at relations *within* the Muslim world itself—the nature of international relations among Muslims, if you will. The two

[2] Palmerston's letter to Lord Abdereen, 1 Nov. 1853, reproduced in Evelyn Ashley, *The Life of Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston; 1846–1865, with Selections from His Speeches and Correspondence*, 2nd edn. (London, 1876), 2. 47.

[3] Carlyle's comments on the occasion of the National Conference on the Eastern Question, 8 Dec. 1877, quoted in *The Political Life of the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone* (London, n.d.), 2. 12. Carlyle had included Muhammad as one of his heroes in *Lectures on Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (Oxford, 1925), pp. 55–101.

[4] C. Vance, *Hard Choices: Critical Years in American Foreign Policy* (New York, 1983), p. 408.

sides are, of course intimately interconnected, for one reason why the Islamic threat is sometimes thought to be so acute is the presumed unity of the Muslim world. I should make clear at the outset that terms like 'Islam' and 'Muslim world' are used as convenient shorthand expressions: they are unavoidable ways of conveying common viewpoints and patterns of experience, but they must not be thought to convey the idea, necessarily, of doctrinally defined agendas. Doctrine, as we shall see, forms only a part of the analysis.

The conventional wisdom is that as Muslims constitute one community of the faith (*umma*), internal boundaries among Muslim collectivities should not have come about. But they in fact did, crystallising entrenched dynastic and territorial rivalries. Marshall Hodgson reminds us that in the medieval period, roughly from 1100 to 1500, political boundaries among Muslims were of little consequence.[5] And yet the assault on the concept of one, indivisible *umma* was to set in almost immediately thereafter. The co-existence of three great Muslim empires—the Ottoman, the Safavid, and the Mughal—set into motion alternating patterns of conflict and mutual accommodation that defined territorial and ideological identities. Elsewhere I have argued that these variant identities, and flexibility of thought and interpretation, have combined over the recent centuries to suggest that Islam and nationalism are more compatible than many assumed possible, or some deemed desirable.[6]

This interpretation does not, however, always satisfy either Western sceptics or Muslim pietists, and presumptions of Muslim universalism have stood as a powerful counterweight to assertions of national and territorial division. The experience of Europe has been instructive. There, as indeed in West Asia, traders, scholars, and pilgrims regularly crossed locally defined borders from the medieval period and created networks defined by broader loyalties. With regard to the emerging European order, from the seventeenth century when national states were in the process of solidifying, parallel developments ensured that national frontiers were neither uncontested nor impermeable. Scientific and technological advances, industrialisation, and urbanisation, which transformed semi-feudal localised societies into hierarchically and centrally organised nation-states, could not themselves be contained within the borders of any one state. The demands of economic specialisation and trade also

[5] M. G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol. 2: *The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods* (Chicago, 1974), p. 57.
[6] J. Piscatori, *Islam in a World of Nation-States* (Cambridge, 1986).

created new patterns of interaction and networks of actors. Moreover, by the end of the nineteenth century, cosmopolitan ideologies such as imperialism, pan-Slavism, international socialism, Christian evangelicalism, and liberal capitalism had further complicated the interstate order. That such ideologies served mainly to aggrandise the power of individual nation-states did not detract from the fact that, even as the mythology of nationalism was being vigorously promoted and, in the words of James Field, 'the nationalist pail' was presented as 'half-full or better', it was in reality 'half-empty and leaking'.[7]

If this is the general case for the coexistence, even importance, of transnational forces alongside national ones, can transnationalism be said to have significance in the realms of Islam? On one level, there is nothing new about such interrelationships, and it may be said that they are the natural condition of Islam. The bedrock tenet of belief, *tawhid* (oneness), endorses the ultimate goal of one community of faith; the pilgrimage (*hajj*) is the great convocation of Muslims, indistinguishable in principle by national or sectarian identity; early and medieval Islamic history is replete with examples of networks of traders who significantly helped to advance the word of Islam; travelling elites such as students, scholars, judges, and political officials routinely sought knowledge (*rihla*) far from their home societies or went on minor pilgrimages (*ziyarat*); Sufi orders rapidly spread from their spiritual centres and created expansive 'brotherhoods'; and the Ottoman empire constituted a multi-ethnic, far-flung political organisation. Muslim transnationalism is even more apparent today, if we look at the activity of myriad non-state groups calling Muslims to a heightened awareness or a more defined practice of their faith, the explosion of widely popular communications media, and the proliferation of Islamist movements. But it is less obvious whether these amount to moves towards a greater cosmopolitan unity, or even a validation of the imperative of unity.

Emergence of 'pan-Islam' as idea and symbol

Pan-Islam has its roots in the familiar double assault of imperialism and decentralisation on the Ottomans in the late nineteenth century. It was certainly the case that a broad Islamic sentiment—a pan-Islamic

[7] J. A. Field, Jr, 'Transnationalism and the New Tribe', *International Organization*, 25, no. 3 (Summer 1971), 353–72 at 355.

populism of sorts—had begun to emerge from the 1870s in South and Southeast Asia and other parts of the Muslim world. The advent of a local press played an important role in stimulating, and giving expression to, this larger concern, at least among the educated classes: 'The more Indian Muslims discovered about the fate of their brethren elsewhere in the Islamic world, the more they wished to know.'[8]

