

Jihad Al-Kuffar

A COLLECTION
OF POSTS
PUBLISHED
IN 2012

List of contents

Ready to strike? (February 8, 2012)

Controversial statements and good sense (February 16, 2012)

In the name of God (September 18, 2012)

***Nobel Prize for Peace or
Nobel Prize for Politically Correct Strategies?
(October 17, 2012)***

Four more years (November 8, 2012)

***The poor victims
who chant, sing and shout "Itbach el Yahud!"
(November 15, 2012)***

READY TO STRIKE?



February 8, 2012

An act of war is an awful event, especially in modern society. Its consequences are unpredictable, the death toll is often higher than expected and heavy damage is inevitable—both to infrastructures and national economy (which usually coincides with global economy). Sometimes, however, an act of war is to be interpreted as a rational action. The case of the war on Nazi-fascism is exemplary. Interestingly enough, the war on Nazi-fascism had a special feature: with few exceptions, there was a worldwide alliance, even among countries that were inspired by different principles, ethics and objectives.

Right now it seems impossible to have similar conditions: worldwide alliances are a reality in a very limited context (science fiction). Apart from the epic battles against alien invaders, it doesn't happen that many nations form an alliance to fight a common enemy. We had clear evidence a few months ago, when a few Western countries decided to take action against Gaddafi. Today, we have an even worse experience in the case of Syria. The heated debate on this country is particularly intriguing, because many leaders from different parts of the world have refused to make a stand against Bashar al-Assad even though the proposal of the most "aggressive" countries did not imply a military attack, but was simply meant to impose economic sanctions (probably because oil is not involved and, in consequence, a deployment of troops would be a waste of money!) Anyway, the massacres perpetrated by the regime were not enough to reach an agreement on a single strategy (probably because many politicians consider President Assad's Syria an interesting market... or because the techniques applied by this President to the crackdown in Homs might also be used, sooner or later, for emergency situations in China or Russia).

So, it is not surprising that Iran enjoys the support of many friendly world leaders and can pursue its policy with a certain degree of confidence. After all, who cares for Israel?

However, despite the unfavorable response of several countries, there's a rumor going around that an air strike on the Iranian nuclear facilities is still an option—or may be imminent. Given this fact, let us assume that the attack takes place. Let us also assume that it is successful. Then, it is absolutely necessary to plan an adequate response to the most likely response of Iran. To put it straight, it is absolutely necessary that a (possible) military success does not turn into a political and practical defeat.

To the best of my knowledge, the past experience (in similar scenarios) shows that there is only one efficient way to deal with the unavoidable problems caused by an act of war. But, alas, it is not so obvious that proper measures will eventually be implemented.

In my opinion, any hostile action that comes from Iran (or that can be reasonably assumed to come from Iran) should have immediate consequences, in terms of further strikes: on airports, harbors, aircraft, ships, railways, roads, power stations and so on. In the end, I believe that the attack can be launched only by a country which is fully determined to strike over and over again (and has the resources to do so). Otherwise, it might be much better to give up the idea: the risk is something similar to what happened in Lebanon in 2006 (when Israel essentially failed to achieve significant results). This time (I have no doubt about it) everything would occur on a larger scale and would lead to worse consequences.

Of course, I am well aware that my remark is like an academic exercise. As a rule, bold policies are not consistent with popular standards and moral fundamentals of the Western world. Therefore, if Iran is hit by an air raid, I expect the usual mix of random initiatives on both sides—and an overwhelming number of mistakes on the anti-Iranian front. Actually, the issue of political mistakes recurs frequently in *Jihad Al-Kuffar*. For instance, in Chapter 14 we can read a self-explanatory comment by a radical fighter who is talking to a fellow militant:

Certain fundamental truths are so strongly rooted that nobody will ever dare to launch a preemptive war. This is the blessed strategy of the governments that want to be sure that a war can only start at a moment of our choice, when our arsenals are rich enough to blow up their countries or when Iran and its Hezbollah allies have all they need to wipe Israel off the map.

