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**ROLE OF MUSLIMS TO CONFRONT TERRORISM**

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***AS VIOLENCE BY EXTREMIST MUSLIMS OCCUR AROUND THE WORLD, PEOPLE ARE TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE FACTORS CAUSING THIS OCCURRENCE IN A WORLD THAT IS FILLED WITH VIOLENCE BY EVERY RELIGIOUS GROUP AND MOVEMENT. GUEST COLUMNIST DR. M. BASHEER AHMED HEADS UP THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY CENTER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, BASED IN DALLAS, TEXAS, AND IS OFTEN ASKED TO ADDRESS THIS SPECIFIC ISSUES. HERE ARE SOME OF THE THINGS HE DISCUSSES WITH MUSLIM AND NON-MUSLIM AUDIENCES***

**BY DR. M. BASHEER AHMED**

This is no longer news that the Muslim Terrorists are creating havoc by indiscriminate killing of innocent Muslims and Non-Muslims all over the world. It is just a matter of where and when?  It is followed by media frenzy.   Then interfaith groups convene. Sometimes I am summoned to speak to such peace loving groups about Islam. I try to emphasize that Islam promotes justice, equality, peace and harmony in the world and that these attacks are not representative of the followers of Islam. A more complex discussion evolves in trying to understand or explain the recurring attacks, and how to stop them.

In my humble opinion, one of those factors is:

*1)  The Current Role And Image Of US And Western Countries In The Mideast.*

The Muslim resentment of the United States and the Western countries and visive has peaked in recent years.  As a Muslim American, I find it alarming.

Faithful

If I may, the ground reality is the immense atrocities of wars we spearheaded in the Muslim world. Half baked and mind boggling snippets of information fed through the media and other social outlets fanned hate and anger among Muslims. It is being attributed to the foreign policies of the western countries, especially the United States. For that, the United States has been losing its popularity and respect in the Middle East and South Asia since late 1960s. It was mainly due to its perceived policy of “20th century colonialism.” Here in the United States, our words of promoting human values, dignity to human life, justice and equality do not match our politically correct behavior abroad.

The US foreign policy in the Middle East does not have any significant effect on ordinary US citizens. Here, all of us rejoice the freedom of speech, economic stability, law and order, and an equal opportunity to actualize our dreams. However, there are people here who clearly see the negative consequences of these US policies in the Middle East and other Muslim Countries. They are not afraid to point out that these policies are created purely to expedite Armageddon and for economic gains in the United States and Europe at the expense of the Muslim citizens in the Middle East, and they are not hesitant to call the US “the most terrorist country in the World” (<https://www.rt.com/usa/202223-noam-chomsky-global-terro>).

The illegal invasion of Iraq by the United States led to the deaths of at least one million people, destabilized the entire region, and created extreme conditions in which militant groups like al-Qaeda spread like a virus, eventually leading to the current era of ISIS. . (*[Dahr Jamail](http://www.truth-out.org/author/itemlist/user/44706)  “*Report Shows US Invasion, Occupation of Iraq Left 1 Million Dead”,*Truthout | Report*)

During the Iraq war and thereafter, innocent people were not only rounded-up, tortured and imprisoned; hundreds of thousands were also killed. Lots of photos were posted on-line. The Abu ghuraib photo-reports were much too much even for the members of congress. These actions created tremendous hate and anger among Muslims in Middle East against the United States.

The disastrous NATO intervention in Libya destroyed the infrastructure, turning the country into a hotbed for extremism and allowing militant groups like ISIS to spread west into North Africa. Thousands of Libyans were killed, and hundreds of thousands became refugees.

Until very recently, Obama government was being pressured to bomb Iran for the same reason Bush attacked Iraq. If Iran were attacked, the US would have been responsible for the creation of another vintage of ISIS, worse than the Iraqi ISIS.