The sultan, Abdulhamid (1842–1918), polemicists such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838–97), and Western apologists such as Wilfred Blunt were self-interested advocates of a pan-Islamic ideology, as Elie Kedourie, Sylvia Haim, and others have demonstrated. But these proponents helped to make a vague idea of unity a symbol of the modern Islamic condition at the same time as they used it to advance partisan political interests. Ethnic, national, and Islamic ideas intermingled in the discord of the early twentieth century. The Young Turks understood that an expansive Islam policy might help to counteract losses such as that of Libya and to rally broad Muslim opinion.[9] While the Treaty of Lausanne (1912) ratified Italian sovereignty over Libya, for instance, it also formally recognised the Turkish sultan as caliph and made provision for his name to be mentioned in the Friday *khutba* (sermon) and for the appointment of the chief *qadi* (judge) from the imperial centre.[10] This drama of a generally ailing empire was closely reported in the accessible newsprint, among others, of Abul Kalam Azad's *al-Hilal* and Zafar Ali Khan's *Zamindar*.[11]

The abolition of the caliphate by the Turkish Grand National Assembly in March 1924 was, as Jacob Landau has meticulously documented, a landmark event in modern Muslim history, but its consequences were not, in the main, what was anticipated.[12] Kemalists, for their part, assumed it would inevitably lead to the secularisation of Muslim societies; colonial offices feared that it would stimulate a broad uprising of the world-wide Muslim community. Neither occurred, but the lingering appeal of Muslim solidarity was not negligible and assumed its place, ironically, in the formation of modern Muslim states and, more recently, in attempts to undermine them.

[8] F. Robinson, 'Islam and the Impact of Print in South Asia', in N. Crook (ed.), *The Transmission of Knowledge in South Asia; Essays on Education, Religion, History, and Politics* (Delhi, 1996), p. 74.

[9] H. Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1918* (Berkeley, 1997), p. 114.

[10] T. W. Arnold, *The Caliphate* (Oxford, 1924), pp. 177–8.

[11] Robinson, 'The Transmission of Knowledge in South Asia', p. 74.

[12] J. M. Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam: Ideology and Organization* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 180–1.

Pan-Islam—that is, giving concrete form to the idea of Muslim political unity—and not simply pan-Islamism, the ideology promoting unity, developed in significant part in the inter-war period in the run-up to and the aftermath of the caliphate's demise. This is the story of how an idea developed as a 'tradition': there were background political impulses and constraints; intellectual pushes came from within and outside; discursive patterns emerged that both reinforced and subverted authority in the name of Islam.

Several currents converged. First, Muslim thinkers, each in different ways, helped to give concrete expression to the idea. Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865–1935), editor of the influential Egyptian periodical, *al-Manar*, framed much of the debate in this period with his important book, *al-Khilafa aw'l-Imama al-Uzma* (The Caliphate or the Greatest Imamate). He could be 'impenetrably discreet', as Elie Kedourie said,[13] but on this burning issue, he left little ambiguity. Anticipating further action against the caliphate, Rida criticised the Turkish decision to abolish the sultanate in 1922. His main argument was that the caliphate had been, and ought to be, a combination of spiritual and temporal authority. While the revival of the caliphate was necessary, in his view reality had also to be acknowledged. Britain, he argued, was opposed to the power of a united Muslim world. In addition, the main institutions of Muslim learning, such as the venerable al-Azhar university in Cairo or the Deoband school in India, had fallen into irrelevance, and political accommodations would have to be made among the Arabs and between them and other Muslims. The religious authorities, however imperfect, had the opportunity, on the basis of consultation, to forge a new consensus appropriate for the times.[14]

As attractive as this position was, not all Muslims who wrote on the caliphate in the 1920s advocated its reinstatement. In 1925, ʿAli ʿAbd al-Raziq (1888–1966), a professor at al-Azhar, argued the opposite of Rida's case. In *Islam wa usul al-hukum* (Islam and the Foundations of Government), he insisted on the need to distinguish between spiritual and temporal power in Islam and expressed doubts about the worthiness of the caliphate. He argued that Islam did not specify a particular form of government, nor did it require the caliphate. The Prophet was purely a spiritual leader, and Muslims had long suffered under the tyranny of a

[13] E. Kedouri, *Afghani and ʿAbduh: An Essay on Religious Unbelief and Political Activism in Modern Islam* (London, 1997), p. 6.
[14] M. R. Rida, *al-Khilafa aw'l-imama al-ʿuzma* (Cairo, 1341 AH/1923), p. 58.

government that was supposedly ordained by God's law.[15] It is not surprising to add that, in so arguing, he incurred the wrath of the more conservative religious establishment.

Yet another viewpoint was to emerge the following year in 1926. ʿAbd al-Raziq Sanhoury's *Le Califat: Son evolution vers une société des nations orientales* directly replied to ʿAbd al-Raziq's argument. In Sanhoury's view, governance was an integral component of Islam, but not static or moribund. If change had occurred in the past, it could continue to do so in the modern age. Because the Prophet had created a universal community at Medina, it was the duty of Muslims to institutionalise this. He stressed that the union of the Muslim world could not be achieved within the parameters of a centralised empire, but the spirit of pan-Islam was nonetheless tangible and required concrete expression. He advocated a caliphate that would be subject to periodic election at the *hajj*, with the caliph presiding over a loose grouping of Oriental nations in association with the League of Nations.[16]

There were different perspectives, then, with conservative, radical, and realist opinion, and all between 1923 and 1926. The spectrum ranged from those wishing to re-establish a purified religious-political institution, though responding to the distortions of the late Ottoman experience, to those who were concerned about the dangers of fusing religious and political authority, and to accommodationists who saw the need to adapt to the realities of an emerging post-war international order. This intellectual diversity merely reflected underlying political differences, despite what was thought to be a common religious sentiment. But, by explicitly placing focus on what the caliphate had meant and the form it should take in the modern world, they each helped to make the post-caliphal community of faith conceivable. To the question, 'How should the *umma* be constructed now?' little agreement emerged, with, however, the significant exception: the spiritual unity of the *umma* required political expression.

