

ISLAM: What Is To Be Done?

by Hugh Fitzgerald (July 2010)

The following is an expanded version of the speech Mr. Fitzgerald delivered to the New English Review Symposium on June 19, 2010.

Shortly after the 9/11/2001 attacks, that have entered history under the too-casual shorthand of “nine-eleven,” the American government began to plan to conduct a war against those whom, it correctly believed, were those most immediately involved in the attack. These were the members of an identifiable group called Al Qaeda. Its head was a mediagenic son of a Saudi billionaire, Osama Bin Laden, ably seconded by the scion of a prominent Egyptian family, Ayman Al-Zawahiri (his great-uncle Azzam Pasha had been the first Secretary of the Arab League), with others who had, from their lairs in Afghanistan, been plotting against the West at least since 1993, when the first attack on the World Trade Center took place. And within months it carried out that plan, directed not only at Al Qaeda but at the Taliban that had given Al Qaeda refuge and succor in Afghanistan.

For the first few years of that war, the word “Jihad” was seldom used. Instead, the Americans had set out, so American political leaders said, to defeat a “handful of extremists,” those who had “hijacked a great religion.” The two most important leaders in the West, Bush and Blair, both assured the world that Islam was a religion of “peace” and “tolerance” though no historical evidence for this absurdity was adduced. – Blair even let it be known that he carried a Qur’an around in his pocket, which was meant to suggest his appreciative familiarity with its contents.

Nor did the word "Jihad" have any application in the war that began in Iraq when the Americans invaded that country in March 2003, with our leaders having been convinced by Shi'a Iraqis in exile that if only we were to remove the regime of Saddam Hussein, Iraq could become a Light Unto the Muslim Nations, for American policymakers, unaware of the real nature of Iraqi society, and the sectarian and ethnic fissures within it, fell for the line that Ahmad Chalabi and others peddled. They wanted to fall for such a line, of course, wanted to believe that "democracy" could be transplanted to a Muslim country, and wanted to believe, as well, that the combination of "democracy" – what Bush described as "freedom for ordinary moms and dads in the Middle East," and prosperity, which would surely come if the Americans encouraged all those members of the Iraqi middle class just waiting to give free rein to their entrepreneurial flair under American direction, and this would make Iraq, a "key" country in the Middle East, a grateful and devoted friend of the United States. Nothing was said about the Shi'a-Sunni split, nothing was predicted about a Sunni refusal to acquiesce in the certain loss of power, or in the Shi'a determination to hold onto power that until the American invasion had been held by the Sunnis during the entire history of modern Iraq.

And no one wanted to consider that American interests might be better served by allowing sectarian fissures to fester, rather than to work to diminish them, and that, furthermore, instead of promoting Arab-Kurd reconciliation, or at least the avoidance of hostilities, it might make more sense to support a non-Arab people, the Kurds, in their attempt to extend their autonomy, even possibly to attain an independent state, for the spectacle of a non-Arab Muslim people successfully throwing off the Arab yoke could prove salutary for the 80% of the world's Muslims who are not Arabs, and who might be made to understand that despite the universalist claims of Islam, the treatment by Arabs of non-Arab Muslims, and many of the practices that Muslims adopt, demonstrate clearly that Islam is a vehicle for Arab supremacism. And the recognition that this is so might make Islam slightly less appealing, or at least more vulnerable to attack, among those 80% of the world's Muslims who are not Arabs, and do not have an ethnic identity, 'Uruba, or Arabness, that reinforces Islam.

No, as in Afghanistan, so in Iraq, the subject not to be mentioned was Islam. American soldiers were taught nothing about Islam, and it was only here and there, as in an Arabic class taught by a Jordanian Christian in Tikrit, that some American soldiers were exposed to virulent denunciations of Islam.

The American military went out of its way not to make clear to its soldiers just what the ideology of Islam inculcated, which might, had it been understood, have made the troops more intelligently wary, but would at the same time, if the lessons about Islam had been thoroughly understood, would also have made the American effort in Iraq and Afghanistan seem more obviously foolish to those asked to conduct that war. So they were not taught.

And the entire premise of both wars was that in each country there was something called an "insurgency" and, for some of the Leavenworth colonels who were said to form such an impressive Brains Trust for General Petraeus, there were also said to be "laws" that governed "insurgencies." For example, we were treated to the information that, "in general, insurgencies last about ten years." This was a ludicrous conclusion, one whose silliness can be seen if, for example, we solemnly declare that "our research shows that, on average, civil wars last 12.7 years" or "our research shows that, on average, wars last 11.2 years." Such notions offer a false arithmetic certainty. They ignore all kinds of things, but the biggest thing of all that is ignored is that, in Iraq and Afghanistan, the people we thought we were fighting were Muslims, and the people whom we were aiding were also Muslims, if of a slightly less virulent or fanatical brand – though even this does not adequately describe the situation in Iraq, where now Sunnis, and now Shi'a, of different kinds and with different interests, seemed to be the most dangerous enemy of the Americans, and their goals. While the Shi'a were still not certain that they would have control of the country, they were the least difficult to deal with. When some of the Sunni Arabs believed that they had more to gain by collaborating with the Americans, and in any case welcomed all the money and weapons the Americans could give them

to fight Al Qaeda (which had made the mistake of attacking local Sunni Arabs), understanding full well that that money and those weapons could be used later on against the Shi'a or, if necessary, against the Americans themselves, they were perfectly willing to collaborate, in tribal allegiance temporarily assigned to "The Awakening," and this was misinterpreted by the Americans as a great strategic achievement, when it represented merely the temporary rental of some allies who, for reasons of their own quite different from ours, were willing to fight Al Qaeda in Iraq.

