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The Emerging World Order: Issues and Concerns for Muslims

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Abstract

This article analyzes the decay and disintegration of the Muslim world since the 18th century, that is, in one way or another, ongoing, even alarmingly accelerating in our contemporary times. It discusses the progressively rising Islamophobia and analyzes the underlying causes and consequences of the current populist movement in the West, particularly in the USA and Europe. The discourse also suggests some steps and policies that Muslims may pursue to face the rising threat of the neo-conservatives and the populists.

مستخلص

يحلل هذا المقال تدهور العالم الإسلامي واضمحلاله منذ بداية القرن الثامن عشر، والذي مازال مستمراً ومقلّماً، بل ومتصاعداً بطريقة ما أو أخرى حتى العصر الحالي. وتناقش هذه الدراسة ظاهرة الإسلاموفوبيا المتنامية، إضافة إلى الأسباب العميقة والنتائج للحركة "الشعبوية" الحالية في الغرب، خاصة في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية وأوروبا. كما تقترح أيضاً بعض الخطوات والمقترحات التي ربما يتبناها المسلمون لمواجهة خطر المحافظين الجدد و"الشعبيين" الدايم.

Up to the end of the 17th century or so, the Muslim World was either the supreme power in the world or one of the key players in the international arena. However, the 18th century, which is labeled in Arabic literature as "*Ahd al-inhitāt* (the Era of Decline)" and described by an American scholar as the "the Dark Age"

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of the Muslim world,² is a watershed or a turning point in this respect. For since then this world has been characterized by general and all round decline, including political disintegration and disarray.³ We should call here what Ibn Khaldūn had said about seven centuries ago; namely that during times of societal decay, political collapse, economic hardship and moral disillusion will automatically follow. This disintegration is, in one way or another, ongoing, even accelerating at an alarming rate in modern and contemporary times. Suffice it to mention in this respect the appallingly tragic mess in the Arab World, Afghanistan and other parts of the Muslim World. Conversely, western supremacy and hegemony are the order of the day in today's world.

Background and Factors for the decline of the muslim world

The underlying factors for this weakness and deterioration of the Muslim World are too complex to be fully explored in this limited space. But they should be primarily examined from within the Muslim World itself. The gradual marginalization from and eventual eclipse of the dynamism, flexibility, tolerance and open mindedness of Islam in favor of the dogmatic phenomenon of *al Taqlīd* (blind following or imitation), that sees things in terms of black and white, is the fundamental culprit, as it has been disastrous to the image of the religion and the reputation of its believers. In effect, this means the closure of the door of *al-ijtihād* (creative reasoning in the interpretation of the Quranic text and the prophetic tradition, *al-Sunna*, to suit the changing times and places). Muslim scholars and elites have thus been deprived from this much needed initiative, and had just to follow dogmatically and verbatimly the often obsolete ruling and principles laid down by their predecessors of the early Islamic period. In this respect, it may be interesting to record the respect that the Sudanese Mahdi had exhibited towards these elderly 'Ulamā' (learned scholars) but he added: "*fahum rijāl wa nahānu rijāl*" (they are men and we are men), and "*li kulli makāmin maqāl, wa li kulli zamānin rijāl*" (for each situation is discourse and for each time are men). Many of them, particularly

² John O. Voll, 1982, p. 89.

³ H. A. Ibrahim, 2004, p. 1.

“*Ulamā’ al-Sultān*” (government scholars),⁴ were dismissed by the 19th century African leaders of the Jihād as being “*‘ulamā’ as-Sū’*” (‘*ulamā’* of Evil) has thus become a carbon copy of the earlier *ulamā’* so to speak, which has been detrimental to the dynamic nature of Islam and instrumental in the rise of some ultra-extremist groups, who portray Islam as a rigid religion that absolutely prohibits dealing with the “other”; that is, Westerners in this case. They have even dismissed Muslims who disagreed with their views as “*kuffār*” (unbelievers) and “*murtaddīn*” (apostates) who should be killed. Some Muslim intellectuals were accused of blasphemy, of whom was the Egyptian Nobel prize winner Najīb Mahfūz, stabbed to death by such an extremist in 1994. Such extremists would have also consciously or unconsciously misread or misinterpreted some Islamic injunctions to support oppressive and dictatorial rule as well as dogmatism.