Another current was the Muslim international agitation of the period. Few of the associations and individuals attempting to promote pan-Islam in those years refined their thinking into an ideology of pan-Islamism or tried to carry it over into a serious consideration of organisations and plans of action. The pan-Islamic conventions grappled with these issues

[15] A. ʿAbd al-Raziq, *al-Islam wa usul al-hukm; bahth fi'l-khilafa wa'l-hukuma fi'l-islam* (Sousse/Tunis, 1999), esp. pp. 21–48.

[16] A. Sanhoury, *Le Califat: son évolution vers une société des nations orientales* (Paris, 1926), pp. 255–87, 569–607.

to a degree. As Martin Kramer has comprehensively demonstrated,[17] while they were less than a complete success, in the absence of a caliph they offered a substitute form of joint action. They caused some excitement in government circles in Europe, and this, in turn, may have encouraged pan-Islamic advocates to reconvene.

The first meeting occurred in Mecca in 1924, when Sharif Husayn sought to build on his special relationship with Britain, having allied himself with British war aims against his nominal suzerains, the Ottomans. Meeting in July, the small group argued for pan-Arab solidarity as the core of Islamic unity, but failed, crucially, to endorse the Sharifian claims that had been unilaterally asserted on 5 March—one day after the action of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. Saʿudi forces were soon, in any event, to lay siege to the Hijaz, and Mecca was conquered in October.[18]

A Caliphate Congress was convened in Cairo in May 1926 by religious officials, *ʿulama* from al-Azhar. King Fu'ad was behind the meeting since he thought of himself as the most suitable candidate for the caliphate. None of the thirty-nine delegates represented the governments of the Arab and Muslim world that had emerged by this juncture, and conspicuously absent were any representatives from India, Persia, Afghanistan, Turkey, or Algeria. One Shiʿi religious official even suggested that Egypt was not an appropriate venue for the meeting because it was under British control; the Egyptians countered that the alternative proposed, Najaf, was itself under a British mandate. British authorities in Egypt grew irritated with the lobbying for the meeting. Unenthusiastic about the meeting, they thought it advisable that Iran should not participate, and the organisers were reprimanded for their zeal.

The al-Azhar committee looked with hope to India,[19] where the fate of the caliphate had given rise to the Khilafat movement with a broad following. Its leaders were, however, suspicious of Egypt. When it appeared in late March 1924 that the Azhar *ʿulama* would proclaim Fu'ad caliph, Shawkat ʿAli urged caution on Saʿd Zaghlul, the newly installed Egyptian Prime Minister. The Khilafat Committee had hoped to persuade Turkey to appoint a Turk to the position and, failing that, to refer the matter to an international gathering of Muslim leaders.[20]

[17] M. Kramer, *Islam Assembled: The Advent of the Muslim Congresses* (New York, 1986). The following section on the Congresses draws on this definitive account, esp. chs 8–11.

[18] For the Hashemite account, see *al-Watha'iq al-hashimiyya; awraq ʿAbdullah bin al-Husayn*, vol. 7: *al-Husayn bin ʿAli wa'l-bayʿa bi'l-khilafa* (Amman, 1996).

[19] For the formation of Indian attitudes during the late Ottoman period, see A. Özcan, *Pan-Islamism: Indian Muslims, the Ottomans & Britain (1877–1924)* (Leiden, 1997).

[20] Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, pp. 92–3.

Against the background of these differences, and despite the intentions of the conference organisers, there was reluctance to make definitive commitments about the caliphate. This was also partly because some of the participants were about to go on to another Caliphate Congress in Mecca. After having discussed the definition of the caliphate, the need for its continued existence, and the ways of nominating the caliph, the conference concluded that investing a new one was necessary, but not feasible, in the prevailing climate. Hopes for restoration grew forlorn and began to appear utopian.

Saudi forces convened their own meeting in Mecca in June–July 1926 for the purposes of securing international legitimisation of their conquest of the Holy Places of Mecca and Medina. The fall of the heartland to the Wahhabis, viewed by many Muslims as well as non-Muslims as intolerant and over-austere, stimulated widespread opposition. About seventy delegates attended from a greater variety of countries, including several official delegations. Rashid Rida and Muhammad ʿAli and Shawkat ʿAli of the Khilafat movement in India[21] were the most prominent participants. Muhammad ʿAli wanted the convention to decide on pan-Islamic guarantees for the independence of Arabia, while Rida proposed an Islamic pact whereby Muslim governments would seek the arbitration of the convention in Mecca in order to resolve conflicting claims. Both proposals were defeated, but greater controversy would come with the Indian insistence on non-interference in the pilgrimage. The Wahhabis had made clear that they would not countenance what they regarded as deviant practices.

George Antonius, whose aspirations for Arab nationalists exceeded their grasp, had a similarly expansive view of what was emerging among Muslim activists: 'I am inclined to believe that for the first time in many years, perhaps in the whole course of history, HMG find themselves faced with the problems of a, if not united, then at any rate uniting, Islam.' Protesting too much, he added, 'and you know how little I possess the temperament of an Islamophile alarmist'.[22] Although the end of these Muslim deliberations appeared ambiguous, Muslim and foreign observers clearly recognised at the time their immediate failure. Differences were papered over, promises made for future meetings, but little else occurred. If the multiple claims to the caliphal mantle were unceremoniously

[21] The Khilafat Movement had divided into two factions over the Wahhabi success in the Hijaz: G. Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India* (New Delhi, 1982), pp. 206–7.

[22] Cited in Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, p. 117.

projected onto the field of Muslim activism in this way, they nevertheless served to highlight the missing dimension of Muslim statecraft: a unity that transcended such petty rivalries.