The Americans never allowed themselves to see their task in Iraq and Afghanistan as connected to a larger effort, that effort seen best as a war of self-defense, not by America alone, but by all the non-Muslim nations, against those promoting Jihad. There was a lot of talk about the "center" of the "war against terrorism" – first that "center" was Afghanistan, and then that "center" moved to Iraq, and then that center moved back to Afghanistan, and then it was located hovering somewhere between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and lately we read that perhaps the "center" has shifted to Yemen – or perhaps to Somalia, or somewhere else. It never was suggested that the very idea of a single "center" for Islamic terrorism – or, still more obviously, for those conducting Jihad through other instruments, such as deployment of the Money Weapon, campaigns of Da'wa, and demographic conquest – made no sense. It showed a misunderstanding that the problem was not a "failed state" here, or a malignant regime there, but rather, the ideology of Islam, its appeal, its demands and pressures, that never let up, on non-Muslims, whether those non-Muslims lived in countries dominated by Islam, or whether they lived in countries that had always been peopled by, and developed by, non-Muslims who had, in an excess of negligent enthusiasm for the Idols of the Age, Tolerance and Diversity, had without too much thought, allowed millions of Muslims to settle within their borders. There is no "center" for Islamic terrorism, and no "center" for those who use other, even more effective, because less attention-getting, instruments of Jihad, in order to promote the Cause of Islam. as connected to the world-wide march of Islam, a march – or a Jihad, rather – made possible not because of any changes in the ideology of Islam, but in the ability of Muslims to conduct, or think they could conduct, Jihad against non-

Muslims everywhere.

Those changes were threefold. First, there was the money that Muslim peoples, incapable of creating modern economies and thus of becoming rich otherwise, received because so many Muslim states sat on large reserves of oil and natural gas. Those countries received tens of billions of dollars even before the quadrupling of oil prices in 1973. And since 1973, the Muslim members of OPEC have received more than thirteen trillion dollars, without having to lift a finger for any of it, for it was solely the result of an accident of geology. That money has been spent on vast arsenals, and for some countries, on projects to attain weapons of mass destruction. It has been spent to promote Islam, by paying for thousands or tens of thousands of mosques and madrasas all over the world, including the non-Islamic world, and for academic departments and whole institutions carefully vetted by Arab donors, to make sure that the people hired and promoted agree with and promote propaganda on behalf of Islam and Muslims. And some of the money has gone to pay Western hirelings who help in the propaganda effort – businessmen, journalists, and present or former political figures – whose work on behalf of Islam and of Muslim causes has also been paid for quite handsomely. In the entire 70-odd years of its existence, the Soviet Union spent about \$8 billion on propaganda throughout the world. Saudi Arabia alone has over the past 30 years spent about \$100 billion on furthering the Cause of Islam.

But the Americans, and those who followed the American lead, insisted on speaking and thinking about their response as a “war” in only the conventional sense – that is, a matter of taking on discrete groups, first Al Qaeda, and then the Taliban, and using such instruments of war as soldiers, guns, tanks, helicopters, planes, drones. And in addition to that, the belief grew, as it became clear that the recipients of all our solicitousness, and all our fabulous generosity, as we lavished tens of

billions upon some of the poorest people in the world, for some reason was not reciprocated by any gratitude, and for some reason – one that no one could quite figure out or discuss intelligently – we had not won loyalty, or even friendship, and instead of being grateful, when anything went wrong, or goods and services far beyond what the locals had ever enjoyed or had any right to expect were not delivered, it was the Americans and other Westerners who were blamed.

Unused to thinking about Islam as an ideology, because it is called a “religion” and because most Americans treat anything called a “religion” with respect, the Bush Administration preferred to make war, in Afghanistan, on what it took to be a small group of “extremists” who had “hijacked a great religion.” Exactly how it had hijacked that great religion, exactly what the beliefs of the members of Al Qaeda were, and what textual authority they had concocted or counterfeited to rely on, to think and act as they did, was never ever discussed. We were simply supposed to assume that this was so, and everyone from Tony Blair to George Bush insisted that Islam was a great religion, a splendid inspiration, a religion of peace and tolerance, and so on and so idiotically forth.

So what did the American government then do? Instead of standing back, and analyzing why it was so natural for the people in Iraq (not “the Iraqi people”) and the people in Afghanistan (not the “Afghan people”) to find fault with, to resent, the Americans, and for quite a few of them to begin to forget what it was they had hated (in Afghanistan) about the Taliban, but to find the Taliban newly-appealing, or in Iraq to forget how much they had hated Saddam Hussein, and for Sunnis he was once again their late lamented champion, and the Shi’a never showed the gratitude Americans expected they would for freeing them from Saddam Hussein, but rather, once they had secured their hold on power and no longer needed the Americans, treated them with mistrust and hostility. Only the Kurds in Iraq seemed to be genuinely friendly to the Americans, unlike either the Sunni or the Shi’a Arabs. There are two explanations for this, but only the first explanation has ever been mentioned, and then only very occasionally. And that explanation has to do with the protection offered by the Americans for the Kurds, ever since 1991, when American planes

monitored the airspace over northern Iraq, and interdicted that space to the planes of Saddam Hussein. That allowed the Kurds a dozen years, from 1991 to 2003, to develop their autonomy. And since 2003 the Kurds have been delighted that the Americans removed Saddam Hussein, their cruelest if not their only enemy. Secondly, they know that if an independent Kurdistan were to have a chance, it would have to rely on American diplomatic and military support. But that other part of the explanation for relative Kurdish friendliness was never mentioned.

But this war against "violent extremists" would have a special component, one that a number of military men talked excitedly about with great self-consciousness, as if it were a remarkably new idea. And that extra component was to accompany fighting, through traditional military means, Al Qaeda in Iraq and Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan, with a great effort to "win hearts and minds" of the locals. And the ways to win over those hearts and those minds, it was felt, was not by appealing to any common effort, or view of the world that we shared with them and that neither of us shared with those horrible "violent extremists" we had come to fight and allowed ourselves to believe were our common enemy, as antipathetic to the local Muslims in Iraq and Afghanistan, and for the same reasons, as they were to us, but rather through bribery. That bribery took many forms, and it was called "reconstruction" as if Iraq and Afghanistan had previously been "constructed" and only the foreign invaders, in their fighting, had so damaged the infrastructure that it now needed "reconstruction." This was false, and dangerous, but by no means the worst of the many false and dangerous things that the American government, in its inattention to language and the truth, has permitted.

So fantastic sums have been spent, amounting to hundreds of billions of dollars, within a larger military campaign that has cost three trillion dollars, once everything is added up. American pilots have told me of seeing planes land in Iraq and Iraqis themselves being allowed to off-load plane-fuls of pallets loaded with packets of one-hundred-dollar bills, that money supposedly then to be "distributed" correctly, but those who witnessed these operations had the distinct feeling that a

great many of those packets of cash were taken by the Iraqis unloading the money. But which Iraqis pocketed these sums is hardly the point: the point is that the Americans kept lavishing these fantastic amounts in Iraq, and now to a lesser extent in Afghanistan, sometimes directly, and sometimes to pay for projects – water-treatment facilities, electric power plants and power grids, hospitals fully-equipped to Western standards, with Western equipment, schools for both boys and girls, and so on – all on the theory that this will somehow make the locals like us.