CONTROVERSIAL STATEMENTS AND GOOD SENSE

February 16, 2012

His name is Hamza Kashgari. He is a young Saudi blogger (and a poet, and a dreamer, and, probably, a careless citizen) who earned unwanted fame by posting some comments about Prophet Muhammad. Unfortunately for that blogger, he was in the wrong place at the wrong time (in Saudi Arabia when a lot of people started to invoke the death penalty). But, with

a bit of luck, he got to the airport and left his country: final destination, New Zealand. Once again, something went wrong: he had made another mistake—he had boarded a flight to Malaysia. So, he was detained upon his arrival in Kuala Lumpur and, instead of proceeding to the boarding gate for an eastbound flight, the poor guy was sent back to the West by the local authorities.



The feelings of his fellow citizens found an echo in the words of Abdul-Aziz Khoja, the Saudi Information Minister: “When I read what he posted, I wept and got very angry” [cf., e.g., an article dated February 14, 2012, and posted on the web page

http://www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/printArticle.asp?cu_no=2&item_no=486502&version=1&template_id=37&parent_id=17].

According to the same source, the Saudi Information Minister was also quick to state that justice would be served: “I have given instructions to ban him from writing for any Saudi newspaper or magazine, and there will be legal measures to guarantee that.” Meanwhile, many voices were raised across the country. Their demand was clear: adequate punishment.

I have no intention to speak about the principles that might have inspired Saudi Arabia or Malaysia. I just wonder why they are happy to be members of the United Nations, an institution that adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. As already pointed out in a thread that was posted on September 14, 2011 [cf. ARCHIVE (threads posted in 2011)], that Declaration features two interesting articles (2 and 18). Both are concerned with freedom of religion. That said, every country has its own rules, which must be known (especially by its citizens) and must be observed at all times. There might be a notable exception, in the event of popular unrest, as recently happened in Egypt and Libya—but that’s another story.

I will only make a general comment about “the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion” (as required by Article 18 of the Universal Declaration). In my opinion, a natural consequence of this freedom is a code of conduct, which is essentially based on good taste.

For example, as well as we are supposed to be polite when we are invited by a friend or an acquaintance, we are expected to behave properly when we visit a religious site or come into contact with a religious community. As guests, we must stick to their rules and avoid controversial subjects. This is what well-behaved people normally do all over the world.

Next, in the case of public debates, it should be possible to discuss any controversial issue and express any opinion—no matter if an opinion is inspired by the same creed, by a different religious education or by an atheist background. Then, most importantly, there must be room for a fair dose of good taste. Insults cannot be tolerated—all over the world.

In a sense, it’s just a question of good manners. To put it in a nutshell, there is no reason to make a special distinction between insults against religious entities or beliefs and insults against human beings or values. Everything should be governed by a sort of moral code. And a violation of that code should result in proper punishment, keeping in mind that freedom of speech is not a license to insult and that offensive words cannot be accepted in the name of alleged human rights.

If we want to explore all the different facets of the problem, we should also mention that it is usually difficult to find a consensus when it is time to introduce a scale of values. Such scale necessarily depends on local tradition and sensibility. For instance, flag desecration is a crime in some countries. Elsewhere, an insult to the head of state is quite different from an insult to a pop star. Similarly, we often find rules that give a “special” protection to the religious beliefs, which are shared by a high number of citizens. Thus, some religions enjoy a better status. It happens in many countries (including Western countries). Quite frankly, I do not like this “special” way of dealing with religious issues.

Personally, I believe that a certain insult should be punished with the same penalty. The final result (when needed, the final sentence) should not depend upon the religion that is insulted.

Instead, it might be convenient to make a distinction when the nature and the target of the insult come into play. Actually, I wonder if we should give a different weight to an offence to God (who is honored, in different forms, by an overwhelming majority of the world's population) and an offence to any religious symbol or entity. After all, if the law of a country is founded on secular ideals and aims to defend universal values, there are important aspects to consider. First, the law should be enforced "without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status" (cf. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 2). Therefore, it might be a good idea if transnational feelings prevailed over local religious sentiments. Should we decide to follow this approach, I would focus on a simple fact: whatever religion we consider, an overwhelming majority of human beings does not accept its teachings. Actually, about one third of the world's population follows the largest religion—and I say "one third" because I intentionally pretend to ignore that the "largest religion" has many different denominations. Therefore, in practice, there is not a unique set of teachings or truths in which all the faithful are called to believe. Anyway, under the most favorable assumptions, the number of people who practice the "largest religion" is about half the number of people who have different beliefs.