A further current was the solidification of those local rivalries into nascent nationalisms in substantial part through the intermediary assistance of pan-Islamic sentiment. To take the example of Palestine, the formalisation of local identity did not occur at the expense of linkages with the broader Islamic world. To the contrary, religious officials continued to be trained at al-Azhar in Egypt, and a large number of Islamic associations and clubs were formed with external ties. Branches of the Muslim Young Men's Association and, later (in the 1940s), of the Muslim Brotherhood were opened in Palestine. This was a two-way street, much as it is today: on the one hand, Palestinians used the connections to publicise and gain support for their cause; and, on the other, these connections enhanced local awareness of larger trends in the Arab and Muslim worlds.

Awareness of the larger Muslim environment was thus a critical factor in shaping Palestinian perceptions of their own position. Moreover, formalising a sense of Palestine's centrality to the Islamic world helped to magnify Palestine's importance. It was thought to be 'a trust (*amana*) of Allah, His Prophet and all the Muslims', and if misfortune were to befall the country, it would 'not be confined to it, but . . . [would] also befall the other Islamic regions and holy places'.[23] Yet cosmopolitanism did not necessarily result. There was, in fact, a turning inwards to a considerable extent, and a sense both that Palestine was a special preserve and that some foreign influences were in the long run harmful. This latter sense obviously developed when large-scale Jewish immigration and land purchases began in 1933. But already at the Islamic Congress of 1931, a detailed proposal had been submitted calling for the establishment of a world-wide Islamic missionary society that would offset Christian activity; it was to be closely modelled on the Christian example.[24] In the end, it was not established, but from 1933 onwards, considerable agitation took place, relying on the twin themes of Palestinian specialness and external cultural aggression.

Egypt is doubtless a better example. A sense of identity moved almost effortlessly between national and transnational registers. The Muslim Brotherhood, the prototype of all Sunni Islamist movements, has long

[23] A *fatwa* of the Mufti, cited in U. M. Kupferschmidt, 'Islam on the Defensive: The Supreme Muslim Council's Role in Mandatory Palestine', *Asian and African Studies*, 17, nos. 1–3 (1983), 175–206 at 195.
[24] Ibid., 202.

combined commitment to the larger causes of Islam with rootedness in Egyptian soil. Hasan al-Banna, the great leader of the movement, lamented the demise of the caliphate and urged its reconstitution, but both realism and particularism entered into his worldview as well. The ground had to be carefully prepared before the caliphate could be revived, and especially needed was the accretion of ties of all kinds across the internal borders of the *umma*. In addition, al-Banna and other leaders of the Brotherhood carefully distinguished between secular and religious-based nationalism. There was nothing wrong with patriotism or nationalism (*wataniyya*) as long as it served God rather than seeking to replace Him; as Kedourie showed, al-Banna wrote a prayer that managed to intermingle Egyptian nationalist and Islamic universalist sentiments.[25] To defend the nation was a religious duty, much as the covenant of Hamas today speaks of nationalism as an 'element of the faith'.[26]

Finally, joining with the Muslim intellectual ferment, the political agitation of the congresses, and the enhanced nationalisms, were influential interventions of the Orientalists. These were by and large sympathetic, often preferring what they saw as the continuities of Islamic thought and history to discontinuities. While French observers in the pages of *Revue du monde musulman* and other journals saw the Sufi networks of North and West Africa as potent expressions of an anti-imperial pan-Islam, others tended to look upon the unity of all Muslims as a given and reaffirmed its centrality to Islamic doctrine. Sir Hamilton Gibb, for example, regarded the political movement of 'pan-Islamism' as self-contradictory because it professed adherence to a broader loyalty but, in fact, in fostering allegiance to the Ottoman caliph, it advanced secularism. 'Consequently, when the hour of testing came, during the First World War, Pan-Islamism proved itself a broken reed.' Yet this failing only highlighted that 'Islamic universalism' was an enduring spiritual and cultural imperative; it was in line with 'the broad and deep currents of a people's psychology' and a model of cooperation for the non-Muslim world.[27] 'Unity' self-consciously became part of the essence of Islam, divorced largely from the canonical articulation of concepts like *khilafa*, *dar al-islam* (the

[25] E. Kedourie, 'Pan-Arabism and British Policy' in W. Z. Laqueur, *The Middle East in Transition: Studies in Contemporary History* (London, 1958), p. 106.

[26] *Mithaq harakat al-muqawama al-islamiyya—filistin* (Palestine: 1 Muharram 1409 AH/18 Aug. 1988), Article 13.

[27] H. A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam* (Chicago, 1947), pp. 112–13; *Whither Islam?* (London, 1932), p. 379.

juridical realm of Muslims), and *dhimma* (non-Muslim subjects). Indeed, the scholarly discussions were remarkably thin on these topics.

In addition, the caliphate was presented as at heart—or, in Gibb's formulation, by necessity—a political institution, connected to the law and 'temporal power and sovereignty'.[28] C. A. Nallino in the late teens and 1920s with his writings on 'panislamismo'[29] and T. W. Arnold in his magisterial lectures at the University of London, published in 1924 as *The Caliphate*, had helped to suggest that, given the functional division of religion and politics in Islamic history, the caliphate was a temporal institution. It had always been such an institution, lacking a 'pre-vision',[30] bound by history and subject to evolution. The implication was clear: temporal and political, hence impermanent and replaceable. It was but a short step to conclude that pan-Islam, or what Gibb called a 'spiritual Caliphate' embodying the 'religious conscience of the people as a whole',[31] could be the functional replacement for the caliphate. Although Arnold, writing as the institution disappeared, argued that hope could still be invested in the doctrine, his larger conclusion points to what we may call pan-Islamic sentiment:

> A growing number of Muhammadans, now more fully acquainted with modern conditions and more in touch with the aims and ideals of the present day, still cling to the faith of their childhood and the associations that have become dear to them from the Muslim atmosphere in which they grew up. These men likewise cherish an ideal of some form of political and social organisation in which self-realization may become possible for them in some system of civilization that is Muslim in character and expression. . . Even when the dogmas of their faith have little hold upon them, they are still attracted by the glamour of a distinctively Muslim culture and long to break the chains of an alien civilization.[32]

The conclusion was soon reached that there was no realistic possibility of the caliphate's reinstatement, nor was there a need any longer to re-establish it. *Khilafa* gave way to an idea of 'unity' (*ittihad-i Islam*, *al-wahda al-islamiyya*), and this in turn meant in effect a kind of 'solidarity' (*tadamun*).

