

Radical Islam? – No such thing!

Recently contacted by a representative of the Rand Corporation, (an independent organisation which produces objective studies on a number of issues, including studies on national security matters funded by and for the US military) who wanted to talk about “radical” Muslims in the UK with me, this was my response, writes Ahmad Thomson :

You have requested my assistance in your study to try and identify a "spectrum of radicalization" for how individuals come to embrace radical Islam in the UK and you state that you are concerned mostly with those who advocate the use of violence and terrorism as part of their belief structure.

Actually I do not think I can be of much help to you, as I do not mix with people who advocate the use of violence and terrorism as part of their belief structure, whether Muslim or non-Muslim and whether individually motivated or state organised – nor do I know much about the inward state of such people, other than what can be deduced from what is broadcast on the media.

The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was a man of peace. Terror tactics both ancient and modern are entirely alien to the way of life which he embodied and which those who seek to follow him try to emulate.

Certainly the reason why I accepted Islam over thirty years ago was because I recognised it as the best means available to leading a balanced life and to reaching an understanding of existence which transcends institutionalised religious dogma, misguided humanist ideology and misconceived personal opinion.

No one forced me to accept Islam and Islam was never presented to me as a means of achieving worldly gain by means of force and violence. Islam was presented to me as the way of submission to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, which leads to a peaceful heart in this world and to the Garden in the next world, and I accepted it on this basis.

So as far as I am concerned, “radical Islam” is a contradiction in terms. It is not possible to be a true Muslim and simultaneously a violent terrorist. The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said that a Muslim is the one from whose tongue and whose hand you are safe.

I have always agreed with Kurt Vonnegut who wrote in one of his books, “Violence is the last resort of the incompetent.”

That said, I will express my view on these matters in case it assists your research. Whether or not you understand or agree with me, my words may help to clarify your own “objective” perceptions.

Firstly, it is absolutely necessary to scrutinise the terminology we use:

As you must be well aware, “spectrum of radicalization” is not an Islamic concept. It is a concept which is alien to the existence view of Muslims. The Qur’an does not talk of “moderates” and “radicals”, but of “muminun” and “kafirun” – of those who accept and those who reject divine guidance. The Qur’an identifies the kafirun as “the people of the left” and the muminun as “the people of the right”.

In this context, the words “left’ and “right” are not used to denote a person’s political leanings in this world, but rather they are used to describe who is destined for the Fire and who is destined for the Garden in the next world.

The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, always favoured what was most balanced and most in the middle in his actions and words – and he confirmed that Islam is the middle way which if you follow it will lead you to the Garden.

The term “radicalization” derives from the word “radical” which used to refer to the root or source of a matter, but which is now usually used to identify some form or other of extremism. It is usually the concept or label used by those who wish to target or isolate specific groups, whether Muslims or non-Muslims, who are perceived as imagined or potential threats to the currently dominant status quo which endorses and supports the disguised, unelected and therefore undeniably undemocratic, ruling banking elite, the 200 or 300 or so families who control 90% of the world’s wealth.

Since the original revelations of Moses, Jesus and Muhammad, may Allah bless them and grant them peace, all categorically forbid the practice of usury, anyone who wishes to abide by this divine prohibition is automatically labelled as “radical” both by the bankers and by the politicians and organisations who support them.

I believe it was Martin Heidegger who pointed out that one of the main techniques of those who think that they are in control of a totalitarian state is to make life difficult for one easily defined group within the larger society so that the remainder of its citizens will be cowed into obedience.

So, for example, during the last century in Europe about 20 million bourgeoisie were slaughtered because of their social class, about 6 million Jews and gypsies were slaughtered because of their race and about 6 million Muslims have been slaughtered because of their religion.

Although Muslims have never been the perpetrators of these “radical” measures, it is clear that during the last thirty years “the Communists” have been replaced by “the Muslims” as the target group who must be represented to all by the media as “the enemy” of “the free world” – “the international community” whose coalition forces have vividly demonstrated how prepared they are to repeatedly flout the rule of law and all commonly accepted standards of decency in order to promote an alleged “war on terror”, a war that has in fact terrorised countless numbers of civilians and probably resulted in more civilian casualties during the period 1990 – 2005 than those who died as a result of the recent tsunami.