Islamophobia and its Aftermath

In July 2016, Nathan Leon published an interesting book, entitled *The Islamophobia Industry: How the Right Manufactures Fear of Muslims?*.⁵ The 11th of September catastrophic attacks on some American symbols of sovereignty and prestige gave the adversaries of Islam a golden opportunity to actively pursue their agenda; the “islamophobia industry”. A group of Western university researchers, thinkers, bloggers, religious leaders and journalists orchestrated a persistent campaign to deepen the already deep gap between the Western and Muslim worlds, and to tarnish the image of Islam. They closely associated it with violence and terrorism and dismissed what they insisted to call “radical Islamic terrorism and terrorists”. Even when they are “generous” with Islam, they sarcastically maintain “Islam may not be a terrorist religion, but all terrorists are Muslims”. The Prophet (Peace be upon Him) has been a particular focus of a campaign of abuse and

⁴ The 19th century leaders of the *Jihād* in Africa, particularly Uthman Dan Fodio and Muhammed Ahmed ibn Aldullah, dismissed these ‘*ulamā’* as being “*‘ulamā’ as-Sū’*” (‘*ulamā’* of Evil).

⁵ Nathan Lean is an American writer and scholar on the Middle East .

belittlement, particularly in a series of insulting and sarcastic caricatures widely published in Western press in Denmark, Norway, Germany, France, etc.

Prominent among this group are three personalities. One is the retired Jewish Professor Bernard Lewis, the theorist and probably the architect of the Neo-Conservative movement, who encouraged former American President George Bush and others to adopt the slogan “either you are with us or against us”. The other two associates are Francis Fukoyama, author of the *End of History and the Last Man* (published in 1992) and Samuel Huntington author of the *Clash of Civilizations* (published in 1996).⁶ Bernard Lewis’ bias and prejudice against Islam and Muslims is directly and discretely reflected in some of his works, notably *The Roots Of Muslim Rage* (published in 1980), where he claims that kidnapping and assassination are inherent in the Muslim character and supported by examples from the *Sīra* (biography) of the Prophet. Of the others are the writer Spencer, the Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci, the American journalist Stephen Emerson, the Danish rightist politician Geert Wilders and the American priest Pat Robertson.⁷ V.S. Naibul, a British writer of Trinidadian origin and a Nobel Prize winner who wrote two books on Islam in South East Asia,⁸ may also be added to this list. For he maintained that Islam has confused these “converts” – “neurosis of conversion” as he coined, and that the only way for the Malays and other inhabitants of the region to free themselves from this confusion is by abandoning the “alien” religion, Islam, and return to their historical religious legacy – Hinduism and Buddhism.

Un their onslaught on Islam, such writers dismissed it as being backward, sensual, rigid and dogmatic, where terrorism, violence and hatred to the West are inherent in its very basic teachings, the *Qur’ān* and the *Sunna*. Their smear campaign is regrettably very effective in the West, particularly so because they are backed by influential think tanks that are experienced in formulating public opinion in the West and elsewhere through the media (newspapers, magazines, radio and television), theatre and cinema. A film entitled “Sedition” associated the *Qur’ān*

⁶ Francis Fokoyama and Samuel Huntington are American political scientists, born in 1952 and 1927, respectively.

⁷ Detailed information on these activists can be found in various sources and on the *Internet*.

⁸ 1988, 1998.

with violence and accused the Prophet of terrorism, while another one titled “Submission”, launched a bitter and sarcastic criticism against Islam’s presumed inferior and repugnant treatment of women.

This propagandist campaign found immense ammunition in the opposition and hatred of some influential Muslim sectors to the West because of its dismemberment and occupation of some Muslim countries, notably Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, support to dictators and dictatorial regimes and absolute and unlimited support to Israel notwithstanding its persistent and defiant violation of international law and commitment of barbaric crimes against the Palestinian peoples.