By the mid-twentieth century, then, several broad themes emerged. First, a sense that something had gone wrong—symbolised by the aboli-

[28] Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, p. 113.
[29] For example, C. A. Nallino, *Notes on the 'Caliphate' in General and on the Alleged 'Ottoman Caliphate'*, trans. from the 2nd edn. (Rome: Direzione Generale degli Affari Politici, 1919).
[30] Arnold, *The Caliphate*, p. 10.
[31] Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, pp. 113–14.
[32] Arnold, *The Caliphate*, p. 183.

tion of the caliphate—was all-pervasive, but ultimately incapable of generating unity of purpose. The congresses of the inter-war period were grounded in the belief that the vastness of the Muslim world constituted its natural strength. In their numbers and in their geographic dispersal, Muslims represented a potentially formidable force. Yet this was clearly their failing as well. A sense of subjugation to the West may have been one binding force, yet the political conditions under which Muslims lived varied widely. It made some difference whether one submitted to British, French, Russian, or Dutch rule. It made a great deal of difference whether one was subjected directly to foreign rule, or enjoyed a measure of independence as part of the balance of power. The calculations made separately by Muslims in different predicaments ruled out an unambiguous consensus.

Second, despite the obvious political differences and competing leadership, institutional stirrings of what we now call transnational networks were enhanced and encouraged. Views were exchanged, issues aired, individuals and cultures encountered. Word of events in distant Muslim lands had often reached other Muslim centres through non-Muslim media, censored publications, rumour. With the international congresses there were more opportunities to forge unmediated and personal linkages.

Third, the symbol of 'unity' was given concrete form in the idea of pan-Islam, in large part because of the constructions of both Muslim and Orientalist intellectuals. It was a working idea, partial and vague, but, even so, soon few spoke of the essential necessity of the *caliphate* as an institution. No longer present, was it ever necessary? The caliphate's political mission may have passed, but the idea of Islam's political mission had not. The spiritual unity of Muslims was not in question, it must be emphasised; all readily accepted this in line with Qur'anic references to *umma wahida* (one community; e.g., 5:48/53, 16:93/95). But, if the caliphate had been abolished and if Muslims indisputably constitute one religious community, then the political unity of Muslims itself became now, to many, an element of faith regardless of whether the caliph was present or not.

Fourth, institutionalised Islamic universalism did not inevitably result, however, from these connections and new consciousness. Whatever broader awareness was instilled was played out against the emergence of nationalism in Egypt and Palestine, for example, or the consolidation of Sa'udi rule in Arabia. Individual claims, however obviously promoted by self-interested, would-be caliphs—whether Sharif Husayn, King Fu'ad or Ibn Sa'ud—were legitimised by broader notions of solidarity. Particularistic

identities were validated, despite what may be the logic of pan-Islamic unity, precisely because they were in part expressed in the universalist language of Islam. If pan-Islam had been essentialised, then it was also instrumentalised, becoming a tool for self-legitimacy and for the devaluation of competitors.

Reclaiming the *umma*

As we have seen, the imagining of pan-Islam occurred over time, but was largely a phenomenon of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The second half of the twentieth century was largely much the same as its first. National elites invoked pan-Islam for everything other than pan-Islamic purposes. With one eye on their domestic publics and the other on rival states, they sought to serve as Islamic patrons, and the rivalry among Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Pakistan was illustrative of this. Counter-elites, including Islamist movements like the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, and the Front Islamique du Salut (FIS) largely did the same, seeking not so much to restore the caliphate as to establish themselves in power within familiar political forms. The ability of Muslims to live within national frontiers in the modern world and, at the same time, the presence of Islamic concerns in both domestic and foreign policy suggest that the vast majority of Muslims have been seeking, at most, to create 'Muslim' states, not to supplant the nation-state system. Hence, the prevalence of debates, in some quarters unnuanced ones, over how to Islamise state, society, and economics. The Organisation of the Islamic Conference, which some regard as the most concrete contemporary institutionalisation of pan-Islam, is in practice an inter-state organisation based on the principles of 'respect [for] the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of each member state' and of 'abstention from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity, national unity or political independence of any member states'.[33]

In reality, ambivalence is embedded in Muslim self-understandings of Muslim political solidarity. On the one hand, as we have seen, the political unity of all Muslims acquires the force of dogma in some circles, even though it is not clear how to attain or organise it. On the other hand, the

[33] Article II B (4 and 5) of the Charter of the Organisation, the text of which can be found in Annexure I of S. A. Khan, *Reasserting International Islam: A Focus on the Organization of the Islamic Conference and Other Islamic Institutions* (Karachi, 2001), pp. 316–23, quotation at p. 317.

political mission of Islam is best represented in the national enterprise, even though the national guardians routinely invoke wider standards of legitimacy. As the pan-Islamic dimension has appeared to recede, as it did for some time, it has left the field open to others, 'radicals', if you will, who seek, in their view, to reclaim the *umma* from the nation-state and dynastic regimes. They seek to reconstruct modern Islam along the lines of an alternative interpretation, one which places the community of faith above individual states and governments, but theirs is a fervid indictment more than a fully articulated programme. Examples are obvious: Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami (the Islamic Liberation Party), the Muhajirun (an offshoot of the Hizb al-Tahrir in Britain), Usama Bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri (leaders of al-Qa'ida). In effect, pan-Islam went underground, re-emerged spectacularly, and attacks the status quo in the name of a 'tradition' that has only relatively recently appeared.