What could be more radical in terms of the use of violence and terrorism as part of this belief structure than the indiscriminate use of napalm, bunker busters, daisy cutters and radioactive depleted uranium tipped warheads designed not only to cut through thick steel but also to poison a whole generation of mothers and infants – or the practice of dropping highly-coloured food packages one week and highly coloured cluster bombs the next week, presumably with the intention of causing maximum casualties amongst hungry children?

I do not keep the company of people who are prepared to go to such gruesome and barbaric lengths to secure their objectives.

What kind of person spends his or her life trying to come up with the most efficient technological means of exterminating large numbers of people as swiftly as possible? What kind of person makes their living not only by producing these weapons but also by selling them to both sides of any conflict? What kind of person is prepared not only to buy these weapons but also to use them? What kind of person does not care who they kill or how they kill or why they kill? Can they be described as human beings? I think not.

I remember discussing the 1st Gulf War with a retired member of the US Air Force who just happened to be sitting next to me on a flight to Detroit back in 1995 and who ended the conversation with a little smile and these chilling words: “We’re prepared to kill a lot of Arabs for the oil.” Subsequent events have proved that he was deadly serious.

It has long been apparent, however, at least to those who are not taken in by the politicians’ predictably scripted misleading rhetoric, that the current offensive in the Middle East is not simply concerned with securing control of oil reserves in the region. The invasions, occupations and annihilation of local populations only fully make sense in the context of what practical measures have to be taken in order to fulfil the Zionist dream of a Greater Eretz that stretches from the Nile to the Euphrates, since if this dream is to be realised then it follows that all those opposed to it or who might be opposed to it have to be neutralised.

Perhaps the only pertinent observation that I can make on the current radical and terrifying so called “war on terror” is that if there is a radical response to this offensive, whether in the region itself or further afield, then this is the direct result of the current implementation of American Zionist foreign policy in the Middle East : When a people come under attack, fighting back in self-defence is a natural response. Every legal system recognises this.

Those who identify with the attackers assist the attackers. Those who identify with the attacked assist the attacked. That’s life.

How people actually behave, how they act and react in this chain reaction is another matter. I have already made my views clear on this in an article which you have probably already read and which, if you have not, can be found at the following link :
http://www.aml.org.uk/pdf_files/shahid_or_suicide.pdf

The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, “If you fight like the enemy, you become like the enemy.” No human being in their right mind wants end up like that.

What I do see is that in the course of this so-called “war on terror” countless innocent non-combatant civilians have been caught up in the conflict and have suffered as a result, losing their liberty, their property, their well being and almost as often as not their lives, to such an extent that the repercussions have been felt far beyond the theatre of war.

Look, for example, at what has happened in the United States since the twin towers attack in 2001, at how many innocent Arabs and Muslims and even people who look like Arabs or Muslims have had their basic human rights violated simply on the basis of “suspicion” which under current legislation does not even have to be reasonable.

Of course when the authorities are criticised for these injustices, the blame is laid at the feet of “the radicals”, but for whom it is alleged, these draconian measures would not have been necessary. Martin Heidegger’s analysis appears more to the point.

I am neither a supporter of the present American imperium which in time will inevitably go the way of all empires – nor am I a supporter of those who imitate the behaviour of the American forces when responding to their attacks. I think both are deeply misguided. I do not wish to have anything to do with either group. They both make me sick.

I think you will probably learn more from interviewing those CIA and Mossad operatives whose techniques include the recruitment, training, support and radicalization of the tyrants whose eventual required demise will become the pretext and the justification for the next carefully planned offensives – so, for example, Usama bin Laden and his men who were supported by the United States in their fight against the Russians were “needed” to justify the subsequent American invasion of Afghanistan – and Saddam Hussain and his men who were supported by the United States in their war on the Iranians were “needed” to justify the subsequent American invasion of Iraq.