Apart from further speculation about numbers, the main moral is that, in a global world, no one should feel offended by remarks (I repeat, by remarks—not insulting words) about her/his religion and/or the leading figures of her/his religion. After all, in this global world, at least two people out of three do not share her/his beliefs. Perhaps more importantly, it is not surprising that even the people who profess her/his religion or claim to profess her/his religion might be assailed by doubts, questions, concerns, misconceptions and so on.

Some will probably disagree, especially when religious sentiments fuel animosity. No doubt, there are people who do not see reason when they think they have the authority to talk in the name of God—and while reading *Jihād Al-Kuffar*, it often happens that we meet characters who are marked by strong religious feelings. For instance, we find a self-explaining statement in the first Chapter:

If we trust in the miraculous light of faith, none of us will disperse despite the plots of the Devil.

Clearly, all of us are free to have a faith. All of us are free to believe that we are on the right track because of our faith. We can also feel convinced that the people who do not share our beliefs are wrong—at the very least, two people out of three. However, instead of pushing ahead with an exemplary punishment, we might have the good sense to think that many people have not received the gift of faith or that many more have been misled by wrong teachings. So, why should we move heaven and earth to punish them? If we are absolutely sure that we live (and will live) a better life because we know the truth, we should rather feel compassion for the huge number of human beings who are not so lucky.

IN THE NAME OF GOD

September 18, 2012

All of us are well aware that sensitive issues can spark unpredictable reactions. It has just happened in many countries and especially Libya, where four American officials were killed, in the wake of the violent protests caused by a controversial video, which was considered to be highly offensive by the Muslim community—and was deemed to be rubbish by many Western leaders and opinion-makers.



After the horror of Benghazi, a sad conclusion is that the force of reason tends to lose its power in the presence of strong religious feelings. On the one hand, there are plenty of moralists who are determined to take a stand against other people's morals—and a rational approach is a mere option. On the other hand, far too often the legitimate defense of religious values triggers an explosion of violence—and anger prevails over common sense. In the end, the most shocking feature of the entire process is that the main actors insist that they act or react in the name of a God, who is usually depicted as compassionate and merciful and ready to forgive.

When something goes wrong, it also happens that many religious and political leaders or institutions do not hesitate to justify any criminal action of their followers or potential voters by claiming that violence is a legitimate (or, *at the very least*, understandable) response to unacceptable provocations. Unfortunately, this is a common habit in several countries, where everyday life is a fragile balance of religious traditions, national interests, foreign interference, deep corruption, dire poverty and radical policy.

Personally, I am not inclined to accept and forgive terrorists or brutal thugs under any circumstance. Right now, however, *unjustified violence* is not the issue I wish to discuss. I prefer to follow a different (non-traditional) approach and point out that even the most radical and extremist militants would probably gain more benefits for their cause by changing their tactics.

Indeed, violence is surely the most immediate and most publicized response to controversial initiatives (cartoons, jokes, movies, books). Yet, in my view, it is far from being the most effective *weapon*. Apart from my aversion to any form of terrorism, I firmly believe that the best results can be obtained with adequate attacks on provocative statements (*not* on people). Instead, indiscriminate killings and wild demonstrations are always likely to provoke a backlash against nations, governments and religious groups, which inevitably give the sensation that they indulge in uncivilized practices or even promote criminal acts.

My remarks are suggested by a simple thought: quite often, provocative and offensive material simply rests on a variety of random assumptions, which are put together by irresponsible people and are based on ungrounded speculations. With rare exceptions, the most controversial themes consist of stupid, squalid, arrogant, disputable remarks that only represent personal views. Thus, it can be damn easy to criticize certain statements, expose them as misguided opinions and provide proof that they are founded on false premises and pretenses.

I'd like to focus on this issue with the help of a Chinese proverb (even though, at first, it will appear to be completely out of place): "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." Definitely, these words have nothing to do with *offensive material* and *random assumptions*, but we can rephrase the proverb in this way: "Respond with violence and you keep your opponent quiet for a day. Prove that he is wrong and you keep him quiet for a lifetime."