As a backlash to this flagrant oppression and injustice, the Arab masses waged the so-called “Arab Spring” which summarily overthrew four pro-Western dictators: the Tunisian Zain Al-‘Ābidīn bin ‘Alī, the Egyptian Hūsnī Mubārak, and the Libyan Mu‘mmar al-Qaddāfī who ruled with iron fist for 23, around 30 and over 40 years consecutively, while the Yemeni president ‘Alī ‘Adbullah Sālih was forced to surrender power in February 2012. The protest movement mushroomed in one way or another to most parts of the Arab world, particularly Syria, where the forces of the “revolution” have been aspiring for six bloody years, but without tangible success, to overthrow Syrian president Bashshār Al-Asad. However, rather than achieving its goal of establishing just and democratic rule, the so-called Arab spring has been used, or rather misused, by colonial powers and others to plunge the region in unprecedented turbulence, chaos and destruction, which will most likely provide a pretext for foreign powers, particularly the USA, to redraw maps and further scramble the already partitioned countries of Syria and Iraq. Moreover, it forced millions of its inhabitants to flee their countries desperately into neighboring countries and to Europe. This influx led to a refugee crisis in Europe that further aggravated suspicion and hatred to Muslims.

Though, as explained above, discord and estrangements between the Muslim and Western Worlds has been on the rise, there have been some modest attempts on both sides for rapprochement. This is reflected in the cautious attempts of a couple of such Western Scholars as John Esposito and Richard Bulliet, to give westerners a balanced picture of Islam and its teachings, history and civilization via debates, interviews and publications. Of the first of them, Esposito, one has his works *Unholy War, Terror in the Name of Islam, Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion*

*Muslims Really Think?*⁹ Of the second, Bulliet, one has his interesting work (2004) *The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization*,¹⁰ which criticizes the theory of Clash of Civilizations and highlights the commonalities between the Muslim and Christian Civilizations. These optimistic voices found a limited favorable response in the Muslim World. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the former President of the Islamic Republic of Iran (2005-2013), addressed a letter to the United Nations suggesting that the year 2005 be the year for dialogue between religions. The endorsement by the UN of this proposal encouraged a series of activities in this direction during the course of the 21st century within and outside the Muslim world, which aspired to patronize moderation and tolerance as a bed-rock for dialogue between civilizations and religions. The Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) held few conferences on this theme that hoped to highlight the importance of dialogue and interaction between different civilizations. Late Saudi King ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz launched an initiative for dialogue between cultures and religions, and on his directive the Muslim World League (The *Rābitāh*) held three such conferences in 2008 and 2009, respectively in Madrid, Mecca and Geneva.¹¹ Moreover, a number of elite centers have been established in some Muslim capitals, e.g. Kuwait, Amman and Kuala Lumpur to advocate moderation (*al-Wasatīyya*).

Though some Muslims distinguish between Western governments and their people, and appreciate the support of few Westerners to Muslim rights, the political theatre is dominated by some radical Muslim groups who indiscriminately dismiss all the West as *Dār al-Kufr* (the abode of unbelief) which should not be dealt with (i.e. *Muwāllāh*),¹² in any way whatsoever. Rather it should be confronted and uprooted. They pursue violence as a means of change, and declare the *Jihād* against

⁹ John Esposito (1940-) is an American professor of international law and Islamic studies at Georgetown University and the director of Prince al-Waleed Center For Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown.

¹⁰ Richard Bulliet (1940-) is professor of history at Columbia University who specializes in the history of Islamic society and institutions.

¹¹ For a detailed study, see H.A. Ibrahim, 2014, pp. 11-46.

¹² *Al Muwālah* is an Arabic noun meaning the “act of supporting, rallying behind”, derived from the verb *wālā*, which means “(to) support, rally behind”.

whom they call “*at-Tāgūt*” and “*al-Jāhiliyya*”¹³ everywhere. Thus they dismiss all the Muslim rulers as *kuffār* (infidels) who should be overthrown by force if necessary as they do not strictly apply “*al-hākimiyyatu li’llāh*” (sovereignty to God; i.e. not to people) and ally themselves with “*al-Kafarah*” (the unbelievers). At the head of these, known as *Salafī* (traditionalist) *Jihādīst* groups is al-Qā’idah founded by Late Saudi businessman-cum-activist Usama Bin Laden who, on his assassination by the Americans in 2011, was succeeded by the Egyptian physician-cum-activist Ayman Al-Zāwāhirī. Next is the “Islamic state in Iraq and Syria (or the Levant)”, abbreviated and known as ISIS in English and *Dā’ish* in Arabic, which founded in Iraq a so-called caliphate under “al-Khalīfa” Abū Bakr Albaghdādī. An influx of Muslim youth, including some from the West, joined its rank and actively participated in its declared Jihād. Several European capitals, such as London, Paris, Berlin and Stockholm as well as some American cities, were theatres of horrific attacks. Other *Salafī Jihādīst* groups are *Jamā’at Ahl as-Sunna wa’l-Jihād*, popularly known as Boko Harām, in Nigeria, which is particularly dismissed because of its brutal abducting in 2014 of 276 of innocent schoolgirls,¹⁴ as well as the Somali Muslim Youth Movement, founded in 2004.

