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BETWEEN SUICIDE BOMBING AND THE BURNING BANLIEUES:

THE MULTIPLE CRISES OF EUROPE'S PARALLEL SOCIETIES

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Between Suicide Bombing and the Burning Banlieues:

The Multiple Crises of Europe's Parallel Societies

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Chairman's summing-up

François Heisbourg*

To introduce a vital topic replete with semantic and political difficulties, we were fortunate to benefit from a number of excellent presentations.

Delivering his paper on "The multiple crises in Dutch parallel societies", Rob de Wijk (from Clingendael and the Royal Military Academy) laid emphasis on four points:

- The frustration of reasonably well-educated middle classes in parallel societies at being blocked from climbing the social ladder. This, rather than the difficulties of the underprivileged, has been a major source of radicalisation;

- The importance of second-generation citizens of Moroccan (often Rifan berber) origin in Dutch parallel societies;

- The existence of 'virtual *ummas*' motivated by external causes (rather than by endogenous economic or social grievances) which find a ready home in the infrastructure of parallel societies;

- The need for innovative approaches to acquire inside knowledge of such groups, notably in terms of the role of social workers.

Amel Boubekeur, from CEPS and Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS, in Paris) underscored points made in the paper she wrote with Samir Amghar (also from EHESS), on "The Role of Islam?" in Europe's multiple crises. She recalled the weak role of Islam in France's '*crise des banlieues*'. Conversely, she singled out three roles of Islam in French and European society: Islam as a source of integration ('*embourgeoisement*'), Islam as a territory in which to retreat (a quiet '*lieu de repli*') and Islam as a vector of j*ihad*.

Alexei Malashenko, from the Carnegie Centre in Moscow, pointed out that while Russia has had its share of suicide bombings, it has hardly had any burning *banlieues*. He made the point that 'parallel societies' outside the modern economic mainstream were something the USSR and especially Russia were rather accustomed to. In the case of Moscow, with a population of Muslim origin of some 1.5-2 million, mostly from the Caucasus, there was little ethnic ghettoisation, and only weak community organisation (setting aside criminal gangs). As a first generation population, they had strong links to their family and friends back home and did not suffer high unemployment. Moscow's immigration situation was different from the current situation in France and most other European countries – notwithstanding the existence of anti-Caucasian and anti-Muslim racism.

Speaking from his paper, "Islam in Russia in 2020", he noted that Islam was often linked to nationalism – 'burning regions', rather than 'burning *banlieues*'. With between 14.5 and 20 million Muslims, Russia could witness major, converging troubles with its Muslim 'south' broadly defined (from the Volga to the Northern Caucasus) or a series of successive explosions in its individual Muslim republics.

Responding to the question arising from the relative absence of home-grown *jihad*i attacks in the US, Steve Simon (Council of Foreign Relations) noted the particular characteristics of Islam in the US: an above national average median income of $50,000 and a proportionately high representation in the professions. However, complacency about America's 'immunity' would be misplaced, given a number of factors: anti-Muslim sentiment had become more acceptable since 9/11; generational issues were arising with a quest for salafist-type purity among some of the Muslim young; not necessarily effective but damaging because of indiscriminate sweeps by the FBI; the over-representation of

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Muslims in the prison population (19% in the New York state prison system). Concerning Europe's integration problems, he discounted the corresponding neo-conservative literature, with its odd mix of Spengler and Churchill appearing in American bookstores of late (inter alia "While Europe Slept"): the '*banlieues*' were more about Karl Marx than about Bin Laden, notwithstanding the realities of political under-representation of the Muslim population.

In the first round of discussion, a representative of the International Crisis Group underscored the findings of the ICG's recent report "La France face à ses Musulmans: émeutes, jihadisme et dépolitisation", noted the waning of political Islam in the French *banlieues*, stating that M. Sarkozy is wrong in his attempts to build up Islamic organisations. On Russian issues, he asked, inter alia, how the war in Chechnya has affected the attitudes of Muslims in other parts of Russia. An American participant with expert knowledge of the French scene criticised the juxtaposition of the 'burning *banlieues*' and 'suicide bombers': the two expressions do not actually go together. Terrorism is largely tied to external causes while the burning of suburbs was a result of internal factors, going well beyond issues related to either Islam or terrorism. He emphasised the need for growth in Europe to alleviate socio-economic disaffection.

A Danish discussant remarked that 70% or so of Danish public opinion supported both the publication of the cartoons and the policy of the Danish government: the reaction of mainstream European opinion needed to be watched.

In the panel response, Alexei Malashenko noted the low level of Muslim solidarity with the Chechens, outside the immediate vicinity of Chechnya. However, he singled out the apparent popularity of Osama Bin Laden in much of the Muslim population.

Rob de Wijk and the Chairman both underscored the similarities rather than the differences between the situations in European countries: the better educated groups go radical and global; the less educated ones riot locally. In other words, simply improving conditions in the neighbourhoods is not going to deal with terrorism. He joked about the 'I' in 'ICG': it was a sign of the times that 'international' concern converges with internal issues.

In the second round of discussion, a former US official reacted against the use of the expression 'political Islam' by the ICG: it was a play on words to indicate that political Islam was on the wane while at the same time noting the rise of radical expression and organisation. What was on the wane was traditional religious pressure groups. He shared the concern of those worried about the reactions of the mainstream population. Finally, he drew a parallel in both sociological and organisational terms between the *Jihad*is and the Bolsheviks.

Another participant queried the role of politicians in coping with the current problems in The Netherlands, and, more broadly, wondered about the possibility of promoting more inclusive policies. This followed a remark by the Chairman on the French government's 'Terrorism White Paper', which supports policies of inclusiveness of the population as a whole (along 'July 7' lines in London) rather than policies of mobilising simply majority support (e.g. the '70%' of pro-cartoon Danes). A member of CEPS echoed another participant's query about successful policies: was Belgium doing something right as compared to the Netherlands?

Finally, a representative of the ICG emphasised the basics of fighting terrorism: good intelligence, good policing and the like, rather than relying on socio-economic programmes which are necessary but for other reasons.

The panel picked up the Bolshevik analogy and the remark by the ICG representative. Rob de Wijk noted that social workers and law-and-order officers have to learn to work together to improve the overall intelligence position. He expressed limited approval of the record of some Dutch politicians. Commenting on Miss Ayaan Hirsan Ali's role, he remarked that she may be courageous, but that she may also have further radicalised an already polarised situation.

Amel Boubekeur remarked that the depoliticisation of structures does not imply the depoliticisation of people and asked: what will follow the November riots in France, since traditional polities do not work?

Steve Simon eschewed the apparent simplicity of 'radical = global', 'rioting = local' paradigm. Local situations can prompt change in global visions, as occurred with young Che Guevara's motorcycle tour of South America. He emphasised the importance of conferring citizenship in order to enable political activity. Finally, he recalled that areas with large concentrations of youth – and the *banlieues* are places with a large share of youths – lead to rowdy collective behaviour…

Alexei Malashenko denounced Salafism as a challenge for both Islam and the world. Communism was an ideology which could be got rid of: it is more difficult to deal with a religious belief.

