
THE WORD OF GUEST EDITOR

When the esteemed Dr Miroljub Jevtic offered me the position of guest editor for this issue entitled *Terrorism from the views of Muslims*, I was left with no other choice but to accept this honouring request, especially given the vitality of the subject. Moreover, the stature of the *Journal of Politics and Religion*, with its established reputation concerning studies on the relationship of religion and politics, in addition to the fact that the journal is published from a Western country by a European university, increased my enthusiasm to accept the offer. Westerner appears to be in need of Muslims to introduce Islam and Muslims based on Muslim literature as opposed to works on Islam and Muslims written by non-Muslims. This is particularly important for those thorny issues that occupy the attention of the Muslim and Western worlds, such as the dialogue of religions and the position of the other, the freedom of women, freedom of religion, and the issue of terrorism, which is perhaps the most pressing global concern since the late decade of the last century, particularly after the tragic events of September 11. Terrorism has become an all too easy and convenient label for Muslims and has been the primary cause for the war in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 which saw increased hostility in Muslim communities against America and its allies. In the West, the issue of terrorism gave rise to Islamophobia as an aspect of the increasing tension between the two cultures. Fear and distrust between the two worlds has increased. This has fostered the spirit of exclusion, stigmatization, and criminalization of large segments of Muslims living in Western societies, which has cultivated a growing sense of alienation among a segment of young Muslims living in the West; pushing each other to violent behaviour to express their resentment of the community in which they live. Such is reflected in the unfortunate events in April 2013 that transpired in Boston.

In light of the common source of information from which the West derives their knowledge of the Muslim world and its issues, it is necessary for Muslims themselves to examine and share their views on these thorny issues. This special issue of the *Journal of Politics and Religion* is devoted to this endeavour. It attempts to identify the position of Muslim intellectuals on the phenomenon of terrorism by addressing a range of issues related to the concepts of terrorism and jihad, which are often subjects of immense confusion and deliberate misinterpretation.

This issue consists of six articles concerning the concept of terrorism and its common charge in reference to Muslims. In his article *Classical and Contemporary Muslim Juridical Views of Terrorism*, Labeeb. A. Bsoul addresses a number

of concepts that are often confused with terrorism, and how some Muslim extremists deceptively use religion to promote and justify their actions. At the same time, those opposed to Islam deliberately misrepresent Islam as a religion of blood and violence. From here arises the concept of banditry for which Bsoul sought to clarify the fact that banditry in Islam arose as a mechanism to counter terrorism and to preserve Islam which is based on the five general aims of preserving the sanctity of life, preserving religion, preserving wealth, preserving honour, and preserving the intellect.

Yousef M. Aljamal in his *Hamas: A Terrorist Organization or Liberation Movement?* discusses one of the main sticking points in the relationship between the West and the Muslim world, namely the issue of resistance as a legitimate right for the oppressed or unjustified violence. This is attempted through an analysis of Hamas as an organization that is often classified as terrorist organization in the West, while most Muslims regard it as a national liberation movement. Aljamal draws attention to the foundations and ideas upon which Hamas was founded, and the justifications adduced to justify its existence and military activities, in addition to discussing the global debate on this topic.

In his *A Muslim Model for Peaceful Co-Existence and Mutual Respect*, Abd al-Fattah M. El-Awaisi employs the positive human values prescribed by Islam in his discussion of the status of Jerusalem as the capital of the three Abrahamic faiths, and how to take advantage of its religious and historical background for building global peace and consensus among Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Jilani. T. Mefttah & M. Hussain Ahmad discuss in *Erroneous Similarities between the Concept of Jihad and the Concept of Terrorism: (A Qur'anic Perspective)* the most difficult and controversial topic, namely the concept of jihad and its religious foundations. They elucidate the concept of jihad based on a careful reading of the Qur'an to differentiate between it being a mechanism for reform as depicted by the Qura'an, and the charge of terrorism often carelessly associated with Islam.

Bouzerzour Zoubir in his *Jihad as a Source of Terrorism a Reality or Propaganda?* examines the views of Muslim scholars on the concept of jihad, and how a small group of Muslims misunderstood jihad. Zoubir identifies the views of the majority of Muslim scholars who view jihad as nothing more than a mechanism for defence and reform. In addition, the article examines how Western media campaigns purposely distort the image of Islam by focusing on distorted conceptualisations of jihad.

The final article by Daud .A. Batchelor concerns the hot topic of *Post-'Arab Spring': Beneficial Lessons in Governance, from Recent Events in Egypt and Tunisia*, the topic is not part of the theme of this issue rather it is part of the journal analysis, even though it can be attached to the theme, as the confiscation of freedoms and limitation of political and intellectual rights, as seen in the

Egyptian case, are primary motivators for the emergence of terrorism.

The issue is concluded with the reviews of three recent books dealing with the relationship of the Western and the Muslim world and the prevailing stereotypes of Muslims in the West.

In conclusion, I wish to express my gratitude to Dr Miroљub Jevtic for entrusting me the role of guest editor for this special issue. It is my sincere hope that this issue will be well received by researchers and intellectuals, and that it constitutes a valuable answer to the pressing concerns surrounding the concepts of terrorism and jihad and its relation to Islam.

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