

Islam, Monoculture, and the Obama Caliphate

by G. Murphy Donovan (September 2014)

“The quickest way to end a war is to lose it”. – George Orwell



The end of innocence

Introduction

Five years ago “Islam and Monoculture” was [published](#) in *American Thinker*. The author, a former Intelligence officer, had become convinced that the American Intelligence Community was spinning the Islamist threat. Making excuses for Islam seemed to have become an academic, think tank, and US government norm after the Muslim/Arab attack against New York City in 2001

In the Obama years, the twin vectors of rhetorical appeasement (John Brennan) and “humanitarian” intervention (Samantha Power) merged to create a kind of democratic imperialism, a foreign policy paradigm where regime change is the agency and democracy is the expected, yet improbable, outcome. The Obama national security team does accept any evidence, including beheadings, which might suggest that democracy and Islam are culturally irreconcilable.

Alas, the aim of Islamists is religious monoculture, not secular democratic pluralism. In the past decade, passive rhetoric and imprudent interventions have enabled theocracy, undermined sovereignty, and diminished democracy worldwide.

The global village, especially the Muslim street, is now littered with the nation/state victims of wishful thinking. Iran, Libya, Egypt, the Sudan, Yemen, Palestine, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, and Pakistan are among the casualties. Intervention in the name of “stability” has become a serial farce.

A fresh crop of neo-fascist thugs is now abroad, varieties that make *Fatah*, *Hezb'allah*, *Hamas*, or *al Qaeda* seem enlightened. The new face of Islam is savage: slavery, beheading, crucifixion, and genocide. Demands are binary: “accept Islam or die.” The mad dogs of Muslim

hell are off the choke chain.

The standard bearer of Islam's latest lurch backwards is the newly minted Islamic State of Iran and Syria (ISIS). Muslim terrorists have upped the ante and called America's bluff again. Unlike the imaginary red lines drawn in the Oval Office, ISIS has now drawn a bright red line with American blood.

The cradle of civilization has become a charnel house, a manufactured tragedy wrought by the intersection of pandering, strategic naiveté, and blowback. Administration and media sycophants were inclined to ignore beheadings in Mosul when the victims were natives. Now that the Islamic knife cuts closer to home, decapitation is finally covered above the fold.

Such news might sound bad, but apparently not bad enough to interrupt the presidential partying on Martha's Vineyard this summer.

Now that children and American journalists are being beheaded by ISIS, someone needs to ask the president of the United States if the conflict in Iraq is still a "war of choice." If the war in Iraq/Syria is now "necessary," the outlook is grim; bleak because leadership in the White House is so clearly insufficient for the challenges that lie ahead.

When Mister Obama spoke of James Foley's recent confession and execution, the president forgot to mention that the executioner was an [Englishman](#). Yes, the man who severed Foley's head was probably a Brit, one of many *jihadi* that America and the EU have allowed, if not sponsored, in the Levant under "regime change" policies. How does America and Europe lay with dogs and not get fleas?

Appeasing the so-called "moderate" Muslim majority in Doha, Riyadh, or Islamabad at the expense of enabling religious war, the global *jihad*, was always a recipe for failure. Now the coercive sword of Islam even threatens western Press apologists, the kind of Islamic blowback that only a moron or a masochist might ignore.

Poetic, if not historical, justice would be served if the shotgun marriage of Syria and Iraq is remembered as the Obama Caliphate.

Ironically, the original "Islam and Monoculture" did not suffer the fate of most internet ephemera. The essay survived in an unlikely venue, [Islam Daily](#). There is some hope, however faint, that truth and religious reform is still possible midst 1.5 billion Muslims when an American Muslim website journal keeps a harsh critique of contemporary Islam available for five years.

Islam and Monoculture (18 August 2009)

Monoculture is a term that has been freighted with a lot of baggage, mostly negative. The origin of this compound word is usually traced to agriculture where it is used to describe a farm or a farming community that relies on a single crop. Tobacco, cotton, sugar, and now corn, are examples. The advantages of monoculture farming are obvious; seed, soil, water and equipment requirements are uniform. Yet standardization has a down side. Uniformity makes crops vulnerable to a single pathogen or pest and the soil, once exhausted, needs to be replenished. Newer varieties of seed or more pesticides or more fertilizer are required. In short, the single crop specialist, over time, must work harder and faster to stay in the same place – until he or the land is exhausted. The tipping point of monoculture is often defined by a single vulnerability.