And to this was added another element: the deliberate constraints put on the soldiers, so that they would not fire unless they were absolutely certain that they had been fired on first, and the requirement that fire be withheld if it was likely that civilians might be harmed, which has led to an end, in some cases, of air support, and has made life far more dangerous for American and other Western forces than it has to be, and that it should be. But this is done because local Muslims become enraged when there are civilian casualties. But why shouldn't they? You may ask.

Here's why. During World War II the Allies were certainly responsible for the killing of hundreds of thousands of civilians in countries that the Nazis had seized, and even responsible for killing tens of thousands in Italy, in the attempt to dislodge the Germans after Italy had left the war. But that did not mean that the locals were against us, and always in danger of going over to the Germans. Not at all. When the American and British planes bombed a Dutch (or was it Danish?) hospital for orphans, by accident, in a raid meant to destroy the Gestapo headquarters next door, the reaction of the Danish (or was it Dutch?) resistance was to urge the Americans and the British to "keep on coming, don't stop, keep on coming."

But in Iraq and Afghanistan, there is no understanding of warfare, or rather the local Muslims insist that the non-Muslim soldiers be held to an impossible standard, and they are quick as well to believe the most

obviously fake of atrocity stories, with those atrocities being ascribed to the Americans and other NATO soldiers, and are quick, too, to believe conspiracy theories in which everything that “goes wrong” such as the failure in Iraq of Sunnis to get along with Shi’a or vice-versa – is ascribed to the Americans who are blamed, in the end, for everything: for “ruining” Iraq, for “destroying” Iraq, for “preventing” true national reconciliation, and so on and so idiotically and falsely forth.

Shouldn't the American military and the civilian leaders have asked themselves why it was that they had to worry so much about the reaction of the locals, why it was so obvious that those, such as the Sunni Arabs in the Awakening Councils, who might turn on a dime and go over to Al Qaeda, or if they were Shi'a to support Moqtada al-Sadr or other Shi'a groups that treated the Americans as the enemy, had implanted in their brains a pre-existing grid upon which the universe could be laid, and on that grid, the enemy was always the infidel.

Even those who hated Al Qaeda, or who in Afghanistan had suffered from, the Taliban, might in a pinch lend support to Al Qaeda or to the Taliban. They might oppose those groups for their attacks on fellow Muslims, but never were they seen as opposing those groups because of their attacks on the Americans or other Infidels. Yet this could never be recognized. Neither our military, nor our civilian leaders, could allow themselves to think in terms of Islam, and what the local Muslims had been inculcated with, had been indoctrinated with, since early childhood. They could not allow themselves to see that Islam explained the coldness toward Infidels, the readiness to find fault with and ascribe blame to Infidels, the willingness to entertain the craziest conspiracy theories about Infidels, the willingness to ignore, or even to secretly take delight in, the attacks by Al Qaeda and the Taliban as long as their targets were the Infidels, the great readiness to play those Infidels for all they were worth, to extract ever more preposterous sums of money, and supplies of weapons, from them, sometimes while pledging a brotherly friendship, pledging it so deeply and sincerely, that the Americans continued to believe in such things, or at least to let such pledges have an effect

on, and to modify what should have been a steely resolve not to be fooled by any Muslim blague, by any would-be leader, whether national (Ahmad Chalabi, Mohammad Karzai) or local (the gunga-dinnish local commanders who win the trust of this or that American military man, who may not realize that the local military man is merely trying to impose his will, become a local warlord, with American backing, rather than a true fighter for peace and justice) and so on and so forth.

For the American civilian leadership, and the military so eager not to question what the civilians insist upon, are collaborating in a fiction. In this fiction, most of the Muslims living in Iraq and Afghanistan have been talked about as if they can be considered to be our natural allies, if only we treat them with solicitude and work for good government. It does not matter that Good Government is unlikely to be achieved in a Muslim polity, where seizure of political power is ordinarily the only way to help oneself, one's family, one's tribe, one's group, to wealth, for wealth is not created, but rather is received as manna, either from the sale of oil and gas or other natural resources (as those recently made so much of in Afghanistan), or from what naïve Infidel nation-states are inexhaustibly willing to provide, with much of that aid siphoned off for the corrupt ruling class – as by the military and other rulers in Egypt, Jordan, Pakistan, the “Palestinian” Authority.

Meanwhile, along with that little affair in Afghanistan, another target was found. This target was Iraq, a country whose monstrous despot had been in the sights of various Washington scopes since the Gulf War. No one understood that when Saddam Hussein tried to make everyone think he had, or was about to acquire, nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, that was not for the benefit of the West – Saddam Hussein never believed the Americans would attack him, because from his point of view that would not make sense, but in order to prevent Iran, the Islamic Republic of Iran, a permanent worry, from doing so. Even today it is unclear to me if the various books on Iraq make this point.

The war in Iraq was made by people who thought, as Paul Wolfowitz did, that it would be over soon, that it would be far cheaper than the cost of continuing to impose sanctions, that those WMD would be found, and a new day would dawn in Iraq because that is what the Iraqis in exile, such as the seductive and meretricious Ahmad Chalabi, kept telling them, and they kept believing him, and other Iraqi exiles, not noticing that all of these exiles turned out to be Shi'a in exile, some of whom had not been in Iraq for nearly fifty Years (Chalabi had last been there in 1958, and left at the age of 14).

What was the goal in Iraq? It was to overturn the aggressive regime of Saddam Hussein, ensure that it would never return, and then to bring, as Bush unforgettably said, "freedom to ordinary moms and dads in the Middle East." And this in turn would be a model for other Arab states, whose rulers and peoples would not be able to ignore the splendid example of a free and democratic Iraq.

Now there were things wrong with this plan. Practically, in fact, everything.

In the first place, there was the political theory of the democratic West, and the political theory that justifies the Muslim ruler: if he is a good Muslim, and enforces the Will of Allah expressed in the Qur'an, and glossed by the Sunnah.