In his closing speech, the Chairman strongly supported the concern about the reactions of the majority of the population. He also remarked that the period of violence in America's black ghettos in the 1960s came to a close when the mainstream political parties took the corresponding issues to heart – not as a result of the activity of more narrowly-based organisations such as the Black Panthers or the SNCC (Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee).

The Role of Islam in Europe: Multiple Crises?

Amel Boubekeur and Samir Amghar*

The contemporary history of Muslims in Europe extends over 50 years. Until the early 1980s, when a new generation of young Muslims born in Europe began rising to prominence, their presence was not particularly visible and European public policies tended to categorise them as temporary immigrants. Policies intended to curb discrimination and unemployment were developed along ethnic lines (in particular French migration and social policies affecting the *beur* children of immigrant parents from North Africa), sparking social discontent and rioting. Beginning in the 1990s, public discourse increasingly identified Islam as a major part of the problem. Developments including the terrorist attacks in Europe (Paris, Madrid, London), the Rushdie controversy in the United Kingdom, the process of the 're-Islamisation' of young people born in Europe, questions about the separation of religion and politics (*laïcité*), struggles against anti-Semitism and even concerns about delinquency in poor districts predominantly inhabited by Muslims reinforced the view that a new phenomenon – a 'crisis of Islam' – called for drastic policy prescriptions.

Over time, virtually all social problems involving European Muslim communities have been reconceptualised within the framework of Islam as a crisis phenomenon. Questions of Muslim political and social integration have become inextricably tied to the 'Islam crisis'. Traditional ideas of a 'clash of civilizations' and the consequent need for intercultural policies to prevent crises involving Islam have dominated public debates surrounding the headscarf, French rioting and cartoon controversies. European policy-makers engaging in these debates are finding it difficult to agree on whether Europe's Muslim citizens should be defined as minorities, immigrants or new Europeans.

These multiple Islam crises and controversies are reflections of the existing gap between Europe's policy elite and Muslim citizens living on the social periphery. The apparent failure of 30 years of European social policies to integrate Muslims is directly related to the lack of Muslim political participation in European affairs at both national and local levels on issues other than security and terrorism. Although the radicalisation of Islam is an important and urgent issue, the policy relevant concerns of most Muslims in Europe instead involve day-to-day problems of Islamophobia, worship management, and social, cultural and political exclusion – problems that tend to be ignored or poorly articulated at the policy level.

To better understand the role of political Islam in European society today, it is necessary to examine Islamic movements from many different angles, including their European roots, the external influences of Muslim countries and the Islamic arguments of some of Europe's most prominent Muslim leaders. Any balanced analysis should also question whether radicalisation is rooted in Islam per se or more the result of deliberate attempts by various religious actors to garner influence via *communautarisme* – the establishment of ethnic or religious communities separate from mainstream life.

Imported crises?

Islam is now considered a European religion. Crises involving Muslim populations in Europe are often blamed on influences from 'foreign' Islam, with blame most often assigned to two types of external phenomena.

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First is what has been called 'consular' Islam. During the 1970s and 1980s, the first Muslim immigrants to Europe (mainly from Algeria, Morocco and Turkey) organised worship, mosque finances, *imam* activities and Koranic teaching through their countries' consulates. The consulates were intent on diffusing Muslim protests or crises in Europe carried out in the name of Islam.

More recently a second phenomenon – transnational or 'foreign' Islamic movements – have begun to compete for control over Muslims in Europe. These include the Tabligh from Pakistan, the Salafi movement from Saudi Arabia and the Muslim Brotherhood organised by an Islamist elite in exile from Middle Eastern and North African countries.

These 'imported' groups and other Muslim diaspora communities employ various means in their attempts to influence the ideological and normative landscape of Islam in Europe. During the 2003 elections to establish the French council of Muslim worship organised by conservative French politician Nicolas Sarkozy, for example, Moroccan and Algerian consulates in France tried to influence the voting process. The goal was to secure a kind of national political majority among Muslims leaders from these countries via the elections. The Turkish diaspora has played an important role in advocating Turkey's accession into the EU. After *fatwa*s were issued related to the Iraqi and Israeli-Palestinian conflict from Youssouf Qaradawi (an Egyptian-Qatari theologian with the Muslim Brotherhood movement), many European Muslims chose to oppose the war by boycotting Israeli and American products. Some among these 'foreign' groups consider Palestinian suicide attacks as justified. Apparently, foreign Islamic activists living in Europe have been largely responsible for using violent videos advocating religious war against infidels (*jihad*), foreign fighter narratives and websites to recruit young European Muslims to fight among the so-called Chechen and Iraqi *jihad* networks.

Such movements promoting violence and terrorism can serve as an outlet for disenfranchised and frustrated European Muslim youth seeking upward social mobility. While most vent their frustrations via peaceful means (more and more young Salafis in Europe are returning to their native Saudi Arabia or Gulf countries, for example), a small number choose *jihad*.

European responses to 'foreign' Islam

This incursion of 'foreign' Islamic movements has led European policy-makers to search for external solutions to European crises involving Islam. For example, in an attempt to fight radicalisation, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands have launched expulsion campaigns against foreign *imam*s to their countries of origin (Morocco, Algeria, Turkey). During the headscarf controversy, Nicolas Sarkozy travelled to the Al Azhar University in Egypt to obtain a *fatwa* from the Egyptian mufti Al Tantawi requiring girls to remove their veils at school. During the riots, French media described the young Muslim rioters as foreigners leading an "*intifada des banlieues*" with France becoming 'Baghdad', while some US commentators asserted that France was paying the price for its pro-Arab policies. Such clichés only serve to further convince Islamic actors of the need to be more effective in influencing policy-making affecting Muslims in Europe. Following Sarkozy's Egyptian trip, Islamist movements led demonstrations against the veil law.

Experience has shown that Muslim religious leaders are not able to defuse social crises affecting Muslims in Europe. The majority of young rioters in French cities were not practising Muslims, nevertheless it is interesting that a *fatwa* to stop the riots issued by the Union of France's Islamic Associations of France (UOIF) – one of the principal federations of Islamic associations close to the Muslim Brotherhood and member of the French Council of the Muslim Faith – had no effect.

At the same time, most European Muslim citizens rally around European values during such crises. During the veil and cartoon controversies European Muslims turned to their local judiciaries and the European Court of Human Rights in support of European values of freedom of belief, multiculturalism and even of secularity. In the same spirit, French rioters did not have clearly defined political proposals because they were not contesting the French model of integration, but rather sought its effective application.

The religious factor in the processes of political radicalisation

Three distinct groups of activist Muslims can be distinguished according to their views on the relationship between religion and politics: Muslims who develop a 'religious citizenship', those who reject all non-Muslim political systems and an ultra-radical minority that places jihadist Islam at the core of their political commitment.

For the first group, Islam is their starting point for a sense of citizenship and commitment to European society. Demonstrations against the veil law, for example, were for them a political negotiation emphasising the need for citizens' participation to build a common society where Muslims act as a positive minority. They vote, engage in traditional secular political parties and participate in European political events such as the referendum on the European Constitution, organised events related to globalisation, etc. European Muslim leaders such as Tariq Ramadan contributed to the development of the concept of religious citizenship.