More recently the notion of monoculture has migrated to cyberspace. Here again it is used as a pejorative to describe alleged abuses by software or telecommunications monopolies: Microsoft operating systems, Google search engines or cable companies are frequently described as monocultures. (The US National Security Agency would surely qualify as a monoculture too.) The advantages of singularity here, like agriculture, are uniformity, consistency, and homogeneity. The disadvantages are also obvious. Like all monopolies, the lack of serious competition breeds complacency, arrogance, and indifference; inferior products, shoddy services, and eventually corruption. While good ideas often create good institutions, just as often, over time, that same institution becomes the enemy of the idea – especially new ideas. Here monoculture becomes a kind of totalitarianism; a cult of “my way or the highway.”

Single party towns, cities, states and even countries often become political monocultures. National Socialists, Fascists, and Marxists are examples in the extreme. Once a single party achieves success, controls the levers of power; the dominant ethic often becomes the retention of power.

An ideology that may come to power with appeals to diversity and pluralism often morphs into a culture of exclusion – a place where the external infidel (non-believer) and the internal apostate (independent thinker) become public enemies. Such developments are not limited to primitive political forms like monarchies and military dictatorships. Indeed, often the worst totalitarians begin as utopian prophets. Even with democracies, the first free election is often last the real election.

America, often held up as the exemplar of democratic probity, is no exception. Some of the most dysfunctional states and municipalities are the victims of single party arrogance and

mismanagement. The District of Columbia, Baltimore, Chicago, Detroit, Newark, Cleveland, San Francisco and possibly all of the state of California are examples.

Utopian schemes from which monocultures rise always have two faces. Almost all international or regional organizations begin with high hopes for the comforts of conformity; and then reality sets in. Somehow we never get to know how regional parochialism is an improvement over national chauvinism.

World organizations such as the League of Nations and now the United Nations are not much better. The most frequent consensus in these forums is the agreement to do nothing about real problems – or bad behavior. Maybe the world would be less safe without these organizations, without these “talking cures,” or maybe most of these forums are just job programs for otherwise unemployable international bureaucrats. There are few measures of effectiveness for what didn’t happen or “what might have been.”

The problem with the layering of international, national, and local governments is that eventually, like the monoculture farmer, you have to work harder and run faster just to stay in the same place. And as the shrewd Baroness from Finchley observed, “Eventually, you run out of other people’s money.”

No government at any level creates wealth or prosperity, they consume it. Chaos is not an accident; it is merely the logical consequence of unmanageable complexity or catastrophe. Sometimes the two are synonymous with homogeneity.

None of this has ever deterred utopian intellectuals who pedal uniformity, conformity, and the quest for some enchanted ideology or technology which eliminates conflict and brings unity, peace, equality, and justice to all. Serious people often take these things seriously.

Karl Marx thought a world commune was possible if only the proletariat would rise and seize the moment. Little did he imagine that the proletariat would be hijacked by a vanguard of venal intellectuals. Marx seems to have slept through French history.

Woodrow Wilson thought the League of Nations was a good idea and then Hitler thought he could bludgeon the world into Aryan consciousness. Albert Einstein thought world government was possible if only America would take the lead – proving only how little of the reason required for great science is fungible. Intelligence and common sense are not synonymous.

Even Canadians got into the act, Marshal McLuhan forecast a global village united by communications technology. McLuhan hardly noticed that the number of nation states had doubled

since WWII while the world was supposed to be bonding with Media cement. The post-colonial political centrifuge was at odds with the global village; the medium didn't send that message.

Today, another variant of utopian unity and conformity darkens the horizon. Five hundred some odd years after the fall of Constantinople, religion is on the march again; this time the objective is Tel Aviv, Rome and all points west. Once again the barbarians are at the gate. The 21st Century version of monoculture is a triple threat; military, ideological, and totalitarian. Theocracy is the latest militant monoculture; and if Islamists have their way, it will be the last.