"Bringing freedom" in the Western sense requires centuries of slow time, to develop a political theory, and to develop those who are capable of seeing themselves, and acting as, citizens rather than as subjects, individuals rather than as insignificant members of a collective.

It also requires a certain ability to engage in economic activity. But in

Islam, all wealth comes from capture of the power of the state, which will in turn allow those in political power to distribute the wealth of the state disproportionately to their own families, tribes, sects, ethnic groups. That is what happens in Saudi Arabia, in Sudan, in Iran, in all of the Gulf shieiklets. There is no independent and powerful private sector. Why? Well, because of Islam: 1) hatred of Bid'a, or innovation, and 2) inshallah-fatalism, a belief that Allah can whimsically bestow, and just as whimsically take away, property, so for many it makes sense not to work hard, but to wait for the manna from oil and gas wealth, gained by gaining political power, or to wait for aid from Infidel donors, who give and give and give, and from whom Muslim recipients take, pocketing what they are given without any display or any feeling of gratitude to the donors, but rather a feeling of entitlement, of merely pocketing a kind of Jizyah. And the same mimicking of attitudes can be seen in the behavior of the Infidel donors, who act as if the Arabs and Muslims are somehow entitled to this vast transfer of wealth (beyond the trillions transferred by oil-consuming to oil-producing nations).

What has happened in Iraq, since March 2003?

Well, two trillion dollars has been spent. 4,500 troops have been killed, and about 35,000 severely wounded, so severely that they will require lifetime care. Tens upon tens of billions of dollars have been spent on projects, many of which were entrusted to local contractors who failed to build what they promised, or blew up what they built in order to be paid to build it again, and everywhere there have been fantastic examples of grand theft by the Iraqis, and by local Arabs, such as the overcharging Kuwaitis, who supplied the American army with oil and other services, and who took full advantage of the Americans whenever they could.

What about the new Iraq? Is there a democracy? Oh, there were elections, but is there a democracy in the Western sense? Did people vote as individuals, or as they were told to vote by various leaders? Did they

vote based on an Iraqi identity, or on ethnic or sectarian identity? Have the Sunnis reconciled themselves to their loss of power? Have the Shi'a decided to share power and wealth with the Sunnis, or are they determined to hang on to what they have obtained through the American invasion? What about Sistani, the great hope of the American military, the man whom Tom Friedman thought should be given a Nobel Prize, and who so impressed Fouad Ajami and others?

Sistani has now come out for the new Shia coalition between Maliki's Party and the other largest Shi'a party, that includes Moqtada al-Sadr. And Allawi, a Shi'a who was nonetheless sufficiently non-sectarian to have become, for a time, a Ba'athist, and who ran as the Shi'a who would champion –insofar as they have a champion – of the Sunnis, claims to have won but in fact, he obtained only two votes more than Maliki, and far fewer votes than the two Shi'a parties.

Ask yourself this: if you were a Shi'a Arab, and knew that the Shi'a Arabs constituted at least 60% of the population, while Sunni Arabs made up less than 20%, and if furthermore, you knew that in the entire history of modern Iraq, the Sunnis had always lorded it over the Shi'a, regarding them as inferior, and depriving them of oil revenues that came from wells under Shi'a-populated southern Iraq, what would you be thinking of? Giving up power at last gained, to the fearsome Sunnis? Why? Why would you?

And if you were a Sunni Arab, and had always despised the Shi'a, as many Sunni Arabs do, and had even thought of them almost as Infidels or, as some Sunni clerics in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and Egypt have said, as "the worst kind of Infidels," and if, further, you had been used to ruling over the Shi'a, under one regime or another, ever since the founding of modern Iraq, would you watch with equanimity as the Shi'a arrogated power to themselves, and even after the Americans left, insisted on keeping it? And would you, knowing that under the Sunni-populated regions of Anbar and Diyala there was no oil, and no gas, and so you would forever have to depend on what a permanently-Shi'a government would hand to you, would you stand for it? Would you stand for

it if you knew that the Sunnis were by nature more aggressive than the Shi'a, and had in the past, under Saddam Hussein, been able to keep the Shi'a under control (and the Kurds too) by brute force, and there was no reason not to do it again, especially since Iraq, to its north, to its west, to its south and southwest, had Sunni Arab neighbors ready to extend a hand to fellow Sunnis who might go to war against the Shi'a, as they stood for what all Sunnis would see as legitimate Sunni rights – well, wouldn't you think you had a good chance of succeeding?

And now let us look at present-day Iraq from the viewpoint of the Kurds. Notice how, in discussing the Kurds, no one ever bothers to ask whether they are Sunni or Shi'a, and whether it matters. Well, they are mostly Sunnis, but in truth, it does not matter, or does not matter in the Iraqi context, because the Kurds are far more likely to make common cause with Shi'a Arabs than with the Sunni Arabs who were responsible for massacring 182,000 Kurds in what is called the "Anfal" operation, and no Sunni Arabs, as the writer Kanan Makiya noted, in or out of Iraq ever uttered a syllable of protest about this mass-murder of Kurds by Arabs. For Sunni Arabs have always believed themselves superior to non-Arab Muslims, and we can all agree that Islam is, has been, and will be a vehicle for Arab supremacism, as noted by the late Anwar Shaikh, and that the Arabs have not hesitated to murder Kurds, suppress the Berbers and attempt to prevent them from preserving the Berber language and culture, and in Darfur, mass-murdered black Africans, though with the Kurds, the Berbers, and the black Africans in Darfur, all of those victims of Arab aggression and murder have themselves been Muslims – but Muslims of an inferior kind. Indeed, in Afghanistan, the locals came to hate the Arabs who came with Al Qaeda, because of their ill-concealed contempt for the Afghans, and the ways in which they ordered the Afghans about in their own country. And no doubt Pakistanis working in the Gulf bring back to Pakistan their own tales of mistreatment at the hands of Arabs.