We find the second group among Salafi and Tabligh disciples. Their conception of politics does not lead to violence, but rather a withdrawal from all political processes based on non-Muslim concepts. Their religiosity is sectarian in nature, meaning that they reject all interaction with non-Muslim institutions. Islam is for them universalistic and timeless. The only priority is to imitate the normative ways of the life of the Prophet. Thus, commitment to a secular state is not relevant. They do not conceptualise themselves within the framework of a non-Muslim political system. Withdrawal is considered to be preferable to participation. This group was not concerned by the demonstrations against the veil law or the publication of cartoon caricatures of the Prophet.

The last group is the jihadist one. Although they do not share any particular social status, they do share the experience of social decline and displacement. Their reason for choosing violence stems less from religious conviction than from painful personal experiences of social and political injustice as a Muslim. They trust that Islam will defend Muslims from European/Western threats against them. They place *jihad* at the core of their religious beliefs and rely on violence as the only way to defend Muslims from discriminatory policies enforced by EU member states. They may believe that the London and Madrid bombings were justified because, in their view, they forced Spain and the UK to consider the withdrawal of troops from Iraq more seriously.

Integration rather than confrontation

The role of Islam in Europe's multiple crises is as complex as the various Muslim communities living in Europe. To better address such crises we need to understand the common interests shared by European institutions, EU member states and Muslim countries. These interests rarely converge, leaving European Muslims feeling trapped in a tug-of-war while Europe struggles to discern its changing identity. Muslim groups can be categorised according to their mode of political protest during European crises involving Islam, but they are extremely diverse. The single feature they have in common is their disappointment at European policies affecting their everyday lives in Europe.

More than ever, Europe has a role to play in rethinking what can be proposed to its Muslim citizens in terms of political representation and participation. To minimise the likelihood of violence, Europe needs to create and make visible an alternative and common public space that provides its Muslims with a voice, especially concerning questions related to terrorism, religious radicalisation, Islamophobia, etc.

The strength of the foundations of a new Europe will depend upon the extent to which Muslims are allowed to participate in the construction of a new European identity.

The Multiple Crisis in Dutch Parallel Societies

Rob de Wijk*

In the Netherlands the debate on the causes of radicalisation, terrorism and social unrest in the suburbs of major cities has been narrowed down to failed integration and the social and economic deprivation of ethnic groups. The emergence of a subclass of underprivileged ethnic minorities is thought to be the root cause of both the riots in Amsterdam and the emergence of terrorist networks such as the Hofstad Group, members of which stood on trial in early 2006. The reality, however, is more complex.

In some of the major cities, parallel societies have emerged. However, the concept of a 'parallel society' is hard to define. Major cities saw the emergence of underprivileged groups of dissatisfied and disappointed ethnic minorities living in the poorest districts. But within these districts, a new middle class of ethnic entrepreneurs running a shadow economy has also emerged. The fact that these districts (partly) escape from government control makes them parallel societies.

The emergence of parallel societies has three consequences. First, social and economic deprivation can lead to unrest, which is not necessarily related to cultural or religious grievances. Second, within parallel societies the new, better educated middle class become increasingly indignant at the lack of upward social mobility. Members of this group are prone to radicalisation. Third, due to their closed nature, parallel societies provide the perfect cover for criminal activities and consequently cover the infrastructure for terrorist networks. As a result social unrest, criminal activities, radicalisation and ultimately the development of terrorist networks could go hand in hand. Moroccans are the cause of many problems in both cases. Some youngsters terrorise entire neighbourhoods, others turn into terrorists.

This paper tries to unravel the complex problem of the development of parallel societies in the Netherlands.

Parallel societies in the Netherlands

Contrary to public perception, according to two reports integration has not really been a failure.[1] Nevertheless, there are some disturbing trends. First, non-western ethnic groups are structurally underprivileged. Second, inter-ethnic contact is decreasing. Third, ethnic and indigenous groups increasingly have negative feelings towards each other. The problems are concentrated in a limited number of districts in the four biggest cities. In Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht and The Hague, one out of three residents is now of non-western origin. In the top ten 'ethnic neighbourhoods', an average of 74% are of non-western origin.

In major cities a high degree of segregation of different population groups can be observed. Contact with the indigenous population is at its lowest in the neighbourhoods with large numbers of ethnic minorities. One study illustrated that if more than half of residents are from non-western ethnic minorities, contact and interaction between the indigenous and ethnic populations generally declines.[2] People of Turkish and Moroccan origin have the strongest orientation towards their own ethnic group. Approximately two out of three living in the Netherlands focus on their own group. The study

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[1] *Blok Commission*, parliamentary commission on integration (Tweede Kamer 2003 – 2004, 28689. nr 17 and *RMO advise* nr. 37, The Hague, October 2005 ('Niet langer met de ruggen tegen elkaar').

[2] Gijsberts, M. and J. Dagevos, *Uit elkaars buurt* (Love they neighbour). Sociaal en Cultureel Plan Buro (SCB) 10 October 2005.

concluded that "in the last ten years the frequency of social contact with the native population by Turks and Moroccans has declined (…) The social distance from the native population is thus not reducing. Of great significance in this interaction is that contacts between second-generation Turkish and Moroccan immigrants and the indigenous population have been steadily declining in recent years, a development that is linked to the steady rise in the numbers of ethnic minorities in the large cities (…) A further factor is the continuing high influx of Turkish and Moroccan 'marriage migrants' who (…) remain largely ensconced in their own community". As a consequence, many also have a poor command of the Dutch language.

Another problem is that second generation non-western minorities have a more negative attitude towards indigenous groups. More highly educated non-western minorities, however, have extremely negative feelings towards indigenous groups. This is explained by the poorly functioning labour market and a lack of upward social mobility.[3]

Until recently, most Dutch politicians turned a blind eye to these developments. By providing generous unemployment benefits, many assumed that the social security system would simply prevent the emergence of truly deprived areas and parallel societies. In contrast to the United States, 'ghettos' could simply not exist. They pointed at the large number of heavily subsidised welfare projects, whilst the police could still patrol the streets. They also argued that no easy conclusions could be drawn because no districts were dominated by a single ethnic minority.

Nevertheless, the situation in the 'Schilderswijk' and the 'Laakkwartier' (The Hague), 'het Oude Noorden' (Rotterdam), Amsterdam-West, and the 'Kanaleneiland' (Utrecht) is alarming. These districts have developed into parallel societies with limited government control, a mixture of underprivileged ethnic groups and a new middle class of entrepreneurs. As municipalities put a lot of money into housing projects aimed at improving their quality of life, some of these neighbourhoods do not even look poor.