All forms of monoculture are authoritarian in some respect; however, theocracy seeks to be totalitarian in all respects. For contemporary Islamists, there are no divided loyalties. National boundaries are irrelevant; only the boundaries of the *Ummah* (Muslim world) count. Civil or penal law is another abomination; there is only one law, religious law (*Sharia*). The separation of church and state is heretical; the religious community is the state, the community.

For the fundamentalist, the division of the world into material and spiritual realms is the nexus of Western culture; the source of wars and all other woes. The divided authorities of democracies are at the root of a "hideous schizophrenia;" indeed, infidels and apostates are sick, slaves to a self-imposed angst. The jihadist is a humanitarian, a liberator. He represents one God (*Allah*), one law (*Sharia*), one messenger (Mohammed), and one message (*jihad*). With *jihad*, the medium is also the message.

In its most benign incarnation the *jihad* is simply a "struggle." In practice there are several means, at least four ways to fight for universal unity: the struggle to improve self, study and accept the word of God; the struggle to spread the word of God, once properly understood; the struggle to do God's work, improve the community; and finally, *jihad* is also the right and requirement to defend Islam with every violent means available – jihad of the sword. Yes, defend! By definition, the nature of *jihad*, the nature of the war (*harb*), is defensive.

For the devout, the world is divided into two spheres: the house of Islam (*dar al-Islam*), they who have submitted to Sharia; and the house of war (*dar al-harb*), they who have yet to submit. Those outside of the Muslim community, or those within, who doubt, are living in a state of dangerous ignorance (*jahiliyya*). The danger is literal, by ancient and modern legal definition; apostasy is a capital offense, punishable by death.

Ignorance itself is an aggressive threat, one that threatens to infect the purity and divide

the unity of true believers. Eliminating ignorance is God's purpose, Mohammed's purpose, and the Koran's purpose. It is also the right and duty of all Islamists to fight any ignorance of God's will. The ultimate goal of militant Islam is one God, one law, one path, and one community of believers – in short, monoculture.

The Islamist take on the role of ignorance in society however, is more political than theological. Indeed, it is a convenient rationalization for aggression.

The proper role of civil society, or civilization writ large, is not to clear every thicket of contradiction or ignorance; the proper role of authority in any society is to eliminate the deserts of intolerance.

But there is little debate within the Muslim community on the meaning of *jihad*. Dr. Tawfik Hamid, a former *mujahadeen*, cautions, "The doctrines of jihad are not taken out of context, as many apologists for Islamism argue. They are central to the faith and ethics of millions of Muslims."

For jihadists, means are variable; the type of *jihad* is tailored to circumstances – time, conditions, and place. What works here might not work there. The tactics may change but the strategy is constant; "two steps forward, one step back." Mainstream or so-called "moderate" organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Akwan*) make peaceful protestations on cue, yet their menace is underlined by spin-offs, cut-outs, and splinter groups which are more than happy to do the "wet" work as necessary.

In one case a brotherhood operative, Ramadan Abdullah Shallah, taught at a Florida university for three years before assuming command of Islamic Jihad in Syria. His first act as chief was to call for the elimination of Israel.

In a more recent case, the grandson of the founder of *al Akwan*, Tariq Ramadan, was about to accept a teaching post at Notre Dame University when his visa was denied. Supporters of Ramadan represent him as a scholar and "reformer." Yet, the facts tell another story.

Tariq was probably happy to seek refuge at South Bend because British and French critics had exposed his irredentism and his defenses of bloody *jihad* in Europe. In short, Mr. Ramadan had been caught practicing *taqiyya*; a kind of Islamic dissimulation where you are not required to speak the truth to infidels. Indeed, Bernard Kouchner, former French Minister of Foreign Affairs, labeled Tariq Ramadan a "most dangerous man."