The Islamic Liberation Party, which began in Palestine and Jordan but is now a discernible presence on university campuses in Britain and elsewhere in Europe and which publishes *Khilafah* magazine in London, expresses strong hostility in particular to the modern Turkish state owing to its abolition of the caliphate and its slavish dedication to Western ways. In their view, Muslims everywhere are endlessly caught up in a web of governmental complicity with such domineering institutions as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organisation. The solution is restoration of the caliphate, rejoining politics to religion and providing a beacon to all Islamic lands. The Qur'anic phrase, 'you are the best nation (*umma*) raised up for mankind' (3:110), makes it obligatory on Muslims not only to work for a single community but to support a political group, such as the party itself, that will lead the movement. Muslims should not shy away from recourse to force in order to carry out this mission; *jihad* is necessary to overthrow unjust rulers and to advance the cause of eventual Muslim unification.[34]

The Muhajirun, which has recently announced it has disbanded but whose situation remains unclear, has followed on from this logic and explicitly asked the question: are Muslims allowed to practise *jihad* in

[34] See, for example, *Khilafah is the Answer* (London, Ramadan 1409 AH/April 1989); and 'An Invitation from Hizb ut-Tahrir to the Muslims of Pakistan to Re-establish the Khilafah' (handout, Hizb al-Tahrir, Pakistan, Ramadan 1421 AH) Also see J. Kelsay, 'The New Jihad and Islamic Tradition', *FPRI Wire* [Philadelphia: Foreign Policy Research Institute], 11, no. 3 (Oct. 2003), http://www.fpri.org/fpriwire/1103.200310.kelsay.newjihad.html (accessed 28 Oct. 2004). For the definitive scholarly account of Hizb al-Tahrir, see S. Taji-Farouki, *A Fundamental Quest: Hizb al-Tahrir and the Search for the Islamic Caliphate* (London, 1996).

order to restore the caliphate? Shaykh ʿUmar Bakri Muhammad, one of its controversial leaders, has given the perhaps surprising answer, no. The reasoning is tortuous, but revealing nonetheless of a pan-Islamic worldview. Jihad is not permissible in the cause of restoring the caliphate because, in the absence of the caliphate, there is no legitimate authority to conduct the *jihad*. Muslims may, however, engage in acts of self-defence, though these are, properly speaking, not jihadist acts but 'fighting' (*qital*). The terminological sensitivity reflects the importance of the Qur'anic emphasis on limits. Chapter 2, verse 191 commands Muslims to defend themselves, but not to be aggressive, 'for God does not love those who transgress limits'. In Bakri's view, and rather disingenuously, even though *jihad* is not enjoined in a precise sense, Muslims are clearly under attack across the globe and Muslims in Britain have a responsibility to assist fellow Muslims everywhere.[35]

In Bin Ladin's worldview, world politics is both territorial and non-territorial. The conventional nation-state category finds a matter-of-fact place. Iraq, for instance, was singled out for Western attack because it was the most powerful of the Arab states. Russia, in this view, sought to extend its domain over Afghanistan, which became the first line of Muslim defence. But world politics is also pre-eminently fixed on peoples. Muslims have constant aspirations to unity and faith regardless of the international balance of power or the type of their own regimes. Like 'Muslims', Christians and Jews are categories of international political analysis, and 'Crusaders' (*al-salibiyyin*) exist today as they did in the medieval period. So too do 'hypocrites' (*munafiqin*), a term often used in Islamist discourse to delegitimise opponents, and applied even to describe international institutions such as the United Nations. By way of contrast, heroic *mujahidin*, in the late twentieth century in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechnya, and Kashmir among other places, defied the godless powers of the age.[36] His emphasis on 'security' in his speech in late October 2004 may have seemed to put him at home with the neo-realists of international relations, but the context makes clear that he is referring to an expansive, integrated notion of personal, religious, and political defence.[37]

[35] U. Bakri Muhammad, *Jihad: The Method for Khilafah?* which appeared on http://www.almuhajiroun.com (accessed 27 Oct. 2002). This website is no longer functioning.

[36] These themes emerge from various Bin Ladin video statements, such as broadcast on al-Jazeera Channel, 26 Dec. 2001. Also see an earlier interview, reproduced in http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/who/interview.html (accessed 9 Jan. 2002).

[37] Al-Jazeera Channel, 29 Oct. 2004.

Bin Ladin's statement of 7 October 2001 dated the current troubles of the Muslim world to eighty years before.[38] The reference is not precisely clear, but it is likely that it refers to the demise of the caliphate in 1924. This interpretation is consistent with general Islamist accounts that link European, specifically British, intervention with local secularising regimes—here Atatürk—to explain the collapse of Muslim unity.[39] The American presence in the Middle East and elsewhere is particularly harmful because it is both economic and religious or 'ideological'; its attempt to attain market domination is dependent on the curtailing of Islam to a kind of safe, conservative and largely privatised Islam such as the ruling elites of the Muslim world practise.[40]