Moroccans

The main problem is second-generation Moroccans. Their ancestors were born in the rural area of the Rif mountains. This is an extremely poor and remote area in the northern part of Morocco, which successfully broke away from the influence of central government. As a result, education, infrastructure and food production lagged behind the rest of the country. The Rif area became increasingly poor and underdeveloped. After unsuccessful attempts to find jobs in Algeria, many Berbers came to The Netherlands in the 1970s. Due to recession many became employed during the 1980s and 1990s. Supported by the government, they continued to stay in The Netherlands and were joined by family members from Morocco. The first generation is still largely unemployed, poorly educated and not integrated. Most first-generation Moroccans do not speak Dutch despite the fact that they have lived in the country for over thirty years. Consequently they are unable to assist their children in building a better future. Second-generation Dutch citizens born in Morocco also struggle with the language and lack proper education. Moroccans born in The Netherlands have grown up without proper support from their poorly integrated parents and were caught between the proud but repressive culture of the Berbers and the indifferent liberal culture of The Netherlands. As a direct result, a generation has been set adrift. Almost 40% of young second-generation Moroccan males are unemployed, against 23% of first-generation males. Of course there are many other poorly integrated minorities, but lacking the specific background of the Berbers, these groups cause less problems for public order.

Problems with second-generation Moroccans are well illustrated by the case of the relatively wealthy Slotervaart district in Amsterdam. Slotervaart has some 45,000 inhabitants, with some 50% of autochthonous origin. Unemployment is at only nine percent. To improve quality of life, housing projects are in full swing. The municipality invests heavily in language courses as well as other

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[3] SCP De sociale staat van Nederland 2005, The Hague 2005, pp. 82-85.

education projects, such as computer courses. Nevertheless, the tension is clearly visible. Petty crime, intimidation, harassment and no respect for the authorities, especially for the police, cause severe problems. On 23 April 1998 the first major clash between Moroccans and the police occurred. In January 2006 small-scale riots again took place, with citizens harassed, cars destroyed and windows smashed. The riots broke out after a Moroccan, fearing a police chase, had a fatal car accident trying to escape. The trigger for the riots was comparable to the situation in Clichy-sous-Bois, the working-class Parisian suburb where an outbreak of French violence began on 27 October 2006. According to a report by the DCRG (Direction Centrale des Renseignements Généraux), the intelligence service of the French police, the riots were not caused by criminal gangs or Islam extremism, but by groups of angry, 'economically excluded' youngsters feeling neglected because of their social and ethnic background. In Amsterdam, as district chairman Henk Goettsch has argued, the problem centres around a small group of 100 to 150 Moroccans who are "completely and utterly mad" and who are "from top to toe unreligious and completely lost for Islam".[4] Goettsch maintains that the only remaining option is to remove them from the street and put them in re-education camps for a long period of time. Politicians, however, fear that this measure conflicts with civil rights. This solution was put forward during the early 1990s by former Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers, and now large parts of the population believe there is no other option but to send these groups to re-education camps.

Schilderswijk: The poorest of them all

A relatively prosperous district, Slotervaart's 'only' problem is Moroccans terrorising the neighbourhood. In other districts the situation is far worse. The Schilderswijk in The Hague is The Netherlands's poorest district. It is the archetype of a parallel society: 89% is of non-western origin with Turks, Moroccans and Surinamers as the dominant minorities. The Schilderswijk is the most densely populated area in the country (23,500 inhabitants per square kilometre, compared to 4,000 inhabitants per square kilometre in the major cities). Finally, more than half of the population is below 25, and some 80% are unemployed.[5]

Over the last 15 years, the Schilderswijk and to a lesser extent the adjacent Laakkwartier have developed into parallel societies, including a grey economy based on crime, semi-legal and illegal jobs and activities such as underground banking, caused in part by banks and insurance companies denying mortgages to residents in some postal code areas. Ethnic lawyers, housing agents, shops, bars, restaurants and phone houses focus exclusively on the neighbourhood. There is some evidence that the Sharia has been introduced in some of these neighbourhoods. Citizens focussing on the outside world watch *Al-Jazeera* and other Arabic stations, such as *Al Manar* (Libya), *Sahar TV1* and *Al Alam* (Iran), Art *Iqraa* (Saudi Arabia), some of which were banned by the minister of justice in January 2006. The main problem is crime, burglaries, car thefts and youth gangs committing violence against fellow citizens, especially against Jews and gay people. Some criminal activities, such as the production of false passports, money laundering, robberies and the drugs trade, are related to terrorism.

Having completely renovated many of the houses, the municipality created a district that is visually appealing. Ignoring the huge differences between ethnic groups in the city and the emergence of a parallel society, authorities argued that all citizens of The Hague are '*Hagenaren*'.

In sum, the Schilderswijk has turned into a district separated from the city of The Hague with a different economic and social structure and people with distinct values. This development provided the perfect infrastructure for the supporters of terrorist networks such as the Hofstad Group, with some of its members living in the district and in adjacent neighbourhoods.

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[4] 'Zo maf als een deur zijn ze van top tot teen los van god', *NRC-Handelsblad*, 22 January 2006.

[5] Figures from the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, The Hague, 15 August 2005.

Action plans

Recently the authorities have embarked on radical action plans to deal with the emergence of parallel societies. Undoubtedly the murder of Theo van Gogh and the riots in the French suburbs have contributed to new initiatives. Rotterdam has been a forerunner in these developments. In Rotterdam the political heirs of Pim Fortuyn (the politician who was murdered in 2002, having instigated radical political change), have experimented with various different measures. For example, a 120% minimum wage requirement was set for those citizens considering a house rent of over 250 euros. Radical measures were codified in the 'Rotterdam Law'. By 1 January 2006, every major city can impose tough income requirements for accommodation seekers; can create favourable conditions for entrepreneurs in specific streets or neighbourhoods and can prevent jobless people moving from one city to another.

Another interesting development is the so called 'Rotterdam Code' – a code of conduct for all citizens of Rotterdam. Aimed at improving integration, the code asks citizens of Rotterdam to accept rules, including the use of Dutch as a common language, and to actively reject discrimination, radicalisation and extremism. Together with the publication of the code in January 2006, the town council started to organise debates in the city's districts between the 160 ethnic minorities and the native Dutch. The Rotterdam Code is part of a broader attempt to prevent the emergence of parallel societies and to reduce the danger of radicalisation and extremism. Rotterdam is also planning experiments to change the ethnic and social composition of neighbourhoods: housing projects that include more expensive houses for higher income groups; income quotas and relocation of the poorest people within the city and a ban on the influx of the more underprivileged into certain neighbourhoods.

Another project called *Wij Amsterdammers* ('We, the citizens of Amsterdam'), aimed specifically at reducing the risk of radicalisation, was set up after the assassination of Theo van Gogh in November 2004. This project focuses primarily on combating terrorism by complementing the work of the police with specific integration projects aimed at preventing radicalisation by mobilising positive forces in society. So far the results of this seemingly soft approach are quite encouraging. In practice the approach is not that soft, because overt and covert counter terrorism measures are actually quite tough. On the one hand, authorities try to win the 'hearts and minds' of the people. On the other hand, activities related to terrorism are continuously disturbed. It is probably this combination of hard and soft measures that makes the strategy of Job Cohen, the mayor of Amsterdam, quite successful. A major problem, however, is the lack of instruments for assessing the level of radicalisation and the processes taking place within these parallel societies.