No doubt, it is hard to achieve a peaceful world as long as there are people who are willing to speak, fight, act and react *in the name of God* because they feel sure that they have received the full knowledge of the truth. Despite this problem, I will try to make a few comments about a couple of world famous episodes in which words (I am sure) would have had a much stronger (and more durable) impact than violent riots or raids on diplomatic missions.

The first example is concerned with some collective religious rituals that made headlines some

time ago, when Pope Benedict XVI delivered a surprising lecture at the University of Ragensburg, in Germany. All across the Muslim World the response was immediate, in terms of mass demonstrations. The fire of resentment was ignited by an apparently innocent remark—not a statement by Benedict XVI, but an ancient comment by a Byzantine emperor, Manuel II Palaiologos (incautiously quoted by the Pope): “Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached.”

I humbly take the freedom to express my view about that lecture and some related topics. I will start with the Byzantine Emperor’s opinion. He certainly had excellent reasons to be afraid of his Muslim neighbors and whip up support for his policy, but he only gave a partial view of the big picture. First of all, he should have thought that his enemies, in turn, had excellent reasons to fight Christianity, which had not given the best of itself on several occasions—especially in the capital of his empire, Constantinople, in 1203, during the Fourth Crusade, when the town was sacked for three days.

Manuel II Palaiologos was born over one hundred years later. Thus, he was certainly inclined to think that the Fourth Crusade was all water under the bridge. Nonetheless, the killings and destruction in Constantinople had been quite “evil and inhuman”, even though the invaders had not been instructed by Prophet Muhammad. But it was not enough. Probably, the massacre had been even worse and more gruesome in 1099, when Jerusalem was conquered by (non-Muslim) fanatics who were absolutely determined “to spread by the sword” the faith they preached (at the end of the First Crusade).

In addition, Manuel II Palaiologos was a bit naive when he claimed that the only new contribution of Prophet Muhammad consisted of “evil and inhuman” things, such as “his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached”. Actually, this statement appears to be completely wrong: if Muhammad really gave this command in the seventh century, he did not do anything new. He simply applied the lesson given by the *Defenders of the Faith* who had already persecuted the Pagans, the Jews, the Arians, the Donatists, the Pelagians and even the Copts (by the way, don’t forget that the Egyptian Copts were so fed up with the Byzantine Empire that they were very pleased to welcome the Muslims in their country).

It goes without saying that Benedict XVI, too, seemed to forget many historical facts when he gave his lecture in Ragensburg—not *only* the crusades and the events that occurred before Muhammad, *but also* the persecution of the Cathars, the fight against the Waldensians, the Thirty Years’ War, the crimes committed in the New World with the aim of converting the local population, and so on. More importantly, the Pope was speaking as the leader of a religious movement that apparently was interested in peaceful, friendly relations with other Faiths, including Islam. Therefore, it seems legitimate to assume that the lecture at the University of Ragensburg displayed a certain lack of diplomacy, although the most critical message was given in a subtle way, by means of a sentence that someone else had written several centuries before.

It is worth noting that a political or religious leader should always follow some basic guidelines. No doubt, diplomacy has its own code of conduct. For instance, former US President George W. Bush did not hesitate to include Iraq, Iran and North Korea in the *Axis of Evil* (when all these countries were considered potential enemies of the United States). However, he always measured his words very carefully whenever he talked about his allies—no matter if they were not aligned with the US policy (as happened in the case of France and Germany during the war on Iraq in 2003).

Soon after the conference in Ragensburg, there was the reaction of the Muslim World. To me, it is unbelievable that so many Muslim leaders (even the most moderate statesmen, to the best of my knowledge) just expressed concern about the Pope’s lecture and somehow accepted (or even encouraged) violent demonstrations. Sure enough, it would have been far better if the pictures of angry, aggressive crowds had not gone around the world. Above all, it would have been much more effective to give evidence of two (*at least two*) major mistakes of the counterpart:

- the arbitrary statement of Manuel II Palaiologos
- the moralistic remark of the leader of a religious movement, which had gained so much power, respect, fame and influence all over the world because its Faith had been “spread by the sword”

Now, let’s talk about the attack on the US mission in Libya. As everybody knows, the dramatic events of Benghazi took place because of a video (deemed offensive to Islam). Going through the websites of some news networks, we can learn that the film-maker “identifies himself as an Israeli Jew” and “the film claims Muhammad was a philanderer who approved of child sexual abuse.”