The juridical bifurcation of the world into Islamic and non-Islamic realms has gained new currency as purportedly Muslim states fall into the non-Islamic category. In the medieval period, ʿAbbasid jurists had established a clear frontier between the land of unbelievers (*dar al-harb*) and the land of believers (*dar al-islam*); the former was the realm of war and the latter of peace. This distinction grew fuzzy over time, and virtually disappeared as the state system crystallised in the Muslim world. But this manner of thinking has reappeared, predictably directed against Western enemies but also directed against nominally Muslim regimes. States like Saudi Arabia or Pakistan may proclaim themselves to be Islamic, but they are actually 'allies of Satan' (*aʿwan al-shaytan*). The old Muhajirun went so far as to say that because no regimes could be considered Islamic today, there is no such thing as *dar al-islam*. Some medieval scholars had argued that there was an intermediary realm of lands in a truce with the Islamic world (*dar al-sulh*). This concept underpins Bin Ladin's offer of a cessation of hostilities to European states in April 2004,[41] and one suspects that this is the normative context in which, in his intervention prior to the American election of November 2004, he singled out Sweden as the example of a freedom-loving state undeserving of a terrorist attack.[42]

[38] *The Times*, 8 Oct. 2001.

[39] Hizb al-Tahrir maintains a web site entitled www.1924.org. In addition, Bin Ladin directly correlates the rise of un-Islamic rule in the Muslim world with the abolition of the caliphate: speech of July 2003 posted on http://www.jahra.org/free/131313/Hamza3.wma (accessed 20 July 2003); and even with the Sykes–Picot agreement of 1916: speech of Feb. 2003 posted on http://www.azzam.com (accessed on 15 May 2003).

[40] Bin Ladin's *fatwa* against Americans was published in the London Arabic newspaper, *al-Quds al-ʿArabi*, 23 Feb. 1998.

[41] Al-Jazeera Channel, 15 April 2004.

[42] Ibid., 29 Oct. 2004.

But not all who invoke traditional frameworks of international analysis are committed to the path of violence. To the contrary, a number of intellectuals, among them the Egyptian Yusuf al-Qaradawi, now in Qatar and popular on al-Jazeera television,[43] and Taha Jabir al-Alwani, an Iraqi who moved to the United States in the mid-1980s,[44] have been concerned with the situation of Muslims living outside the majority Muslim world. *Fiqh* or jurisprudence has covered Muslims in a personal capacity but has always had a territorial dimension built into it as well. The development of a permanent Muslim minority presence in Western and other societies has seemed to call for clearer guidance on modern conditions, such as military service, participation in elections, and contracting home mortgages. This is called jurisprudence of the minorities (*fiqh al-aqalliyat*), and in various rulings and opinions it effectively makes the division between majority and minority the critical demarcation of the modern world. Al-Qaradawi, for instance, gave contradictory *fatwa*s concerning the obligation of Muslim soldiers in the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan war, but the initial ruling largely rested on the national obligations of American Muslims in the American military.[45] The rationale for this kind of judgement involves an acceptance, at times explicit, at others tacit, that Western societies are tantamount to *dar al-islam* if they allow Muslims to practise their faith openly and without interference.

This argument echoes the conclusions of the Indian *'ulama* when, in the mid-nineteenth century parts of India were in turmoil over the Wahhabi call to *jihad* against infidel rule. The Wahhabis, making a considerable impact on the rural areas of India, mobilised much of the peasantry, but the city-based intelligentsia quickly rallied to the defence of the Crown. Although there were subtle differences of interpretation among the four Sunni schools of law and the main Shi'i school, they were all broadly in agreement. To the question posed by W. W. Hunter in the title to his book, *The Indian Musulmans—Are They Bound in Conscience to*

[43] His programme, 'al-Shari'ah wa'l-Hayat' (Islamic Law and Life), is widely watched. Also see his *Fi fiqh al-aqalliyat al-muslima; hayat al-muslimin wasat mujtama'at al-ukhra* (Cairo, 2001).

[44] See, for example, his *Towards a Fiqh for Minorities: Some Basic Reflections*, Occasional Paper Number 10 (Herndon, Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2003).

[45] Al-Qaradawi was the chief signatory to a fatwa of 10 Rajab 1422 AH/27 Sept. 2001 that American Muslims could participate in the forthcoming war in Afghanistan because to do otherwise would bring their patriotism into question. For the text of this *fatwa* in Arabic, see http://www.unc.edu/~kurzman/Qaradawi_et_al_Arabic.htm (accessed on 30 June 2003). But, after considerable opposition was expressed throughout the Muslim world, he, along with other senior scholars, issued a second *fatwa* in late Oct. 2001 that abrogated the first one and banned American Muslim soldiers from fighting in the war. See *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, 30 Oct. 2001.

Rebel against the Queen? the answer was decidedly no. The Shi'i jurists said the Wahhabis were deviators from the right path, and that in any event *jihad* was permissible only in the presence of the Imam, who was in occultation. Among the Sunnis, three of the four main jurisconsults backed the British, in effect, with *fatwa*s. The Hanafi and Shafi'i muftis said that as long as the British allowed 'even some' of the Islamic practices to be observed, India was in fact *dar al-islam* and hence *jihad* was not permissible. The Maliki mufti said much the same thing when he observed that India would become part of *dar al-harb* 'only when all or most of the injunctions of Islam disappear therefrom', and that this lamentable situation had clearly not occurred under British rule.[46]

The pan-Islamic dimension is an important part of the logic of today's evolving jurisprudence since, it is argued, minority Muslims, no matter where they reside, are still members of the larger *umma* and have obligations as members of that community. But they owe, and are clearly expected to give, obedience to the laws of the land in which they reside, unless, naturally, those contravene God's law. The redrawing of the internal borders, to the extent that it has in fact occurred, has wider implications. In the increasingly frequent conferences on relations between the Muslim and Western worlds, the intimate connection between these new domains of Islam—majority and minority Islam—has become a prominent topic of discussion. Specifically Muslim satellite programming is lauded as a way to penetrate Western societies and, by directly providing unbiased information on the Qur'an and *hadith*, to link minority to majority.