All action plans focus on winning the hearts and the minds of the people. The aim is to prevent social unrest, riots and radicalisation by improving social and economic conditions and facilitating communication between ethnic groups. Action plans most probably ease tensions, but it is unlikely that these measures can prevent radicalisation and terrorism as well.

Fighting terrorists

As has been argued before, within parallel societies the poor usually do not turn into fundamentalist extremists. Rather, the problem seems to lie with the more highly educated and the emerging middle class. Reinforced by relative success in the black and grey economies, many have turned their backs on Dutch society.[6] Some have become extremists. Radicalisation requires some degree of abstract thinking, which only the better educated are capable of. They transform religious, cultural, and historical grievances into action. This is exactly what happened with the Hofstad Group.

The case of Mohammed Bouyeri serves as an example. During the 1990s he was active as a community worker in Amsterdam and a capable student who graduated from high school with good

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[6] P.C. van Duyve, 'Economisch succes zorgt niet automatisch voor integratie', *NRC-Handelsblad*, 24 November 2005.

marks. Without providing an alternative, the authorities closed down the local youth centre in 1998. Until then Bouyeri was quite successful in keeping young Moroccans off the street, but after losing the centre they had no other choice but to gather in the streets of their neighbourhood. This contributed to the riots of 1998 mentioned earlier. Nevertheless, Bouyeri fruitlessly attempted to establish a new youth centre, and as time progressed became radicalised and turned violent. He fought with the police and was sent to prison for twelve weeks. After being released, nine days after 9/11, he told his councillor about his new hero, Bin Laden. It is unclear to what extent his battle for a youth centre contributed to his radicalisation. His friends later observed that his detention and the death of his mother in December 2001 were the real turning points. It is, however, clear that his change of conviction cannot be solely attributed to an underlying hatred of the West in general and The Netherlands in particular.

In a recent interview on Dutch television, the interior minister estimated that some 15 to 20 radicalised groups of some 10 to 15 members each were active in the country. Mohammed Bouyeri, who assassinated Theo van Gogh, was among the members of this Hofstad Group (Hofstad being another name for The Hague, where most bombings would take place). Other members of the sixteen that stood trial in 2005 and 2006 included Samir Azzuz, who was accused of planning attacks on Parliament, the offices of the Intelligence Services, the nuclear power plant of Borsele, Schiphol Airport and the Ministry of Defence in The Hague. The group's characteristics are well known:

- Physically they lived in the parallel societies of The Hague, Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Utrecht.

- Spiritually, they lived in a virtual, anti-western world created on the internet and in private houses during sessions with self-appointed *imam*s. They not only discussed Islam, but watched extremely violent jihadist videos and 'snuff movies' as well.

- Most member knew each other for a long time. Kinship and friendship were important.

- Some suspects, including Mohammed Bouyeri, Jason Walters and Ismail Akhnikh already had a reputation of violence.

- Most members were second-generation Moroccans who radicalised as teenagers. Some members, including Jason and Jermaine Walters and Martine van den Oever, were converts.

- Most were well educated. Some terminated their studies after being radicalised. The Koran rather than school became the source of all knowledge.

As has been argued before, there is little evidence that parallel societies and social and economic deprivation contribute to radicalisation. The possible explanation lies in the role of the virtual *umma* for radicalised individuals – a Muslim world created behind closed doors and on the internet. In the absence of a formal Islamic doctrine, the 'citizens' of this virtual *umma* create their own truths, norms and values based on their own explanation of history and Koran. If needed, *fatwas* will be obtained from unknown internet *imams*.

But terrorist networks can only develop with at least some form of (passive) support of a majority of the citizens. Therefore, parallel societies provide cover and infrastructure for networks of radicals and extremists, but the virtual *umma* reveal their true motivation. Their motivation usually comes not from social and economic grievances but from hate against the West. Conceptually, the emergence of home grown terrorism has a resemblance to communist cells in Europe during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the insurgencies in former colonies. Consequently, counter-insurgency doctrine still provides some guidance for conceptual thinking. As a matter of fact, some elements of counter-insurgency doctrine could be used to fight today's home grown terrorists. To fight home grown terrorists in parallel societies, traditional counter-insurgency doctrine could be applied as follows:

- Protect the local, neutral and receptive part of the population against the 'insurgents'. This requires improving the security of the neighbourhood by reducing criminal activities, especially those criminal activities in support of terrorism.

- The reduction of crime is also necessary to deprive the 'insurgents of their support system'. The objective is to physically and psychologically isolate home grown terrorists.

- Eliminate the insurgent's intelligence network by closing down websites, television channels and the denial of internet access.

- 'Hearts-and-mind' activities to separate 'insurgents from their base'. This requires dialogue between ethnic groups and projects aimed at improving the social and economic conditions of the population. Moderate ethnic groups must be convinced that the indigenous population is on their side.

- Well co-ordinated and continuous flow of intelligence based on human intelligence (HUMINT). This is an important by-product of the hearts-and-minds campaign. Close cooperation between the police and community workers is of crucial importance to know what is going on in parallel societies.

- Direct, small-scale, possibly covert action against the 'insurgents' to disturb their activities and arrest them if necessary. The use of force against home grown terrorists could jeopardise the hearts-and-minds campaign and should therefore be a measure of last resort.

To many, this approach is rather controversial. For example, community workers will have difficulties using the hearts and minds campaign to improve the intelligence position of the authorities. Close cooperation with the police could lead to mistrust among the population and losing hearts and minds. However, considering the nature of home grown terrorism, there is no other alternative but to complement infiltration of terrorist networks with HUMINT by community workers. Needless to say, HUMINT is also useful in preventing riots and criminal activities.

Why do they radicalise?

If social and economic deprivation is not the root cause of radicalisation, the key question is why do Muslims radicalise. Bouyeri's radicalisation mentioned above seems to fit a broader pattern. After 9/11, many western European countries saw the emergence of networks of extremists, including the Hofstad Group. They were part of the emergence of an international salafist *jihad* as a force to be reckoned with in Europe.

There are two sets of background contributing factors – origins and catalysts. Both are only marginally related to the development of parallel societies and underprivileged groups. The violent struggle against 'corrupt, decadent and pro-western' governments in the Arabic world which started in Egypt in the 1960s is considered as one of the root causes of the violent salafist *jihad*. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 provided the international dimension. This was formalised by the shift from the near to the far enemy during the 1990s, especially with Osama bin Laden's Declaration of War in 1996 and his *fatwas* of 1998.