Apart from the obvious resentment and animosity that is typical of religious issues, there are at least a couple of objective reasons why any comment about Prophet Muhammad’s private life appears to be (*at the very least*) inappropriate and unmotivated.

First of all, what is considered today to be “child sexual abuse” was judged in a different way over one thousand years ago. Therefore, it is absurd to speculate on the age of Muhammad’s youngest wife, Aisha—the age which, I assume, somehow disturbed the conscience of the film-maker. In addition, if someone really wants to apply today’s moral standards to the past, then the same criteria should be applied to the private life of any person in any society (no matter his/her religion).

If we do so, it is inevitable to be horrified by a man like Augustine, the famed Bishop of Hippo, whose sexual activity was quite frenetic in his youth. He even abandoned the mother of his son when he planned to marry a girl who was ten years old—and he continued to enjoy himself with other women, while waiting for the wedding day (at that time, in Augustine’s world, girls had to be twelve before they could get married).

And it’s not finished, yet! The current moral standards (especially Western standards) would certainly cast a shadow over men and women who play a major role in the Old Testament (and who lived in conformity with the will of God, according to the Bible). For instance, a profound difference emerges between today’s and yesterday’s morals, if we consider the following (well-known) episodes:

- The men of the city of Sodom—everyone from the youngest to the oldest—surrounded the house and called to Lot, “Where are the men who arrived tonight? Bring them out to us so that we may know them intimately.” Lot went out toward the entrance, closed the door behind him, and said, “My brothers, don’t do such an evil thing. I’ve got two daughters who are virgins. Let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them whatever you wish. But don’t do anything to these men because they are now under the protection of my roof.” [Genesis, 19:4-8]
- Since Lot had become fearful of living in Zoar, he and his two daughters headed up from Zoar and settled in the mountains where he and his two daughters lived in a cave. The older daughter said to the younger, “Our father is old, and there are no men in the land to sleep with us as is the custom everywhere. Come on, let’s give our father wine to drink, lie down with him, and we’ll have children from our father.” [Genesis, 19:30-32]
- Sarai, Abram’s wife, had not been able to have children. Since she had an Egyptian servant named Hagar, Sarai said to Abram, “The Lord has kept me from giving birth, so go to my servant. Maybe she will provide me with children.” Abram did just as Sarai said. After Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Abram’s wife Sarai took her Egyptian servant Hagar and gave her to her husband Abram as his wife. He slept with Hagar, and she became pregnant. But when she realized that she was pregnant, she no longer respected her mistress. [Genesis, 16:1-4]

What conclusion? Given the circumstances, we can refer to another saying: “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth”. Even better, we can rephrase it and adjust it to the needs of a world where everyone talks of peace, but many groups and individuals tend to add fuel to the fire: “an eye for an eye, a remark for a remark”.

Indeed, all Muslim believers have plenty of reason to be offended by some recent events (and all non-Muslim believers should acknowledge that it is absolutely wrong and socially unacceptable to offend religious sensibilities). To put it straight, it came as no surprise when many demonstrators took to the street, but violence was unexpected and, definitely, was not the right answer. It cannot be tolerated, let alone encouraged. There is no excuse for what happened in Benghazi, because reaction should always be proportionate to the offense—and the punishment should affect the groups or the individuals who are responsible for inappropriate or offensive or libelous remarks.

I can easily imagine that most radical militants do not agree. Most likely, they are willing to *live by the sword* and avenge any affront, but they should also be aware of possible *side effects*—and should clearly understand that the rules, in principle, must be the same for everyone, on any occasion. That said, the moral is self-evident. If the United States is to be punished because of a film produced in that country by some US citizens, it is clear that the Americans, in turn, must have the freedom to consider any option after the raid on their diplomatic mission in Benghazi, which was probably stormed by Libyan citizens. Similarly, if an entire country can be held responsible for the mistakes or the crimes of some citizens, it can be concluded that the Americans would have been within their rights to plan a military attack on Egypt in 2001, when Mohamed Atta, a ring leader of the September 11 attacks, turned out to be an Egyptian national.