In an important way, therefore, these concerns are helping to subvert the internal/external bifurcation of conventional international relations thinking: on one level, it is recognised that Muslims are increasingly living in an 'external', predominantly non-Muslim domain. Yet, on another level, the defence of and care for these same Muslims are regarded as an 'internal' Muslim prerogative—that is, a matter for the *umma*, no matter how elusive the notion may seem. The territorial and the universal, 'traditional' frameworks and new ones, thus, in a hybrid way, meet on the common ground of religious obligation and political expectation. Be that as it may, guidance as to how to negotiate between these levels of obligation is far from final and is best viewed as a work in progress.

[46] W. W. Hunter, *The Indian Musulmans: Are They Bound in Conscience to Rebel Against the Queen?* (London, 1871), p. 120.

Conclusion

We have arrived, finally, at a juncture that reflects the distinctive modalities of our age as well as the inheritance of the past. Awareness of this juncture undermines simple ideas of universal community and the centrality of doctrine, but it also reminds us of the deep structures that underpin Muslim societies. There are lines of division among Muslims, now seen mainly but not only in nation-state terms; there are also mobile communities that escape easy categorisation, now especially seen in Muslims of the West who make a nonsense of a strict divide between an Islamic 'here' and a non-Islamic 'there'. Muslim transnational networks are well-financed organised additions to the scene, but they could not exist without underlying strata of affiliation and support, however unformulated and inarticulate they may be at times. And, it must be acknowledged, there is also a more sharply delineated sense of inclusion and exclusion among some Muslims—one that aspires perhaps more urgently to redraw the internal borders of Islam than to reconfigure the Muslim-non-Muslim balance of power. Speaking in the name of a fictive, capital E Islamic Empire, these radical Islamists deploy, in Homi Bhahba's words, the 'language of archaic belonging'.[47] Theirs is a particularly obsessive form of utopianism. It is important to stress, however, that the larger picture that has been presented here is mixed.

In this lecture I have attempted to outline the emergence of a political symbol. This, to my mind, carries unusual significance, for Muslim politics is principally competition and contest over symbols, who produces them, and who controls them. 'Pan-Islam' emerges, not as an ideology (pan-Islamism), but as an idea, a symbol, that is conditioned by modern contexts and is shamelessly used and manipulated, but nonetheless exercises a pull on the modern Muslim imagination. What I am calling a symbol, others in a commonsensical way may prefer to call a utopia, an imagined, lustrous alternative to the problem-ridden world. Whatever it is called and regardless of whether it is thought to be idealistic, it becomes representative of Islam itself. As Peter Berger, Clifford Geertz and others[48] reminded us long ago, this way of seeing things emerges as neither objective nor subjective, but something in between—formalised and concrete, objectified, as part of the modern self-understanding of Islam.

[47] H. K. Bhahba, 'DissemiNation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation', in Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration* (London and New York, 1990), p. 317.
[48] For example, P. L. Berger and T. Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Harmondsworth, 1984), pp. 60, 65–6, 70.

Rather than seek to decode the ambiguities and chart the contradictions of this understanding, it may be more useful to consider what relevance such articles of modern belief, in the end, may have. Radical and conservative opinion are both examples today, not of 'utopias of escape', which seek release from the frustrations of an imperfect existence, to build castles in the air, but of 'utopias of reconstruction', which seek to build a better house.[49] While they have political engagement in common, the guiding vision is distinctly divergent, of course, and the differences in consequence are considerable. Some observers believe that any project of reconstructing the *umma* is bound to fail. In this view, the fusion of religion and state in the modern era creates an insurmountable 'structural constraint'[50] whereby state is automatically privileged and religion is automatically tainted by association with any political action. But this is not a view likely to find favour in many quarters of the Muslim world where the sense of connection and fraternity, however inchoate, resonates widely. The Khilafat movement in India could be said to have lasted no more than five years in its organised sense and more realistically three, but the sense that Indian Muslims belong to a larger enterprise has not entirely disappeared.[51] Part of this may be due to their minority status, but feelings of wider affiliation persist. Nikki Keddie is doubtless right when she says that pan-Islam has much in common with modern nationalist movements, but it is questionable whether this modern identity is at the expense, as she says, of 'older Islamic feelings'.[52] Rather, these feelings persist and are re-articulated in various modern forms.

Symbols, utopias, feelings, faith: these are not the normal concepts of international relations. But they have an undeniable marked presence today. Constructivists helpfully alert us to identity and culture as defining features of international order and to their social contingency. The international relations of the Muslim world and larger Muslim politics not only are interconnected; they are centred on these questions of Muslim identity and aspiration. How pan-Islam is locally understood and how the *umma* is to be reconstructed are thus relevant to our broader concerns

[49] These terms are borrowed, loosely, from L. Mumford, *The Story of Utopias* (New York, 1962).

[50] F. Dallmayr, 'An Islamic Reformation? Some Afterthoughts' in C. Kurzman and M. Browers (eds.), *An Islamic Reformation?* (Lanham, Maryland, 2004), p. 181.

[51] This is not to dissent from Minault's conclusion that the 'Muslim community self-consciousness' which the Movement stimulated led to a 'specifically Muslim nationalism in the subcontinent later': *The Khilafat Movement*, pp. 211–12, quotation at 212.

[52] N. R. Keddie, 'Pan-Islam as Proto-Nationalism', *Journal of Modern History*, 41, no. 1 (1969), 17–28 at 18.

today. The nature of Muslim politics, and by extension the Muslim–Western encounter, will continue to depend in no small way on the possibilities, and indeed the limits, of the search for 'reconstruction'.

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