One has sufficient evidence to assume that the United States had somehow been instrumental in the emergence of ISIS and other Islamic groups, moderate as well as extremist, or, at least, turned a blind eye to their rise. For, since 2004 the administration of Former president Obama was presumably cautiously inclined to coordinate with them and to generally encourage political Islam to capture political power in the Arab world and elsewhere; that is, to fight Islam with Islam as some have put it. For they seem to have expected that this will make the USA less susceptible to terrorist attacks and to enable it to achieve its vital strategic and economic interests, and those of its allies, particularly Israel, in the Arab states.

¹³ “*At-Tāgūt*” is an Arabic noun derived from the verb *Tāgā* meaning “(to) be absolutely dictating and oppressive”, designing absolute oppression and dictatorship. Literally *al-Jāhiliyyah* is the pre-Islamic era in Arabia. But Muhammed Qutb in his book, 1995, *Jāhiliyyat al-Qarn al-’Ishrīn* (The *Jāhiliyyah* of the 20th century) extended its meaning to include any country at any time where the conditions of pre-seventh century Arabia prevail.

¹⁴ For a detailed and excellent study on militant Islamic movements in West Africa, see Shaheed Ahmed Rufai, 2017.

According to a recent report by Wikileaks, a senior official at the White House had reportedly sent a letter on the Syrian situation to the then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in which he maintained that Al-Qā'ida is for the American position in that country. Moreover, some circumstantial evidence supports this notion that ISIS is American made, namely for the huge funds and superior armaments that it has. If the American huge intelligence apparatus was able to discover in a flash of a moment a few Russian cars that entered Ukraine, it would be ridiculous to assert that they would have been unaware of the fleet of ISIS cars that move freely in Iraq and Syria.

However, it is not fair to hold the USA totally responsible for all the brutal acts of ISIS and other Jihādist groups. For the latter are convinced that their horrific acts are totally compatible with Islamic injunctions based on their own interpretations of some texts attributed to earlier Muslim 'Ulamā' like Ibn Taymiyyah and Muḥammad ibn 'abd al-Wahhāb.

Al-Qaida's 11th of September devastating attacks on the American twin towers and the Pentagon, and excessive brutality of jihādist groups to non-Muslims and Muslims alike,¹⁵ have, understandably, made westerners concerned, even afraid, of what they insist to label as Islamic terrorism. All this is indeed somehow instrumental in the recent rise of the Neo-conservatives and the current emergence of the populist movement in Europe and the United States, which have both expressed open anti-Muslim sentiments and took measures against Muslim interests and presence in Western countries. The latest is President Trump's executive order to ban entry to the United States from six Muslim countries, including Sudan.

Populism Vs Muslims

Two theories have been given to the recent sweeping rise of populism in the West, namely, the economic insecurity perspective and the cultural backlash. The former claims greater income and wealth inequality that resulted in the deprivation of the less secure strata of the society- unskilled workers, the unemployed, but particularly the poor and uneducated white population in inner city areas with concentration of immigrants. Hence these economically frustrated sectors of the "autochthons" blame "them", meaning immigrants, including Muslims, for stripping prosperity, job opportunities and public services from "us"; i.e. the white entrenched sector of the society. The cultural backlash emphasizes the progressive

¹⁵ See above pp 5-6.

cultural change and shift in the western societies that has increasingly developed because of globalization and immigration, and consequently resulted in the displacement of the traditional norms. Both factors, in varying degrees, have caused the resentment of these sectors, particularly the older generation of the white people, to the establishment and the established political classes¹⁶. Hence, is the rising support for the populist parties and their leaders in Europe, who openly and emphatically oppose Muslim presence and immigration to Western countries: Marine Le Pen, who succeeded her father Jean-Marie Le Pen, as president of the French National Front, Norbert Hoffer of the Australian National Front, Geert Wilder, leader of the Dutch Party of Freedom, and Nigel Farage, leader of the United Kingdom Independent Party, 2006-2009 and again 2010-2016.