Of course, the arguments of terrorist groups are quite different. Most of the extremists feel entitled to resort to violence and assume that the same right should *not* be accorded to their enemies. As a matter of fact, radical fighters tend to show off confidence and strike at random, in the hope that no one will ever retaliate—in the hope that they are dealing with a harmless enemy, unwilling to fire back.

Alas, there's no denying that their defiant behavior is fully justified. After all, a lot of terrorists have been doing what they wanted with almost total impunity for decades...

For example, we can mention the case of the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro, whose hijackers killed a disabled Jewish-American passenger and could flee to former Yugoslavia with the help of the Italian government in 1985. We can also mention a case that has similarities with the attack that was launched on the US mission in Benghazi on September 11, 2012: the hostage crisis in Iran, when Jimmy Carter was President of the United States. At that time, all the terrorists got away scot-free. And right now, in Libya, history might repeat itself. There's a possibility that the assassins of Benghazi will continue to live a happy life.

Nonetheless, things can change by the minute and, suddenly, it may well be that an action provokes a reaction, as happened in 2003, when Iraq came under fire, despite worldwide efforts to avert the war. On that occasion, even former US President Jimmy Carter was mobilized. In a desperate attempt to save Saddam Hussein, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for peace and delivered his touching Nobel lecture in December 2002, but the situation quickly went out of control. The end result is well known: on March 19, 2003, the first missiles fell on Baghdad.

The risk of retaliation or, if you prefer, the right to take adequate measures (*it all depends on your viewpoint*) is briefly discussed in Jihād Al-Kuffar, in Chapter 7. At the end of the year 2000, a radical fighter is talking to a fellow militant. He thinks back to a former American President with some nostalgia and would be pleased to pay tribute to that President of the seventies, who actually was destined to become a Nobel laureate, but did not succeed in avoiding the war on Iraq in 2003:

I think he deserves much more than words of praise. Let me see...what about a Nobel Prize for peace? Isn't it a smashing idea? I can't imagine anything better to celebrate the pacifism that put America at the mercy of Ruhollah Khomeini's pasdaran and to implicitly condemn the warmongers who defeated Saddam Hussein's republican guards in the Gulf War. You know how easily a Nobel Prize award ceremony can evolve into a powerful brainwashing machine, suitable to deliver a strong message to the world, suitable to fight against the principle of preventive war, suitable to demand that Western nations surrender to the charm of unconditional peace.

NOBEL PRIZE FOR PEACE OR NOBEL PRIZE FOR POLITICALLY CORRECT STRATEGIES?



October 17, 2012

The Norwegian Nobel Committee has come to the conclusion that the Nobel Peace Prize is to be awarded to the European Union, since “the Union and its forerunners have for over six decades contributed to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe.”

This choice definitely represents an impressive step forward when compared to the rituals of the year 2002 (when former US President Jimmy Carter got the Prize) or the rituals that were performed three years ago (when President Barack Obama became a Nobel laureate).

Indeed, the European Union has been awarded the prize in view of its contribution “for over six decades”, while President Barack Obama became a candidate when he had taken office for twelve days. In actual fact, as explained in the Official Web Site of the Nobel Prize, “the Committee bases its assessment on nominations that must be postmarked no later than 1 February each year. Nominations postmarked and received after this date are included in the following year’s discussions.” Needless to say, the main merit of President Barack Obama, according to the Norwegian Nobel Committee, seemed to be a politically correct achievement: he had defeated the Republican Candidate in the 2008 US Presidential elections. Yet, there was no statistical evidence that a Democrat at the White House would reduce the risk of military intervention: the US entered the First World War with Thomas Woodrow Wilson, the Second World War with Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Korean War with Harry S. Truman (who also gave the green light for the nuclear attacks on Japan), the Vietnam War with John F. Kennedy (and this war came to an end with a Republican President, Richard M. Nixon, who also established friendly relations with the People’s Republic of China, perhaps contributing to “the advancement of peace and reconciliation” in the world arena).

Similarly, in 2002, there was another political problem of high impact. At that time, the world was dominated by the clash between two opposite views regarding Iraq: while the American and British governments were pressing to oust Saddam Hussein from power, lots of statesmen (especially in France and Germany) were making an effort to keep a friendly dictator at the Presidential Palace in Baghdad. