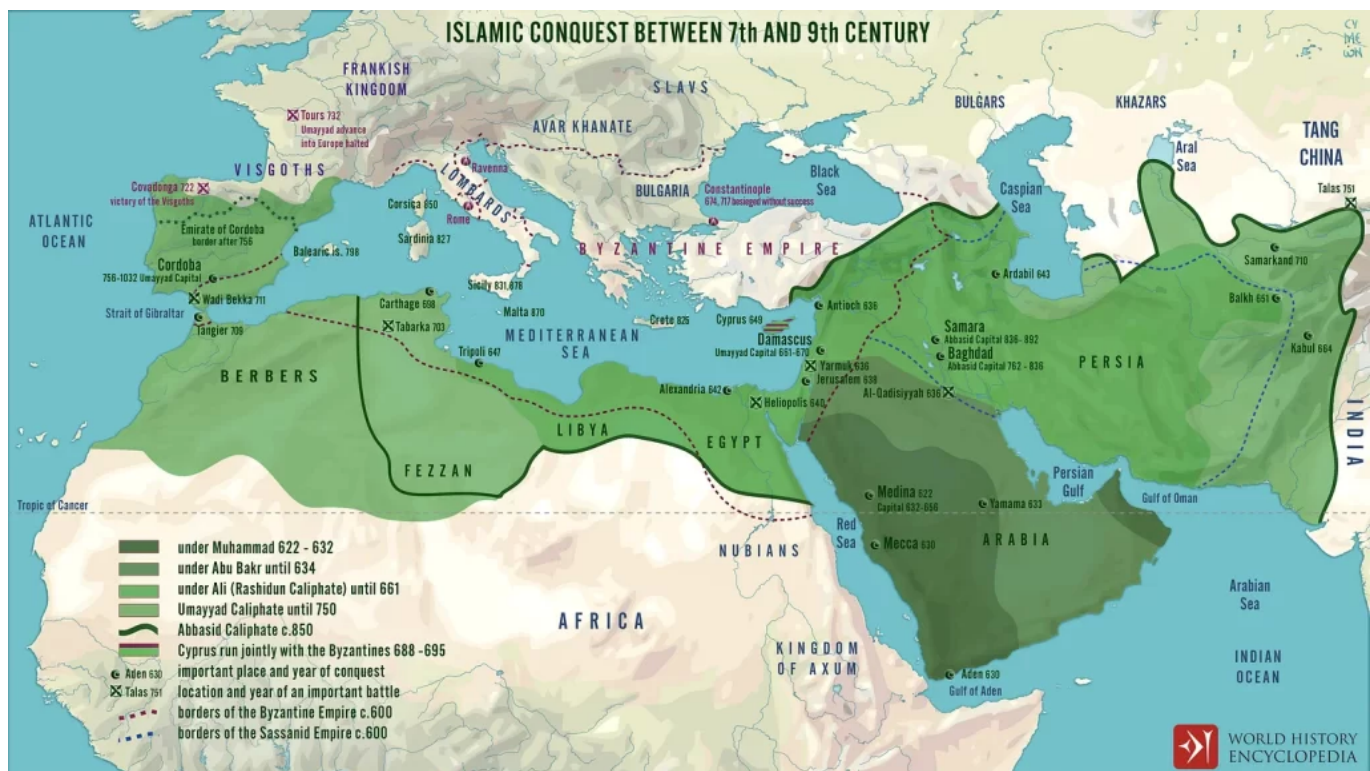


Islamic Imperialism



by Lev Tsitrin

Imperialism got a very bad rap nowadays. A mere century ago it was trumpeted as a “white man’s burden,” a duty to be proudly borne, a noble enterprise of spreading civilization to the “half-devil and half-child” of the non-Western world, as Rudyard Kipling memorably put it. Nowadays, it is a cause for ancestral shame and descendants’ penance. All cultures are equal, none are “backward.” In the West, multiculturalism replaced imperialism as the dominant mindset.

But not everyone is ashamed of their imperialist past. It must have been fifteen or so years ago that I attended a talk with the Syrian representative to the UN, and asked him during Q&A whether Arab conquests that followed the death of Mohammed and gave the Arabs half of the then-known world, from Spain in the West to India in the East, were just another instance of imperialism, to be condemned and ashamed of. No, he replied – because they spread Islam!