Another root cause is Islamic culture. Fundamentalism is both a product of this development and Muslims' attempt to deal with this development by rejecting western culture and influence, committing to Islam as the guide to life in the modern world. Muslim extremism is closely linked to this. Many Muslims consider fundamentalism as the solution to political and socio-economic problems that had become manifest in the 1970s. Due to increasing oil revenues, rapid but uneven modernisation, urbanisation and economic liberalisation took place, which led to social tensions in large parts of the Muslim world, especially the Middle East. Youngsters in the fast growing cities felt betrayed by their rulers, who failed to use the oil revenues to create a civil society based on Islamic values, but used the spoils for their own purposes instead. They also accused their leaders of becoming the puppets of western companies and governments. In *Jihad vs. McWorld,* Benjamin Barber argues that a collision is occurring between the forces of Islamic disintegral tribalism and reactionary fundamentalism ('*jihad*') and the forces of integrative modernism and aggressive economic and cultural globalism ('McWorld'). Barber sees this as a "dialectic expression of tensions built into a single global civilization as it emerges against the backdrop of traditional ethnic and religious

divisions, many of which are actually created by McWorld and its infotainment industries and technological innovations".[7]

Bin Laden's goal, to unite all Muslims and to establish a government which follows the rule of the Caliphs – the ancient religious rulers – is widely shared by extremists, including the Hofstad Group. Agreeing with Bin Laden that the Caliphate can only be established by force, the overthrow of all Muslim governments is deemed necessary. In this view, governments are corrupt and influenced by the 'Judeo-Crusader Alliance', an alliance of Jews and Christians, embodied by Israel and the United States and supported by liberal democracies in general. This unholy alliance has occupied the land of Islam's holy places (Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem) and is trying to crush Islam. To end this influence, the destruction of Israel and the United States is a prerequisite for reform of Muslim societies. In January 2006, Mohammed Bouyeri made his grievances abundantly clear during a three hour long testimony in court, mentioning the West's hatred against Islam as his main grievance.

In sum, the origins of radicalisation have little to do with parallel societies and the existence of underprivileged class. The same holds true for most of the catalyst factors. Our as yet unpublished piece of research on some 35 plots and successful acts of terrorism revealed a number of catalyst factors:

0. The ongoing struggle in the Middle East.

0. The war against terrorism and how it is fought in Afghanistan and Iraq. Especially the indiscriminate counter-insurgency tactics used by the Americans – Abu Graibh and Guantanamo Bay have become symbols of western attempts to oppress Muslims.

0. The ideology of the West, namely President Bush's solutions for peace in the wider Middle East.

0. The successful attack of 9/11. It inspired young Muslims to turn into extremists and to join terrorist networks. The Hofstad Group is an example of this development. After 9/11, Europe witnessed an explosion in the number of attempted terrorist attacks, usually by home grown terrorist groups. Generally speaking, all successful attacks around the world are strong motivators.

0. Calls by radical leaders such as Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri.

The terrorist's inspiration is usually of foreign origin. Similar conclusions were drawn by a Norwegian study. It concluded that home grown terrorists were motivated by 'global *jihad*' rather than domestic grievances.[8]

Mohammed Bouyeri declared war on The Netherlands. As there is no higher authority but Allah and Koran he rejected politicians and other authorities as 'non-believers' and saw democracy and the rule of law as antithetic to God's word and Sharia. His views were widely supported by other member of the Hofstad Group. As these grievances are common for the supporters of the international salafist *jihad*, they cannot be considered domestic catalysts. In the Netherlands few domestic catalysts could be identified:

0. Overreaction by local politicians. In 2002 the Netherlands Security and Intelligence Service AIVD found evidence that opinion leaders contributed to radicalisation of Muslims. Indeed, the movie 'Submission', by MP Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Theo van Gogh, undoubtedly contributed to the death of the latter. The recent cartoon affair is certainly also contributing to further radicalisation.

0. The lack of social mobility merely confirms the West's attitude towards Muslims, but does not seem to be a root cause of radicalisation. The same holds true for social and economic deprivation.

In sum, domestic grievances confirm the West's negative attitude towards Islam. Home grown terrorists such as the Hofstad Group are part of the international salafi *jihad*. The movement is rooted

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[7] Barber, Jihad vs McWorld, p. xvi.

[8] P. Nesser, *Jihad in Europe: A survey of the motivations for Sunni Islamist terrorism in post-millennium Europe*, FFI/Rapport-2004/01146, p. 69.

in the Arabic world, gained momentum after 9/11 and complemented Al Qaeda and its franchises with home grown radicals setting up local terrorist networks. Some of these loose networks have international connections as was the case with the Hofstad Group. Some of its members knew Abdelhamid Akoudad or Nauofel, who was arrested in Spain for his involvement in the 2003 Casablanca bombings. The Hofstad Group and most of the Madrid bombers share the same Moroccan background.

Conclusion

The emergence of parallel societies contributes to fractured societies. When entire districts no longer take part in the democratic process, they pose a threat to the constitutional state. Parallel societies are not only the source of criminal activities, illegal economic practices, intimidation and violence, but also provide the perfect cover and infrastructure for networks of extremists. In The Netherlands, major cities have embarked on a strategy of dealing with parallel societies. Most initiatives are aimed at winning the hearts and minds of ethnic minorities by improving social and economic conditions and by improving interethnic communication. This could have two effects. First, improving the standard of living could increase stability and reduce the danger of riots. Second, winning the hearts and minds is a prerequisite for counter terrorist operations. Finally, local authorities should study counter insurgency doctrine and the lessons learned from military operations to find solutions for dealing with home grown terrorist networks.

Islam in Russia in 2020

Alexey Malashenko*

The influence of the 'Islamic factor' on the socio-political process in Russia has long become routine. People are accustomed to it and it arouses concern mostly in connection with sporadic excesses of terror that occur in the context of religious extremism. At the same time, demonstrations under Islamic slogans and efforts of Muslim politicians and clergy to provide religious grounds or religious interpretation for contradictions and conflicts promote slow but stable rising influence of Islam on society and politics. (The classical example is the Chechen war, which was proclaimed as a *jihad* by separatists and explained by some Russian politicians as a "clash of civilizations".)

According to the official census of 2002, there are 14.5 million Muslims in Russia. In reality, there are about 19 to 20 million (taking migrants into account), which is equivalent to 12% of the population.[1]

A consolidated Muslim community with a common religious centre has not formed in Russia. Islamic society of the country consists of two large groups. The first lives in the Volga-Ural region, Western Siberia and Moscow, where Tatars and Bashkirs live; and the second is the nations of the North Caucasus. The largest Islamic ethnicity in Russia is the Tatars (7 million people), followed by the Bashkirs (about 1.5 million people), and, amongst Caucasians, the Chechens (1 million people).

In recent years, intensive migration of North Caucasian Muslims to the Central part of Russia has been observed. This phenomenon has aggravated inter-ethnic relations as well as those between different Muslim ethnic groups.

The short history of Islam in Russia (after the disintegration of the Soviet Union) may be divided into several stages. The first stage was characterised by the beginning of religious revival, a rapid rise in the number of mosques, the forming of an Islamic educational system and a major emphasis on religion in people's consciousness. The second stage, which took place in the middle of the 1990s, was characterised by the politicisation of Islam. Nation-wide religious-political groups, such as the Union of Muslims of Russia, the 'Nur' movement, and the 'Refakh' party, as well as regional religious-political organisations appeared. At this time amongst Russian Muslims, primarily in the North Caucasus, the Islamist movement was formed which was greatly, although not entirely, provoked by the Chechen war. Islamists began to operate in Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria and Ingushetia. Centres of Islamism appeared in Tatarstan as well. The third stage occurred from 2000 to 2002, when the total level of Islamic politicisation fell, and Islamists of the North Caucasus suffered losses during the second Chechen campaign.