So, to conclude, if you think I am a likely source of information, you are mistaken – or if you think I am a potential parallax view candidate (referring to the 1974 film directed by Alan Pakula), you are also equally mistaken.

I am just a very small fish in a very large ocean, filled with wonder at the vastness of creation – and of little practical use to the Rand Corporation.

As one wise man pointed out, the creation is a veil that hides the Creator, so if you find the creation wonderful, imagine how wonderful the Creator is.

From a distance, one sees the extraordinary perfect balance in the interplay of opposites manifested in the creation, particularly in the interplay between the muminun and the kafirun. Close up, one experiences the opposites, sometimes rough – sometimes smooth, sometimes beautiful – sometimes ugly, sometimes difficult – sometimes easy, sometimes bitter – sometimes sweet, sometimes just – sometimes unjust, sometimes true – sometimes false, sometimes “moderate” – sometimes “radical”.

In the midst of all of this, personally, I am saddened by every aspect of the whole “radical” scenario. It all seems so unnecessary in the first place – but one has to accept that it is in the nature of things, that Allah has power over everything, that Allah does what He wants with His creation – creating, sustaining, destroying and recreating, that whatever happens is by the decree of Allah – that there is nothing that happens which is outside or beyond or independent of the decree of Allah. This is why we are commanded in the Qur’an to fear Allah – we do not know what he will decree for us, and to have hope in Allah – because He is Forgiving, Compassionate and Generous.

I remember when I was a young man at university, I read Leonardo da Vinci’s words, “The more I learn, the more I weep.” At the time I was too young and ignorant to understand his words and indeed I was puzzled by them. Now I am beginning to understand what he meant. In the words of Virgil:

Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.

“Tears are in the nature of things,
in the awareness of human transitoriness.”

Ultimately the final outcome will be in the next world which awaits us all on the other side of death.

Although the Qur'an identifies people in terms of whether they accept or reject divine guidance, as far as I can see, the "radicals" are far more likely to end up in the Fire and the "moderates" are far more likely to end up in the Garden, provided of course that they worshipped their Lord without associating anything or anyone other than Him with Him:

Recite what has been revealed to you of your Lord's Book.

No one can change His Words.

You will never find any safe haven apart from Him.

Restrain yourself patiently with those
who call on their Lord morning and evening
desiring His face.

Do not turn your eyes from them,
desiring the attractions of this world.

And do not obey someone whose heart
We have made neglectful of Our remembrance
and who follows his own whims and desires
and whose life has transgressed all bounds.

Say: 'It is the truth from your Lord;
so let whoever wishes have iman
and whoever wishes be kafir.'

We have prepared for the wrongdoers a Fire
whose billowing walls of smoke will hem them in.

If they call for help, they will be helped with water
like seething molten brass, frying their faces.

What a noxious drink! What an evil repose!

But as for those who have iman and do right actions,
We will not let the wage of good-doers go to waste.

They will have Gardens of Eden
with rivers flowing under them.

They will be adorned in them with bracelets made of gold
and wear green garments made of the finest silk
and rich brocade,
reclining there on couches under canopies.

What an excellent reward! What a wonderful repose!

(*Qur'an* : 18.27-31)

[*iman* : belief, faith acceptance in the heart of Allah and His Messenger. Iman consists of believing in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, the Garden and the Fire, and that everything, both good and bad, is by the decree of Allah.

kafir : someone who rejects Allah and His Messenger and the deen of Islam.

deen : life-transaction, religion in the broadest sense. The deen of Allah and the Muslim community is Islam but every society and cultural grouping have a deen which they follow.

Quotations from the Qur'an are from *THE NOBLE QUR'AN – a New Rendering of its Meaning in English* by Abdalhaqq and Aisha Bewley, (Bookwork, Norwich, 1999).]

A wise man once said, "If you persist in anything, you will arrive at the truth of the matter." – May you persist in your research until you do, remembering always that the ocean of existence is a mirror in which you see your self – and that whoever knows their self, knows their Lord.

Peace