To his mind, Islam was a civilizing force – which I think fully explains a phenomenon that comes up in conversations time and again: the seemingly inexplicable insolence with which Moslems who came to the West, loudly – and occasionally, violently – protest their adopted countries' Middle East policies, and decry the free speech which allows, among other things, for criticism and mockery of Islam, seeking to shut it down with “anti-blasphemy” laws – while one would have naturally expected them to be grateful to hospitality extended to them, getting assimilated into a new homeland that must be a far better place than the (I forgot the exact word Trump used, but never mind) countries they ran away from – ran away for a reason that those countries were exactly what Trump called them – though, again, I regret forgetting his term.

Yet the Syrian ambassador's answer raises the question of, why should we be surprised? If, as we read in history books, in 19th century a colonial power like France or Belgium could suppress local laws replacing them with European ones in the Kiplingian spirit of civilizing the locals, why wouldn't today's Moslems do the same – impose their will on Europeans among whom they live, since Moslems know the right and proper way of life, while the natives don't? If it is Islam that is the real “light of civilization,” then it would be natural for Moslems to feel that it is they who are the rightful masters of Sweden, Denmark, France, Germany, the UK, the locals being but mere un-Moslemed savages devoid of any sense of what's true and right – Kipling's “half-devil and half-child”!

It should not be hard for any multiculturalist – necessarily well-read in the history of their ancestors' imperialism that is part of the penitent history curriculum, and therefore well-aware of its tenets, to project that imperialist mindset to others. Isn't this called “empathy”? Try to empathize with someone for whom Islam is the epitome of God's will, and who is stepping on the shores of the land where natives are unaware of Islam's obvious truth – and hence, are of necessity

savages?

Put yourself in those Moslems' shoes. Ask yourself the question they must be asking themselves: shouldn't the ignorant natives get civilized? Shouldn't they be taught the right, Islamic way to live? Isn't it unnatural (let alone annoying) that they should stick to their error? Shouldn't they be *made* to abandon it?

Well, the answers to all suchlike questions are an obvious "yes." Hence, the in-your-face behavior – behavior of the conquerors, of the natural, rightful masters who demand what is their (and more importantly, God's) due.

Most natives look the other way, writing off this this behavior, even when it becomes a little too disturbing, to "culture" of the newcomers – which should just be added to a country's priceless multicultural treasury. Those who see danger in the newcomers and treat them as imperialists bent on takeover are nothing but racists and bigots, to be shunned, their voices ignored.

Is it possible to break through the thick wall of political correctness that protects this goody-goody attitude?

Let's try. This terminology is that of moral outrage: racism and bigotry are morally-charged terms. So what if we look at the problem from a non-moral, but purely intellectual standpoint? What if, instead of treating Islamism as an anthropological phenomenon (and therefore, subject to "multiculturalism") we treat it as an intellectual one – and use this approach, examine the Moslem newcomers' intellectual pretensions?

After all, their staked position *is* intellectual: they claim to know the truth – which is why they try to thrust it on others (much like what Galileo did, arguing against the geocentric system and getting into trouble with the Inquisition).

“Truth” is of course a completely different frame of reference than “culture,” and the West is extremely well-equipped to deal with it. And a look at the claims to truth offered by the Islamists show that Islamism has a fatal logical flaw: it simply does not follow from Mohammed’s claim that God talked to him, that God indeed talked to him. It is simply impossible for anyone to know whether He did. Galileo invited other astronomers to verify his observations – but there is no telescope with which one can verify the origin of Mohammed’s “observations” that are recorded in the Koran. The term “truth” simply does not apply to it, toppling the entire edifice of Islamism – and this renders Islamists’ unsubstantiated (and unsubstantiateable) claim to knowing the truth idolatrous, to use religious terminology.

But if the Islamists are wrong, so are we in the West, too. We treat as “culture” that what claims to be a science – but is really a pseudo-science, gone badly awry right at the onset as a result of a simple error embedded in its chain of reasoning, its claims to truth being utterly worthless.

Once the West’s error (a “category error,” to use the exact term used by logicians) is corrected, it turns out that it is not the Westerners who are benighted, and in need of instruction and correction by the newly-arrived and still-arriving Islamists. It is in fact just the other way around – it is the Islamists who have it wrong and should stand corrected – both in the West, and in their (darn it, I still can’t recall Trump’s term!) native lands which they fled.

The West with its freedoms – including the freedom of criticizing, and even poking fun at Islam – is based on an intellectual system that is vastly superior to that practiced by Islamists. We should not allow the new arrivals to replace what is good with imported Islamism that is definitely wrong.

Moreover, the Islamic countries that still treat Islam as final truth, need to abandon their stance, even if it leads to

Western-style “multiculturalism.” Call it “Western imperialism” if you will – but free reason is indeed a civilizing force, and the reason – and very basic reasoning – tell us that Islamist imperialism is rooted in error and must end for good.

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