The Ramadan appointment was defended in the name of free speech, academic freedom, and

ecumenicism. Nonetheless, there are no axioms of freedom that require the academy to provide a soapbox for hate speech, and more important, ecumenicism is not a suicide pact.

Or as George Orwell might put it, "There are some ideas that are so wrong that only a very intelligent person could believe in them."

The liberation theologians of Notre Dame are not alone. There is an emerging if not bizarre convergence between Western intellectuals and *Jihad* dissimulators, an odd couple coalition of the American Left and the Islamic Right. John Walsh, writing for the *Harvard International Review*, Winter 2003, claimed that "there is no evidence to undermine the Brotherhood's peaceful rhetoric." He also repeats, without question, the party line, "The Brotherhood has never ordered an act of terrorism."

In the March/April, 2007 edition of *Foreign Affairs*, Robert Leiken and Steven Brooke took a similar tack in "The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood" where the title itself is an asserted conclusion. The problem with these arguments, and many like it, is the willingness to accept spoken or written assurances about non-violence while ignoring or rationalizing the violence itself.

As a practical matter, the historical record, of deeds not words, is what should inform judgments. Surely there are peace loving Brothers but, their existence in no way offsets the dark history and continuing excuse making for terror. Academic and official analyses of modern theocrats have two troubling deficits, little common sense and no sense of responsibility.

National security naiveté is not limited to journalists and academics. The July 2009 conference of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) provided a forum for Imam Warith Deen Umar, among others. He is the former director of NY State prison chaplains. Umar used the occasion to argue that a small number of Jews "control the world." He offered White House aides Rahm Emanuel and David Axelrod as evidence.

Imam Umar was preceded by Valerie Jarrett as keynote speaker. Ms. Jarrett was senior White House advisor for public engagement, her appearance was a first for any White House official. ISNA is a Brotherhood affiliate.

Brotherhood proselytizers are now seconded in America by *Hizb ut Tahir* (HT), an organization now represented in at least 40 other countries. HT is a Sunni political party based in Palestine which openly advocates *Kilafah*, a unitary Muslim state controlled by clerics and *Sharia*. This theocratic movement has been outlawed in many Muslim countries yet, they held their first open international conference in America, in Illinois.

Al Akwan and *Hizb ut Tahir* are thought to be the largest and best organized radical Islamic political movements in the world. Although they make frequent peaceful protestations, they both rationalize violent *jihād*, non-violent sedition, and anti-Semitism.

The Brotherhood is infamous for its cut-outs or affiliates who represent a “whose who” of terror organizations including *Hamas* and *al Qaeda*. HT is thought to be a recruiting venue for *mujahadeen* who, once indoctrinated, are then passed on to frontline terror groups as required. Their alumni include known “jihād of the sword” soldiers, Abu Musad al-Zarqawi and Khalid Sheik Mohammed.

Neither *al Akwan* nor *Hizb ut Tahir* appear on the State Department’s official list of terror groups.

The absurdity of American *kafirs* (infidels) trying to rebrand *al Ikwan* as “moderate” is beyond ironic. From the Islamist point of view, a secular Muslim is two things; an apostate and a target. In Egypt alone, the most populous Arab nation, the Brotherhood or cutouts, have been responsible for hundreds of terrorist incidents and scores of political assassination attempts, several of which have been successful.

The Brothers assassinated Anwar Sadat and they have been responsible for more than half dozen attempts against Hosni Mubarak. *Al-Ikwan* is illegal in Egypt where there are few illusions about “moderation.” The latest menace on the Israeli front, *Hamas*, is a Brotherhood export.

The list of so-called moderates like Sadat who have been assassinated for apostasy is international. Benazir Bhutto was a special threat, a presumptuous woman and a secular Islamist. The most notable martyr to “moderation” was Afghan President Mohammed Najibullah. In August of 1996, he called for the US and “the civilized world to launch a joint struggle against fundamentalism.”

A month later, he was assassinated and hoisted on a lamppost by the *Taliban* as a public example. Najibullah had more than a dog in the fight; he gave his life trying to define the enemy. More than a decade later, Najibullah’s clarity is lost under a fog of politically correct euphemisms.