These emerging populist parties have thus disrupted the policies of many western societies, and their leaders have been successful in altering the established patterns of party competition in contemporary western societies. The parties gained votes and seats in many countries, particularly among the less well-off, the unemployed and the elderly, and entered coalitions in at least 11 European democracies, including Austria, Italy and Switzerland.¹⁷ For they appealed to the electorates because of their adamant opposition to globalization and multiculturalism and stern demand for a significant lowering of immigration. Even in countries without many elected populist representatives, these parties can still exert tremendous “blackmail” pressure on mainstream parties, public discourse and the policy agenda. This, recently, has been illustrated by the catalyzing role that the Eurosceptic United Kingdom Independent party played in Britain’s exit from the European Union (Brexit),¹⁸ with massive consequences to the immigrants, including Muslims. Brexit and the Brexiters appear to have been a model to some populist groups in other parts of Europe and in the USA. During his election campaign, President Trump had openly commended the Brexiters and other right wing populists in Europe.

¹⁶ Inglehart, Roland F. and Pippa Norris, 2016, pp. 2-5.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 2.

¹⁸ *Ibid*.

But nowhere had the resounding success of the populist movement been glaring than in the unexpected, and shocking too, election of Donald Trump to the office of the presidency of the United States in 2016. This is largely because of his excessive and inherent arrogance and consequential ultra-extreme policies that aim at bringing all his opponents, particularly the Muslims, to their knees. Trumpism is indeed most troubling to the Muslim world and probably the entire world. During the weeks after the election, many mosques across the United States received rising numbers of hate letters, e-mails and phone calls that threatened “Muslim genocide in president Trump’s America”, who “will do to Muslims what Hitler did to the Jews”. Trump’s election empowered the undercurrent bigotry in America thus encouraging people to voice their bigoted views openly. According to a recent poll, 49% of Americans think that at least some Muslim American citizens are anti-American. Some Muslims are literally afraid to leave their homes, while Muslim kids do not want to go to school because they had been bullied or they are afraid of being bullied.¹⁹

Will populism rise indefinitely and be triumphant in changing the *status quo* in the West to the detriment of Muslims within and outside western countries, or will this movement come to a crushing end in the months and years to come? The answer to this question is difficult to speculate, but right now there seems to be no indication that the political redefinition will come to a halt soon. The populists in France attained significant gains in the 2017 presidential elections. Their representative Marine Le Pen of the far right ultranationalist National Front got 39.9 % of the vote (10,644,118 votes) in the run off held on 7 May 2017 versus the Centrist Emmanuel Macron who got 61.1 % (20,753,797). This is a major victory for a party that had been founded as late as 1972 by Le Pen’s father the convicted Holocaust denier Jean-Marie Le Pen, though the resounding success of Emanuel Macron is in itself, and in the current troubling circumstances, a significant sigh of relief to the enlightened Westerners in particular and the world population at large.

However, for Muslims to face this eminent threat of the neo-conservatives and the populists, they have to radically change their current obsolete religious discourse that belongs to the 4th Hijrah century (11 CE) and which is diametrically opposite to the truly Islamic one. First and foremost, they, so-to-speak, have to put their own house in order. In particular, they should strive to end, or at least contain, the devastating Sunni-Shī‘a conflict that seriously threatens to dismember the

¹⁹ Eakin Britain, 2016.

Muslim world, and the Arab region in particular, into petty and weak entities that could be easily dominated by their adversaries. A serious and constructive Muslim-Muslim dialogue is therefore urgently needed to settle the doctrinal and political differences between the two sects,²⁰ that, unfortunately, has been aggravating since the triumph of the Iranian Islamic revolution in 1979, and subsequently the recent so-called Arab Spring, though what binds the Muslims together is more fundamental than the psychological and intellectual barriers that had been created between them over long years of bitterness and hostility: One God (Allāh *subhānahu wata'ālā*), one Prophet (Mohammed *sāllā Allāhu 'alayhi wasallam*), one book (the Qur'ān) and one Qibla (Makkah). The author does not suggest that this is an easy task. In fact it has been pursued since the time of the Muslim thinker –activist Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, but without success. But, on the other side, without a kind of understanding between the two sects, the current internal wars and bloodshed will accelerate and the Muslim world will have no future whatsoever. It will continue to be the object, not the subject of history. History may repeat itself, and Mālik Bin Nabī's prophecy – the Muslim world is colonizable- may once more be actualized. The United States, actually, is currently on the verge of totally controlling the Muslim world.