Since February 2004 I have written many articles urging the removal of American forces from Iraq. I thought then, and nothing I have learned since – not about a "successful election," not about the famous "surge"

that changed so many doubters about the war into believers – which I never understood, for what did they now believe in? The stated or implied American goals, as making sense? Which goals? Bringing freedom to ordinary moms and dads? Keeping Sunnis and Shi'a from killing each other, and urging them instead to make certain compromises so that Iraq could stay intact and become prosperous? Keeping Arabs and Kurds from fighting? How realistic were any of those goals? But even more important, in what way would a stable, and unified, and prosperous Iraq help to weaken what can be called the Camp of Islam? In what way would such an outcome make the countries of Western Europe safer from such instruments of Jihad as the Money Weapon (mosques, madrasas, propaganda), well-targetted campaigns of Da'wa, especially in prisons, and above all, the demographic conquest which Houari Boumediene at the U.N. in 1974, and Qaddafi many times since, and many Muslim clerics too – you can see them at Youtube – have predicted would be the Conquest, the Demographic Conquest, by Muslims, of the countries of the West, that is of Western Europe.

I submit that when the Americans finally leave Iraq, the Shi'a will refuse to relinquish power (to Allawi or to anyone else who might be thought to represent Sunni interests). And any outreach to the Sunnis will be superficial and tepid, and that the Sunni Arabs, in turn, will make preparations to take, with the support of Sunnis outside Iraq, what they believe is theirs by right – that is, a large share of political power, far larger than their numbers would ordinarily entitle them. There will be discord, there will be low-level hostilities. And if we are lucky, the co-religionists of both Sunni and Shi'a Arabs will help both sides, sending volunteers, money (as, during the Iran-Iraq War, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait sent 60- billion dollars to Saddam Hussein for weaponry).

As for the Kurds, why should they, who since 1991 have enjoyed a freedom they never had before, thanks to American air cover that protected them while Saddam Hussein was still in power, and after the American invasion, proved to be far more helpful to, and more trusted by, the Americans, than were the Arabs – give up their dream of independence? They have oil, under Kurdistan. There are perhaps 30-40 million Kurds in the Middle East, spread out between northern Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Anatolia, with a

distinctive language and culture.

The friendliness of Kurds toward the Americans is not perfect, and it comes in large part from their recognition that whatever autonomy they possess, and whatever independence they might attain, is due, or would be due, to American support, American aid of all kinds. Furthermore, as with many other non-Arab Muslims, where there is an alternative identity – in this case that of being a “Kurd,” that identity helps to dilute the power of Islam. That is true for Iranians, who are keenly aware of their own pre-Islamic past, and of Turks too, but it is not true of Pakistanis, who have no identity other than that of being Muslims, inhabiting a state created of, by, and for Muslims, Pakistan, the “Land of the Pure.” Pakistani Muslims, and Bangladeshi Muslims, have no interest in pre-Islamic India, in “The Wonder That was India,” they have no interest in their own Hindu or Jain or Buddhist ancestors who were forcibly converted, or converted to avoid intolerable conditions under Muslim masters, to Islam. They have no other identity, and that is why Pakistanis are the Muslims closest in their fanatical faith to the Arabs, whose ethnic identity, Arabness, “Uruba, reinforces Islam so that it even causes some Christian Arabs to adopt the worldview, and promote the geopolitical ambitions, of the Umma, the Community of Believers.

American policy in Iraq has resulted in a colossal squandering of men, money, materiel, and of attention too – we focused on Iraq, and by manically focusing on it for so many years, wasted time that might have been spent coming to grasp the meaning, and the menace, of Islam.

And Afghanistan?

Not quite the same, but almost.

Afghanistan is on the other side of the world, ringed by deserts and mountains and itself full of mountainous terrain, difficult to negotiate. And we rely on an airfield in Kyrgyzstan, and then on trucks to travel through Pakistan, which itself is essentially not an ally but enemy territory, and then through the Khyber Pass. The most difficult supply route in the world. What could happen if somehow the corrupt Karzai regime came to an end? We could keep supplying aid to the Pushtuns, and the Tadzhiks, and the Uzbeks, we could supply aid to Sunnis and to the Shi'a Hazaras. We could build schools, not all of which would be burned down, and water treatment plants, and power plants, and electric grids, and everything else. But so what? What would we have accomplished? How would we have weakened the forces of Jihad, that is, the Camp of Islam?

Al Qaeda can be prevented from re-establishing itself in Afghanistan without any Western troops being permanently stationed there. Nor is any kind of makeover, or any aid of any kind to Afghanistan, required to keep Al Qaeda out. Nor need we bring a factitious "unity" to a country that consists of warring ethnic groups (Tadzhiks, Uzbeks, Pashtuns, Hazaras) and, even within those larger groupings, all kinds of tribal and family enmities that it would be impossible to record or remember and play upon for our own purposes, especially since loyalties can only be rented, not bought, and only most temporarily. Afghanistan – it's a name, not a country in the Western sense – has never had a strong central government, and whose tribes and families enjoy making war on one another, and always have done so. That does not require transferring large amounts of wealth to them. It only requires monitoring, with drones and planes, the land area – it would have to be done even if there were hundreds of thousands of American troops in Afghanistan, for they could not possibly patrol the whole vast area, and in monitoring, and being vigilant, creating a new reality that has nothing to do with returning Afghanistan, and the Al Qaeda threat, to the status quo ante. We are not prevented, if we withdraw from Afghanistan, from attacking when and if they are deemed necessary, nor in firing missiles now and again from drones. Some talk and write as if an American withdrawal from Afghanistan would somehow deprive us of the ability or right to ever enter, intermittently, and in

minimally invasive fashion, Afghanistan ever again. But why would anyone think this? Of course we can return, whenever we want.

Like Iraq, and for reasons only slightly different, Afghanistan represents a further squandering, of men, money, materiel and, also not to be overlooked, uses up attention by government officials, attention that should be spent on many other things, including far more effective and cheaper means to weaken the Camp of Islam and, therefore, the threat of Jihad.

We need not make mention of China, and its dangerous rapaciousness and nationalism, or about anthropogenic global warming which is still not accepted by many of those who, when it comes to Islam, seem to be unfoolable, but apparently their supply of unfoolability is limited, and they've already given at the office.

If we keep still to the subject of Jihad, we find that the most important theatres of war are areas of the world where American inattention, or the wrong kind (because ill-informed) attention, threatens countries far more important to the West than does any conceivable outcome in Muslim Iraq or Muslim Afghanistan or Muslim Pakistan. These are Infidel lands where Muslims are on the march, and where many Infidels outside, and some inside, show a lack of understanding of what is going on, and seem ready to meet Muslim demands, and thereby to help swell the sense of Muslim triumphalism.