This and other evidence that *jihād* apologists are willing to ignore is overwhelming. According to State Department figures, the number of terrorist incidents and casualties has increased tenfold since Najabullah’s death. More recently, a professional intelligence officer, Stephen Collins Coughlin, at the Pentagon, connected the dots linking historical *Sharia* precedents to contemporary jihadist military doctrine in a 300 page legal brief. Coughlin was labeled a

“Christian zealot with a poison pen” and fired for his candor.

His nemesis turned out to be a former Deputy Secretary of Defense, Gordon England. Apparently Major Coughlin was asked to moderate his scholarship and legal expertise at the behest of a special assistant to England, Hesham Islam.

Egyptian born Islam was a “community outreach” expert for the Pentagon with ties to *al Ikwan* affiliates in America. Mr. Islam left his Pentagon post after several “anomalies” in his resume were exposed.

If nothing else, *Jihads* of the tongue and of the hand, these “peaceful” struggles, provide a kind of plausible deniability, a convenient separation from those with blood on their hands, the jihadists of the sword.

This *jihad al-sayf* is frequently literal. Never mind individual amputations or beheadings, recall the massacre at Luxor, the work of a Brotherhood splinter, where 84 were killed, 58 of them tourists, one of which was a child of five. Several were hacked to death with knives and swords. The literal symbol of the sword is lost on Westerners, the coercive power of the knife is not lost on Muslims.

Children aren't incidental casualties or collateral damage of *jihad*, they are often targets – especially females. At Beslan an entire grade school of over seven hundred was held hostage: 334 hostages were killed, 186 of these were children. Although the leader of the massacre was a Chechen national, Shamil Basayev, his crew, like most jihadist operations, was international. Several held British passports and some were associated with the Finsbury Park Mosque, London.

In January of 2004, Basayev issued an annual report of sorts entitled “Nothing Can Stop this *Jihad*.” In it he highlights Russian losses and all the usual justifications common to such manifestos: appeals to Allah, blessings to the Prophet, cant about the righteousness of bloody *jihad*, castigations of *kefirs*, and one eerily prophetic note, he compares Russians to “children who close their eyes in order to hide.” Ten months later nearly 200 hundred Russian children were dead at Beslan.

Religion is the heart of the Western predicament. On the one hand, smug intellectuals dismiss religion as some primitive superstition. In the process they underestimate the power of ideas, the significance of *Jihad* and *Sharia*, and their relation to military doctrine in the Muslim world. On the other hand, these same self-anointed progressives defend the separation of church and state and freedom of religion.

Here they are skewered on the horns of the political correctness dilemma, tolerating intolerance in the name of tolerance. Separation of church and state is not the only core value in peril. The rights of women and children and freedom of thought and speech are also at risk under theocratic thugery.

One constant of despotism over the centuries has been anti-Semitism. The modern *jihadi* is no exception. Not only are 20th Century atrocities like the European Jewish and Armenian Christian genocides denied by Islamic politicians, but ayatollahs and imams regularly use the prophet and the Koran as touchstones for characterizing Jews as “apes and pigs.” This bigotry is not a “fringe” phenomena, it is a thread of Muslim history. Indeed, with Saudi Arabia and Iran, intolerance is a state sponsored activity.

Despotism has only three requirements: false prophets, slaves to immutable doctrine, and naïve apologists.

The oft repeated mantra that Israel, not Jews, is at the heart of Muslim angst is another deceit. Anti-Israel rhetoric is mostly anti-Semitism masked with a political veil. The structural bigotry of Sunni Deobandis and Wahabis all predate the state of Israel, in one case by millennia. Wahabism is the state religion of the wealthiest Arab state, Saudi Arabia. The irredentism of *al Ikwan* is the most infamous modern export of Egypt, the most populous Arab state. The Brotherhood was created in Egypt two decades before the state of Israel reappeared in the Levant. The official hate speech of Shiite Iran is a modern phenomenon, but its literary antecedents are as old as the Sunni variety.