*There may not be a peace in Middle East until Western powers leave the area and stop installing regimes for their personal short term economic gains.*

In the midst of a multitude of terrorist groups, we seem to have overlooked the real problem. Bypassing, circumventing, avoiding or just out right partiality has now unfortunately left with only one solution. That is, a complete withdrawal by the West from any involvement in Middle East affairs. There is no doubt that more people will die. It will still be much less than that being caused now by the indiscriminate bombardment of the region being shelved by the West, including Russia. If western countries would just leave, and stop arming the “favorite” Muslims, the fuel and the oxygen for this firework would be gone. Unfortunately, the greed, the desire to control a people and continue to exert remains far too tempting for the powerful and the mighty. These factors are ever so vivid to any Middle-Easterner lay man. And this begs a question –

*“Are these factors not enough for Muslims in Middle East to show resentment, anger, hatred and revenge towards US and their allies, including Russia?*

**2) RESPONSIILITIES OF MUSLIMS**

The ensuing anarchy in Muslims lands has also given rise to heart wrenching events. The bombing of a mosque in Iraq killing hundreds of people who were performing Juma prayer on the first day of Ramadhan-a very sacred day for the Muslims. One hundred and fifty (150) Muslim children are killed in Pakistan by Muslim terrorists without any mercy, 300 school girls kidnapped and taken away from the families in Nigeria, Muslim terrorists shoot a group of Ismaili Muslims in a bus in Pakistan, and people are picked out from a bus and killed because they were Shias. All this is being done under the name of Islam. What a merciful Islamic behavior demonstrated by Muslims upholding the good name of Islam (A Peaceful Religion).

Muslim Terrorists are operating under different names and different motives. Taliban, Al-Qaeda, Booko Haram, Al-Shahab, and hundreds of other groups are promoting violence in the name of Islam. Now, ISIS established a Muslim Khilafath and is promoting a more severe and brutal regime.

After these Muslim terrorists kill innocent people in the name of religion, the “moderate” Muslims, and even countries, typically react by issuing press releases and edicts (Fatwa) condemning the terrorists’ acts and apologizing for their behavior by labeling them un-Islamic and deviant. These press releases and Fatwa had no effect on terrorists.

Every time the media broadcasts Muslim terrorist acts, we accuse them of Islamophobia. We Muslims immediately give the statistic that 90% of the terrorist attacks are committed by Non- Muslim, though correct. Yet, fact remains, none of these terrorist acts are committed under the name of the religion. (I admit there are incidences like bombing of the abortion clinics, but they are extremely few, isolated and duly addressed…) Our denial will retain status quo.

What is the Solution?

The majority of the victims of Islamic terrorism are Muslims, and the majority of Muslims regard the terrorist’s activities as unislamic. However Muslims must take responsibility to control terrorism in the name of Islam.  Muslims need to stop sectarian violence and the spread the jihadi Wahhabi ideology resulting in death of thousands of Muslim throughout the world. If the majority of Muslims (95%) take this challenge, then terrorism can be controlled. By not taking any action, we are giving sanctions for terrorism. There is not necessarily a need for a complete reformation of Islamic faith, but Muslims do need to consider some reformation of radical Islamic ideology and reflect on the true Islamic spirit. Moderate Muslims must spread the correct message of Islam by refuting the Jihadi ideology.

Faith is a matter of relationship between God and human beings. The reformation of Muslims ideology is only possible through education, logic, and critical thinking. As long as some dominating groups try to impose their rigid and sometime illogical ideas in the name of religion, we cannot bring any change in the ideology. Mandating one interpretation of the Quranic message is not desirable and should be replaced with interpretations according to the needs of the time.

No matter whatever the underlying factors are. TERRORISM is not the answer as it will cause more death and destruction, and it is not a rational approach to the solution.

Therein lays a unique opportunity of historical proportion for Muslims. Along with millions of other peace loving American Citizens – across the board – we can work together to find a peaceful solution – towards national and international harmony.

*Dr Basheer Ahmed is the chairman emeritus of the Muslim Community Center for Social Services some 20 years ago in Dallas, Texas. You can read about it at:*[*http://mcc-hs.org/*](http://mcc-hs.org/)*Dr. Basheer Ahmed, has undertaken another initiative to nurture goodwill among Muslims of different backgrounds at Iqra. He can be reached at**mbahmed05@ yahoo.com*