Let's start with the Jihad against Israel. Slow Jihadists and Fast Jihadists, who differ only on matters of tactics and timing. The war has no solution, not a one-state, two-state, n-state solution. We should stop

thinking naively in terms of “problems” and concomitant “solutions.” There is no “solution” to Jihad, and certainly not to the Jihad against Israel. There is something else, which is managing a situation, making a threat less threatening, making it such that open warfare is unlikely to occur. The way is clear: deterrence can work, and the Muslims can be forced to explain their inaction, as they have in the past, by relying on the doctrine of *Darura*.

Darura means “Necessity.” The concept can be invoked, for example, to justify eating pork if a Muslim has nothing else to eat. And “Necessity” can justify not going to war which would otherwise be compulsory. Muslims do not make open war on Israel when they think they cannot win, and right now they think they cannot win. But if they ever come to believe that they can win, or can win without suffering such retaliatory damage as to make it unwise, Arab rulers will have no excuse not to do so – even if they dimly suspect that they won’t win, that damage will be severe.

An Arab or Iranian leader – at least in the Islamic Republic of Iran – needs to explain why he does not go to war. Right now no explanation is necessary: Israel is too strong, and understood to be too strong. But what if Israel is reduced in size? Then what appears on the map to be a ridiculously and hopelessly tiny country then seems to have become even more obviously impossible to defend, then the likelihood of an Arab attack grows. “*Darura*” may be invoked to justify not waging open warfare on an unsubmitive Infidel enemy if that Infidel enemy remains too strong. So “*Darura*” can be considered the doctrine invoked when Deterrence, by Infidels, that is the threat of inflicting far greater damage on a Muslim attacker than the Muslim attacker can himself inflict, is successful. Think of “*Darura*” then as simply a name we can use for Deterrence. For if Israel is not only stronger, but overwhelmingly so, and seen to be so, then there will be no war. There will never be real peace. That is impossible. But so what? The present situation is not bad, and perfectly manageable. Without permanent control of the “West Bank” Israel’s position is NOT manageable, war is more likely, for Arab leaders – including those who succeed Mubarak in Egypt, and King Abdullah in

Jordan – will not be able to resist. The temptation of a gang-up will be too great, especially since the Arabs have never really known defeat as Germany and Japan knew it, with the ruination of their countries, lying in smoldering ruins. That Israel has never inflicted, and never wanted to inflict.

What about the other great theatre of Jihad, at present conducted through many different instruments other than terrorism or qitaal – that is, Western Europe? Here the problem was entirely avoidable, but not avoided. It came about because Western leaders, and members of the media, simply assumed that there was no problem with Muslim immigrants, no problem with the ideology of Islam. Now, with some 20-30 million Muslims in the West, they know better, but it is a little late. The Arabs and Muslims like to claim that they were “brought in” to “do the work Europeans wouldn’t do.” This is, with one exception, almost entirely false. That one exception is West Germany, and there, during the economic miracle of Ludwig Ehrhard, Turkish males were encouraged to come, to work as *gastarbeiter*, guest workers, to send money home, and then, it was assumed, they would leave. Not only did they not leave, but they ultimately were allowed to bring their wives – how many is unclear – and their many many children, and were allowed to stay, and the results you can see in any large German city.

But elsewhere, it simply is not true, and has to be repeatedly and firmly rejected, that the Pakistanis were “needed” to open grocery stores and news stands, or that the Algerian Arabs were desperately needed by the French or the Moroccans by the Spanish, or Moroccans and Turks by the Dutch, or Moroccans and Kurds and Turks and other Arabs by Denmark, Sweden, Norway, or Egyptians and Libyans by the Italians. They were not invited in, but they were ineffectively kept out, and they keep coming, by hook and by crook, managing to arrive, where instead of filling a felt economic need, they tend with their plural wives – all of them deliberately uneducated, and mere breeders of children – to become burdens on the state, taking

advantage of every conceivable benefit, free health care at a level they could never obtain in a Muslim land, free education, of a kind they could never obtain in a Muslim land, free or heavily subsidized housing, and so on. Polls suggest that most young Arabs in North Africa and the Middle East would leave their own lands for Europe in a minute, if they could, that such emigration is their fondest wish. It is the task of the peoples of Western Europe to keep them out, for unlike refugees from the Nazis and the Communists, who came to warn those who gave them refuge about Nazism and Communism, those who flee the miseries of Muslim lands do not recognize the cause of that misery – Islam itself – and come bearing Islam in their mental baggage, undeclared, then unpack it, to the great woe of those among whom they have come to live, and whose lands they regard as, in a sense, belonging by right to them, as Believers, as the Best of Peoples, and only temporarily to the Infidels who live in them. They are interested in the land, the territory, and all of its wealth, but have no idea what it was that created that wealth, or allowed for good government.

In Western Europe, two things can be noted: the first is that the problem with Muslim immigrants is unique and does not occur with any other immigrant group, not Hindus, not Chinese, not non-Muslim black Africans, not Latin American Indians – only with Muslims. And second, the great problem of Muslims is not limited to this or that country, but is observable all over Europe, in every country, and the effects and the distress are most noticeable in two small countries that once upon a time elevated Tolerance and Diversity to the gods of a secular religion, but whose citizens have learned, to their great sorrow, that these ideas have been used to import and protect the bearers, and disseminators, of Intolerance, and Islam itself is the greatest enemy of Diversity – wishing to make the whole world one uninterrupted Dar al-Islam – in human history.

Which now brings me to what, instead of those wasteful wars, and that sentimental messianism, of Iraq, and to a lesser extent Afghanistan, should be done – not to bring “victory” in the war of self-defense against the Jihad now visited, in every sense, upon us, because no “victory” is possible – but, rather, to “redimension” (cut down to size) the problem, to make it less dangerous, to bring down the level of risk. How is this to be done?

In the first place, through self-education and through dissemination of what you have learned about Islam to others. They don't have to know everything about Islam, but they have to know something. And bookish knowledge should be supplemented by an understanding of Muslim behavior, and how it reflects what Islam inculcates. You don't have to know a specialized vocabulary, though such words as “Jihad” and “dhimmi” and “taqiyya” are useful to understand, to define for others, and to employ. One should never be at a loss in a room full of taqiyya-and-tu-quoque masters, always able to see through, and to help others see through, the *blague*, the nonsense and lies, however subtle or oblique may be its presentation.