Surely the mere presence of modern Israel in the midst of the Arab world is itself an irritant, and the many Israeli tactical victories has rubbed salt in the wound that now passes for Arab honor. However, any honest review of historical Muslim literature and commentaries reveal anti-Semitism to be part of the warp and weft of ancient and contemporary culture. Just as surely, apologists can find appropriate citations to the contrary. Nonetheless, these exceptions are not the rule.

Official irredentism has been underlined by Arab and Muslim states at numerous human rights forums. The 60th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, 7 April 2004, was no exception. Whenever issues such as the stoning of women, honor killings, mutilations, and the apostasy death penalty are raised, Muslim officials reject any criticism as interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state. (*Dar al-Islam* scholars recognize secular or national boundaries when convenient to their arguments.)

Only two Muslim states address the apostasy issue in their penal codes, Sudan and Mauritania, both mandate the death penalty. In all other Muslim states the issue is covered by religious law where the penalty is the same. Wherever elected politicians are subordinate clerics, the first casualties are tolerance and human rights.

Religious dogma is not negotiable, the idea that "moderate" Islam can or will compromise core tenants is absurd. Why change a winning political strategy? In contrast, secular democratic values in Europe and America appear to be malleable at their best and marketable at their worst.

Indeed, serving and retired presidents, Bill Clinton is a prominent example, premiers, cabinet officers and military personnel all avail themselves of Petro-retainers with unseemly regularity. This is not to suggest that such officials are for sale, but their values, like oil, may have lease options.

Some ask the question, why now? Why has radical *jihad* now come to dominate the threat spectrum? The answer seems to be self-evident: because it can! The theosophy, dogma, and militant doctrine (as Major Coughlin reminds us), have been elaborated for centuries had anyone cared to look. The Arab world especially, now has the resources to resume the "struggle" in earnest. The largest transfer of wealth in human history is underwriting the attempt to undo the last five hundred years of human progress.

Nonetheless, the Islamic chimera of religious and political homogeneity is still a pipe dream. Cultural, political and theological unity can not be validated by virtue, history, or reason. Put aside for a moment the record of utopias or even the practical difficulties of establishing or maintaining a universal theocracy. The real evil is coercive cultural imperialism.

No religious or political monoculture can succeed or be sustained without force and oppression. This is the great moral contradiction of all utopian visions and with imperial Islam today; a warped amalgam of military terror, bigotry, politics, cultural arrogance, and misappropriated wealth.

Surely persuasion is one of many tactics used on believers, doubters, and infidels. Yet, in the end, like all totalitarian schemes, theocracy is underwritten by fear and the threat or reality of force. Anwar Sadat put it best before his assassination: "Fear is the most effective tool in destroying the soul of an individual – and the soul of a people."

Najabullah and Sadat had the integrity and courage to identify the theocratic threat and its

consequences – and they paid with their lives. Sadly, there are few signs at the moment that any Western politicians, save a few Israelis, are worthy of their mantle or their sacrifice. Appeasement is not so much a hopeful strategy as it is a symptom of fear, a signal of weakness, and a harbinger of defeat.

All monocultures are destined to fail eventually. They all suffer from insurmountable internal contradictions. Healthy biological and political cultures require diversity, competition and pluralism to thrive. Unfortunately, the lessons of the last century seem to be forfeit by the first decade of this century.

In an age where any principle or weapon might be sold if the price is right, the cost of relearning the futility of utopian visions will be high. Islamic monoculture is sure to fail, but before it does, the *jihad* could wipe more than Israel “off the face of the earth.” Words like holocaust may be inadequate to describe the impending clash.

G. Murphy Donovan was the last Director of Research and Russian (nee Soviet) Studies at USAF Intelligence. He was also a former senior USAF research fellow at the RAND Corporation, Santa Monica. The author served in Vietnam during the Tet Offensive (1968) and the invasion of Cambodia (1970).

To comment on this article, please click [here](#).

To help New English Review continue to publish interesting articles such as this one, please click [here](#).

If you enjoyed this article by G. Murphy Donovan and want to read more of his work, please click [here](#).

G. Murphy Donovan is a regular contributor to our community blog, The Iconoclast. To see all of his entries, please click [here](#).