However, from approximately the beginning of 2003, the activity of Islamic radicals was back on the up. The number of Jamaats in the North Caucasus grew and Islamists in the Volga region became more active despite the fact that in some specialists' opinion they practically disappeared at the end of 1990s. Thus, it is possible to assume that a fourth stage began during this period.

The radical ideology of some Muslims in Russia proved more persistent than it was assumed to be. In our opinion, various independent factors contributed to this. First of all, the growth of Islamic observance contributes to the awakening of an interest among them in other areas besides just traditional Islam. The second factor is the formation among the young generation of Muslim clergy of various concepts coming from the Arabic East. Graduates of the Universities in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt and Turkey offer their compatriots some different, more radical (including Hanabilah) versions of Islam, as well as 'Islam without maskhabs' or, in other words, Salafism. Thirdly, as is typical

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[1] According to different data, 1.5–2 million Azerbaijanis, 0.8–1 million Uzbeks and over 1 million Kazakhs, Kirghizis and Tadjiks permanently, and predominantly illegally, live in Russia.

primarily in the North Caucasus, domestic Jamaats continue to propagandise the organisation of society on the basis of Shariat and advocate the idea that social justice may be ensured only through Islam. Fourthly, in connection with the previous thesis, Islam appears to be the natural form of protest against the injustice of local and central power and its corruption. Fifthly, aid continues to arrive from outside (though not on the previous scale). Finally, the radicals' activities contribute to the confrontational atmosphere between Islam and the West.

Although as noted above, Russia's Muslims are not homogeneous, it is the radicals that most often manage to overcome 'Tatar-Caucasian' mutual alienation. The non-traditional interpretation of Islam currently being spread all around Russia transcends ethno-cultural barriers and consolidates Muslims on the basis of radical ideology. At the same time, contacts between Russia's radicals and like-minded people from Central Asia are gradually growing. This is related to the periodical appearance of emissaries of Hizb at-Tahrir al-lslami in the Volga region and the South Urals.

The integration process based on radical religious ideology is certainly dangerous because it supports extremist tendencies and as a result produces the basic conditions for destabilisation. However, it should not be forgotten that the sympathies of common Muslims frequently turn out to be on the side of Islamists, for Muslims understand Islam as connected to hopes for an improvement in their material position and securing social justice. Islamists, not being angels themselves, become allies of the disadvantaged part of society and gain popularity by virtue of their confrontation with authorities. In the North Caucasus there is a view that local Islamists are the single power that authorities seriously fear.

Islamism has the greatest prospects in the North Caucasus. The waning of war in Chechnya (which in itself does not mean the end of the conflict) is occurring simultaneously with the revival of Islamist activity in the whole region. Authorities who fought 'Wahhabists' almost entirely by military means since 1999 have failed to prevent its expansion. As a result, Islamists have become the constant and de facto legitimate political power. It is indicative that the new separatists' leader Abdul-Khalim Sajdullaev, who succeeded Aslan Maskhadov (killed in 2005), emphasises the creation of a 'Caucasian front' of *jihad*. There is no common front, but the coordination between Islamist groups in separate republics is improving.

The self-confidence of the Islamists is also evolving. An increasing number of them believe that they are not fighting against local administration and Moscow, but are part of a world *jihad*. Thus, they enhance their status not only in their own opinion, but also in that of the local and federal authorities opposing them. Authorities always emphasise that they are fighting not just bandits but, rather, the 'vanguard' of international terrorism.

It should be acknowledged that during the last two years, Russian special services achieved some success in annihilating several leaders of Jamaats in Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria as well as Chechen field commanders. In 2005, newspapers almost every week published stories about the successful operations of federal force units ('*siloviki*') against Islamists.

At the same time, there is a feeling that the authorities did not manage to achieve the most important goal – to stop the influx of young 18-20 year olds into Islamism. Recently, a 'rejuvenation' of Islamism has occurred. This may be observed, for example, in the Muslim Volga region where groups of followers organise themselves around young and radical *imam*s.

Throughout the entire culturally Islamic area of Russia, Intra-Muslim confrontation, between traditionalists and those who try to train people to 'Arabic Islam', continues and is even increasing. This struggle is particularly intense because the influence of present clergy on their flocks, access to material and other secular blessings, and also their authority in front of secular power, which is afraid of losing control over Islam, are all at stake. (It should be noted that the emergence of the liberal trend towards 'Euro-Islam' did not receive support from clergy, is still unknown among believers and has been relegated to the narrow circle of secular intelligentsia).

To some extent, processes occurring with Russian Islam may be linked to a generation gap. *Imam*s aged 40-50 who obtained recognition during '*perestroika*' (after the fall of the Soviet Union) are opposed by ambitious twenty-year-old young men. They received an education in the Arabic language, know fairly well Fiqh and Shariat, and, most importantly, have acquired and are improving the preaching skills.

The intensity of the conflict greatly depends on tolerance of both sides, on the general situation in the country and also on the devotion of Russian Muslims to their historical and cultural traditions.

Followers of traditional Islam are particularly anxious about the state of the educational process, training programmes of many *madrasahs* and institutes and the abundance of books that popularise the views of traditional Islamic fundamentalists such as Said Kutba, Yusef Karadavi and others. Such a situation is characteristic not only for Russia but also for all Muslim states in post-Soviet space. There, attempts to found educational and informative programmes that may help to move the believers out of the influence of Islamists are being undertaken.

In the past decade, Russian Muslims have persistently striven for integration into the world of *umma*. In certain cases, this tendency may contradict Moscow's official policy. Thus, the Muslim clerical and political elite opposed Kremlin pro-Serbian policy and expressed solidarity with Muslims in Bosnia and in particular in Kosovo. Yet, the Kremlin position in the conflict around Iraq in 2002 was generally supported. Moreover, it is known that in Dagestan there was an initiative to help Iraqis by sending Caucasian volunteer units of (according to some data) up to 6,000 people. At that time, the head of the Central Clerical Board of Muslims of Russia Talgat Tatdzhutdin publicly declared '*Jihad* to America'. (This fact significantly irritated the Kremlin.) In 2006, Russian Muslims expressed their solidarity with people of their faith during the scandal with the cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad published in some European newspapers. In the capital of Dagestan, Makhachkala, a protest march was organised, and acting prime minister of Chechnya Ramzan Kadyrov expelled the Danish humanitarian mission from the country. (Moscow later disavowed knowledge of this decision.)

It is obvious that the central object of general *umma* unity is still the conflict in the Middle East. After the unconditional support that was given to Palestine by the Soviet Union, Russian Muslims were genuinely disappointed by the new policy of maintaining equal distance from the opposing sides. That is why president Putin's invitation to Hamas to send a delegation to Moscow, after it had just won at the parliamentary elections in 2006, was greeted by Russian Muslims with great satisfaction. (Incidentally, Hamas is not listed by Russia as a terrorist organisation.)