And then what? Then one would see that the war of self-defense against Islam is primarily an ideological war, and we have to be sure of ourselves, sure that whatever our own great faults, or the faults of our societies, they are as nothing compared to the death-in-life that Islam presents. We need to grasp what Islam teaches, and what the consequences are of growing up in societies suffused with Islam, and what happens to individual liberties, to the enterprise of science, to the practice of art, when one is raised up in a society where everything militates against free and skeptical inquiry, where as a consequence the craziest things, the most absurd conspiracy theories, are deeply believed not, as in the West, by a handful of cranks, but in the Islamic lands, believed by a great many, and disbelieved only by those who are regarded as a handful of cranks.

I maintain that while leaving Muslim states alone, and hoping that their own sectarian, and ethnic and even economic resentments and hostilities will, in the absence of immediate Infidels upon whom to vent one's wrath, will develop naturally, and that this would be a good thing. The best thing to have happened to the West in the last twenty years was the Iran-Iraq War, and from our point of view, it should have gone on forever, weakening Iran, and Iraq, and using up billions of dollars from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the U.A.E., and for eight years, from 1980 to 1988, keeping the Islamic Republic of Iran busy – since that war has ended, we have seen that the Islamic Republic has had time to start its nuclear project, and to bring it almost to fruition, while supporting terrorist attacks from Paris to Buenos Aires, and now backing Hezbollah in Lebanon, a threat both to the Jews of Israel and to the Christians, and not only the Christians, in Lebanon.

We should welcome, and do nothing to discourage, the sectarian conflict between Sunnis and Shi'a in Iraq, and recognize that the aggression and violence, and inability to compromise, that one now notices, is a result of what Islam does – for the Qur'an, the Hadith, the Sira are full of violence. Muslims are taught that there are only two outcomes: the Victor and the Vanquished. It is Muslims who will ultimately be the Victors, and their enemies, the Infidels, who will be the Vanquished. But these categories, and the ways of thought and behaviors that result from such categories, do not disappear when no Infidels are on the horizon, but only fellow Muslims. The same attitude, the same refusal to compromise, though temporary and deceitful bargains may be struck, occurs when one set of Muslims opposes another set – say, Arabs against Kurds or Berbers or black Africans in Darfur, or Sunni Arabs against Shi'a Arabs, or Sunni Pakistanis against Shi'a Pakistanis. That's not to be deplored. That's to be observed, and its workings out regarded with grim satisfaction.

In one way we can help things along. That is by encouraging the translation and widespread dissemination of texts, such as the book by

Anwar Shaikh, "Islam: The Arab National Religion," that show all the ways in which Islam has been and remains, a vehicle for Arab supremacism. We know those ways: the requirement that the Qur'an be read in Arabic, the requirement that one look to seventh-century Arabs, and their mores, as a permanent guide to life, even for non-Arabs living in the twenty-first century, the turning Mecca-wards, that is towards the Hejaz in western Arabia, five times a day, the frequent taking on of an Arab name, the making of Arab history one's study while the history of one's own people and land – see Pakistan – is frequently dismissed, forgotten, of no interest. All of this can, if pointed out, be hard to ignore, because it happens to be so obviously and vividly true. Why the hell are people wandering around Pakistan with Arab names, ignoring the history of India, Bharat, and even claiming to be "sayids" that is descendants of the family of the Prophet? It is as if black Africans in Nigeria claimed descent from King Arthur, and wore suits and shoes in the jungle – a comic theme adumbrated in "Mr. Johnson" by Joyce Cary, but a tragic one if truly believed and acted upon by many.

While we should practice non-invasive military surgery –that is, monitoring from the skies and from afar, and from time to time, bombing terrorist training camps, or groups, but whenever we choose to do so, and without sending over large numbers of troops, difficult to maintain, and never again making the mistake of thinking we must win Muslim hearts and Muslim minds through the lavishing of aid and the "construction" (called falsely "reconstruction") of their countries, which are the way they are, in large part, because of Islam itself.

That is what should be done abroad.

In our own countries, aside from the obvious change in immigration policies, so that all Muslim immigration is halted, and naturalization will in the future include a much larger examination of the true beliefs of those who are asked to swear an oath of allegiance to the

Constitution, and with a provision that citizenship will be stripped from those who perjured themselves in swearing such an oath, and then to point out that the Shari'a flatly contradicts the American Constitution in both letter and spirit, as the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights, flatly contradicts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of which it pretends to be merely an oh-so-slight "Islamic" variant.

But most important is for us, the Non-Muslims of this world, to grasp all the ways that Islam itself explains the political, economic, social, intellectual, and moral failings and failures of Muslim polities and Muslim peoples. We should explain how the emphasis on blind submission to Allah's will has consequences for attitudes toward the Ruler. We should explain the Muslim political theory that relies not on mere man-made expressions of desire – they should not count – but rather on the will expressed by Allah in the Qur'an. There is a reason why almost no Muslim states are democracies, and so many so naturally despotic.

In economic matters, we can point out that the largest transfer of wealth in human history – some thirteen trillion dollars since 1973 alone, to the Muslim oil states, simply because they sat on reserves of oil, and not because they did anything to earn such fantastic sums, has not resulted in modern economies. They are all still dependent almost entirely on the oil and gas revenues, and furthermore, they rely on vast armies of wage-slaves from the non-Muslim lands, for their doctors, teachers, petroleum engineers, for their technical advisers of every sort, their pilots, their mechanics, and it is to the West that the Arabs who can afford to go for health care, and for their children's education, and for practically everything that they need, for they produce nothing, they make nothing. In Dubai, there are 250,000 natives and more than a million non-natives who are the ones who make the economy, such as it is, go – and the same is true in the other emirates, in Kuwait, in Qatar, in Saudi Arabia. In Libya Qaddafi can't even build roads, and keeps trying to blackmail the Italians into doing so. Yet the Arabs and Muslims act as if they possess real economies. They do not, and they do not, in large

part, because of Islam. The Muslim hostility toward innovation, *bid'a*, discourages new ways of doing things, discourages local entrepreneurs. And the dislike of work, that Wafa Sultan has noted among Arabs, who have a *razzia*-mentality, the mentality of the desert raiders, is perhaps attributable not only to the model of seventh-century Arabs who looted for profit, rather than farmed themselves, has something to do with *inshallah*-fatalism. One has only to compare, by the way, the unemployment rates, and rates of incarceration for crimes, of Muslims and non-Muslims, in Western Europe, to see further evidence of the truths Wafa Sultan offers.