Another urgent task that Muslims need to appreciate and understand is that they should not allow Islam to be hijacked continually by the small, but vocal, groups of Salafī Jihadists- *al-zā'ālāmiyyīn* or *al-fi'ati ad-Dāllah*, as they are often dismissed in Arabic literature. Muslims, their sizable numbers living in the West in particular,²¹ should explain patiently to the Westerners and the whole world that Islam is indeed a flexible and universal religion. It ordains a dynamic response to social change, expresses interest and respect to the achievement of others, and emphasizes human dignity and rights to all people (*Rahmatan l'il-'Ālamīn* 'Mercy to the entire Human-kind'). Thus, if its injunctions and teachings are properly understood and interpreted to balance (*tazāwuj*) between *al-wājib wa'l-wāqi'* (the

²⁰ H.A. Ibrahim, 2006, pp 161- 174.

²¹ One does not have detailed statistics of the Muslim population residing in the West, but it is generally agreed that it is huge and progressively increasing, particularly in Europe and the USA where Islam is the second largest religion after Christianity.

obligatory and the reality), as Ibn al-Qayyim says, then they do not contradict the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of December 10th, 1948 (UDHR).²² In several places, al-Sadiq Al-Mahdi²³ credibly argues that this Declaration and Islamic teachings seen eye-to-eye, are not incompatible. Moreover, the mainstream Muslims should continue to pursue cooperation with the enlightened forces in Christianity and other religions to encourage dialogue between religions and cultures and therefore curb extremism in both Worlds. Visits like the recent one of Pope Francis to Egypt on 28 April 2017, during which he courteously visited Al-Azhar after a seven-year rift and had a constructive conversation with Ahmed Al-Tayib, its Supreme Sheikh (*al-Imām al-Akbr*), should be commended and encouraged as they both emphatically condemned every form of violence. The role of the 20th century Turkish Mujaddid Sa‘īd an-Nawrasī and his *magnum opus Rasā’il an-Nūr* (Epistles of Light) should also be highlighted and studied.

Conclusion

The already strained relations between the Muslim World and the West has reached a crisis level after and since Eleventh of September incidents and the subsequent emergence and rise of the neo-conservatives and populists in the West: Europe, the USA and elsewhere. But, on the other hand, the current confrontation between the West and East threatens western vital strategic and economic interests in the Middle East and, in likewise manner, could sharply accelerate poverty, political instability and extremism in most parts of the Muslim world as the events and repercussions of the so-called Arab Spring clearly demonstrate.²⁴ The picture is

²² For a discussion on, and around UDHR, see H.A. Ibrahim, 2006, pp 166-170.

²³ Al-Sadiq al Mahdi (1936-) was the most favoured grand-son of Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi, founder of Neo-Mahdism in the Sudan, whom he had groomed for a future role in the Mahdist party and the country. Since 1961, Al-Sadiq has been the *de-facto* leader of Neo-Mahdism and had twice occupied the position of Prime Minister of the Sudan. Besides being an established politician, he is a distinguished intellectual and researcher who wrote many pieces on Islamic issues, and is a recognized proponent of the *Wasatijyyah*- Islamic moderation.

²⁴ For an interesting discourse on the so-called Arab Spring and its aftermath and repercussions, see Amelia Smith (Editor), 2016.

quite bleak, particularly after the recent election of the inexperienced and limited Donald Trump to the American presidency, and the threat that the Ultra Nationalist Marine Le Pen of the French far right National Front continues to pose. There may not be light at the end of the tunnel unless and until the sensible elements on both sides courageously take up the initiative.

The rapidly emerging forces of Populism in Europe and the United States of America demonstrate that the New World Order is experiencing new developments that threaten to discard globalization and multiculturalism in favour of local nationalism and uni-culturalism that are both hostile to foreigners in general and Muslims in particular. Thus, the pressing question now and during the immediate future is “what is next?”, or as more expressively stated in Arabic “*thumma mā dā ba‘du?*”. Has populism triumphed once and for all or is it just a temporary phenomenon that is bound to vanish within a decade or so? The answer to this complex question, at this juncture, is indeed difficult to prophesize. One is to hope for the best.

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