In 1998-1999 The Union of Muslims of Russia made the first (unsuccessful) attempt to bring Russia into the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC). In 2002-2003 this idea was developed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and approved by Vladimir Putin. And in spite of the fact that Russia still has not received the status (and it is unknown if it will) of an OIC observer, the fact that this question was even discussed gives Russian Muslims additional opportunity for self-identification as a full member of the *umma*.

Confessional self-identification may be in discord with one's civil identity. In other words, the sense of affiliation with Islam becomes more acute than the sense of belonging to the nation state. In the Russian poly-confessional state, this contradiction is catalysed by complicated interactions between major religions. The proclaimed constitutional equality of all religions is not always observed. The Russian Orthodox Church (the majority of population of the country practises Orthodox Christianity) confidently lays claim to the special, leading role in the life of society while underlining its exceptional importance to the building of a nation state. Ideologists of the Church are fully confident that it is Orthodox Christianity that must form the basis of the 'Russian national idea'. Attempts to develop it have been made throughout the past decade but the process has never been completed.

The head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Aleksii II, consistently ranks between 10th and 15th place in the list of top Russian politicians. The Church actively penetrates the army and primary schools, trying to influence educational programmes.

There have been cases when representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church unofficially impeded the building of new Mosques, the registration of Islamic communities and creation of Islamic centres.

All of these facts cannot but irritate the Muslim elite, the overwhelming majority of whom have a benevolent relationship with the Russian Orthodox Church. Considerable conflicts are concealed behind the façade of the official inter-confessional dialogue, and from time to time they leak out onto the pages of newspapers and magazines and into speeches of some representatives of the clergy. (For example, Andrey Kuraev, one of the leading ideologists of the Russian Orthodox Church, stated that it was necessary to establish total state control over Islamic education.)

The latest conflict to break out over national Russian symbols is, in our opinion, the most absurd. The crown and the orb topped with crosses have always been depicted on the State Emblem of Russia. In the fall of 2005, the All-Tatars public centre unexpectedly demanded the removal of this sign of Christianity from the State Emblem. A rather heated dispute began. Several well-known religious figures, such as Deputy Chairman of the Council of Muftis of Russia Nafigulla Ashirov, were involved. Picked up by mass media, this senseless debate contributed to the rise of mutual irritation between Muslims and Orthodox believers.

Russia did not avoid the notorious 'headscarf conflict'. The Union of Muslim Women of Tatarstan demanded that women be allowed to be photographed for passports with a headscarf on. Secular authorities, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then later judicial bodies, reacted quite tactfully and permitted Tatar ladies to be photographed for the official documents with their head covered. As a result, this appeal of the Union of Muslim Women did not receive any significant backing from society and the conflict dissipated.

Another, more noticeable, attempt to bring back some standards of an Islamic way of living came in the form of appeals to restore the right to polygamy. In Russia, such discussions have gone on since the mid-1990s. One of those backing this idea is Ruslan Aushev, the former president of Ingushetia. The idea was also discussed at length by some Tatar politicians. In 2005, Ramzan Kadyrov insisted on legalising polygamy, arguing that the number of women in the republic exceeds the number of men by ten percent and that polygamy would be the only way to rescue the Chechen nation from extinction. Some politicians and religious figures of Dagestan regard this idea favourably, and of course Islamists support it unconditionally. It should be noticed that while polygamy is already practised by prosperous people, it is unlikely to become widespread. (Occasionally it is not clear what is behind the aspiration to legalise polygamy – the willingness to affirm Islamic custom or to legitimise someone's family status.)

However, it should be accepted that the re-incorporation of Islamic models of behaviour into society really exists. One can judge it by how strictly the fasting and all sorts of food prohibitions are kept, in particular, those on alcohol.

In the first part of 1990s, some politicians and experts expressed the view that "Islam is in fashion". Of course, there is some truth in such an approach. However, re-Islamisation of Russian Muslims turned out to be much more profound than was imagined, and it appears that this process is still going on.

What can be expected in 15 years, in 2020? What will happen to the Russian Islamic community in 30 years?

The number of Muslims will increase and may amount to about 25 million people, taking into account the population growth particularly in the North Caucasus, as well as the current rate of migration. And if one takes into account that the total number of Russian citizens will decrease to 130 million, the 'percentage of Muslims' will be 17 to 19 (with or without migration.) Simultaneously, the internal conversion of Muslims will occur, and the majority of them will be from the Caucasus. The number of emigrants from the Caucasus settled in Russian cities will increase in absolute and relative terms.

Two contrary tendencies will become more marked in the future. On the one hand, there will be the dispersion of Muslims, and in particular Caucasians, in Russian society. On the other hand, they will aspire to protect their identity and ethnic character, especially during the first stage of their business.

Hence, the new generation of politicians who will represent the interests of various groups will be based on different ethno-confessional affiliations.

Quasi-religious movements may appear. (Something similar took place in the 1990s, but an authoritative all-Russian party with social-Islamic motivation was never founded.) Such movements will not be of an inherently separatist nature.

Russia and the rest of the world will not 'get rid of' radical Islam, which will continue to exist in different forms, such as Wahhabism, Islamism and Fundamentalism. It will remain at its most pronounced in the North Caucasus. However, centres of religious radicalism will remain in the Volga region as well because of the preaching activities of a new generation of the clergy, who received education in Arab countries.

The next 15 years of terrorism under religious slogans will continue to be a disaster in Russia and beyond.

However, in spite of these circumstances, the authorities (and federal authorities as well) will have to begin a systematic dialogue with moderate Islamists.

Ethno-confessional relations will remain somewhat strained, with direct clashes. Such a situation may be observed already now. And if the administration of all levels, leaders of ethnic communities, and authoritative priests play the waiting game, such conflicts will become more frequent and violent (right up to 'mini-wars').

Islamophobia will rise and will become a part of political and domestic consciousness and in the behaviour of a significant proportion of Russian citizens. Such a rise will be furthered not only by ethno-confessional problems, but also by mutual prejudice between the West and Muslim world.

Thus, Russia will not become the Muslim state which is predicted by some of our contemporaries – political scientists and writers. But the 'Islamic factor' will become more visible in social life and in the orientation of various political groups.

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The aim of the initiative is to think ahead about the strategic security agenda for Europe, treating both its European and transatlantic implications. The topics to be addressed are selected from an open list that includes crisis management, defence capabilities, security concepts, defence industries and institutional developments (including enlargement) of the EU and NATO.

The Forum has about 100 members, who are invited to all meetings and receive current information on the activities of the Forum. This group meets every other month in a closed session to discuss a pre-arranged topic under Chatham House rules. The Forum meetings are presided over by François Heisbourg, Chairman of the Foundation for Strategic Research, Paris. As a general rule, three short issue papers are commissioned from independent experts for each session presenting EU, US and Russian viewpoints on the topic.

The Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) is an independent policy research institute founded in Brussels in 1983, with the aim of producing sound policy research leading to constructive solutions to the challenges facing Europe.

The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), founded in London in 1958, is the leading international and independent organisation for the study of military strategy, arms control, regional security and conflict resolution.

The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) promotes good governance and reform of the security sector. The Centre conducts research on good practices, encourages the development of appropriate norms at the national and international levels, makes policy recommendations and provides in-country advice and assistance programmes.