Then there are what may be called the social failures. Societies in which women are kept as sex slaves, or breeders, not allowed lives of their own, at every turn thwarted and kept under male control, are not what we regard as acceptable. And the mistreatment of all non-Muslims – whether Hindus in Pakistan and Bangladesh, or Christians throughout the Muslim world – has led to an outflow of these Hindus, and of these Christians. And since non-Muslims have been a source of economic stimulus and cultural vivacity – there are Egyptian film-makers and writers who lament the disappearance of “old” Alexandria and Cairo – that is, the cities where the Greeks, Italians, Jews, Armenians, all lived and fructified an Egypt that has become more and more boringly monochromatic, and even the Copts, under assault, are made to feel, in their own country (they are the truest and most loyal descendants of the Egyptians, the ones who refused to be either Islamized or Arabized, though of course they must use the Arabic language) are feeling marginalized. The movie “The Yacoubian Building” is about a different Egypt, a more secular and interesting Egypt, the Egypt of the 1930s, 1940s, even 1950s, before, under the supposedly secular Nasser – underneath that secularism there was still the firm subsoil of Islam – when the Greeks, Italians, Jews had their property stolen, and were booted out.

The intellectual failures come from the indifference, in Islam, to everything but Islam. Oh, it's true that somewhere along the line Muhammad is said that Muslims should take knowledge from everywhere, but

this single quote is not enough to undo the anti-intellectual smothering atmosphere of Islam – for there is Islam as the final truth, and all else is only important insofar as it can help the triumph of Islam. And that means that fanatical Muslims are perfectly willing to contemplate study in the West of the sciences, because these, they think, will help them to learn the mysteries of military technology that have eluded them, and that is what they want to find out about, or like A. Q. Khan, to simply steal military secrets wholesale. They have no interest in study of how the brain works, how life began, how the universe began, the structure of DNA, the nature of the cosmos. That's all been dealt with, and for all time, in the Qur'an. But how to build WMD –now that is knowledge worth having, whether acquired in East or West.

We have all read about that U.N. Report on the squalid intellectual state of Arab countries – the one written by those described as “Arab intellectuals.” The report offers statistics as evidence for the lack of intellectual curiosity about all kinds of things, as reflected in the fact that all 22 of the Arab countries manage to translate a mere 330 books a year (many of them junk novels, or military technology, no doubt), that is fewer books than tiny and impoverished Greece manages to translate for the profit and pleasure of Greeks, every year. But what the Arab authors did not do is compare, for example, translation in Pakistan with translation in India, that is to examine other Muslim lands. And what they fail to mention, fail even to hint at, is the role of Islam in discouraging free and skeptical inquiry. For Muslims, Islam is supposed to contain everything, and the rest is merely a footnote, possibly to be consulted when weaponry is needed, but otherwise unnecessary. There is no curiosity about the history, the culture, of non-Muslim lands and peoples, nor about their art, their science, their political theory. That curiosity originates in the West – the same West that Muslims are taught to despise.

Now why should it matter if we understand the reasons for the failures of Muslim societies? First of all it will give us confidence to continue to defend ourselves, and not to give in on this or on that, when Muslims

make demands. It will make us much more resolute in our determination not to yield, and not to allow Muslims to undo us from within. It will strengthen the resolve to change our immigration policy toward Muslims, and to refuse to change our own ways to accommodate Muslim demands, but we will, rather, wish all over the West to make our countries less generous and welcoming to those who do not wish us well, and cannot wish us well.

And even more important, if the relating of these many failures to Islam is widely discussed, then those who exist in the prison of Dar al Islam will have to overhear us, and in so doing, will ultimately have to try to rebut what we say. But what we say will be true, and will be impossible to rebut, and the attempts to do so will be clumsy and unconvincing, and more and more of those who are capable of thought, within the world of Islam, will be forced to recognize, possibly at first only for themselves, the truth of what we point out. This will distress and demoralize large numbers of people, who will have to begin to question Islam and its wonderfulness, if it turns out that Islam explains their own backwardness, a backwardness exhibited less in those Muslim countries, such as Turkey, that managed over many decades to constrain Islam as a political and social force (and as Turkey backslides into Islam, many parts of Turkish society, and even its economy, will suffer).

This is what must be done. Not boots on the ground. Not surges. Not winning of hearts and minds. None of it. Just an understanding – a deep understanding – of Islam and its effects on the minds, and societies, of those who, through no fault of their own, have been born into, and raised up within, it.

The theme of this talk was what was to be done about Islam, meaning, how best might the dangers of Jihad, pursued by adherents of Islam world-

wide, through the use of many different instruments, be diminished because, as I noted, there is no "solution" to Jihad, but merely the possibility of reducing its threat to more manageable proportions.

I reviewed with you the twin follies of Iraq and Afghanistan, and suggested that the best way to contain Islam was not to invade, not to conquer, not to try to win Muslim hearts or minds, but simply to take the doctrines of Islam seriously, and to understand that they cannot be reinterpreted away, and so we should act to defend ourselves, and in defending ourselves to husband our resources, by exploiting, cleverly and relentlessly, the pre-existing fissures – sectarian, ethnic, and economic – within the world of Islam, with special attention to disseminating among the 80% of the world's Muslims who are not Arabs that Islam, despite its universalist claims, is – as Anwar Shaikh called it – "the Arab national religion." It is not hard to show all the ways in which the practices that Islam reinforce the use of Islam as a vehicle for Arab supremacism. That should be a major theme in the exploitation of those identifiable fissures I have discussed.

And the second point I wished to make is that if we study Islam, we begin to understand all the ways that Islam itself explains the failures of Muslim societies, and that the explanations of those political, economic, social, intellectual, and moral failures are no convincing, and so impossible to rebut, that once stated, and re-stated, and re-stated, by Infidels, speaking among themselves, Muslims will overhear the discussion, and be forced to respond, and will be unable to do so convincingly.

That's what, answering the question asked by my title "Islam: What Is To Be Done?" I think should be done.

Perhaps, if you have read this far, you will find reasons to agree.

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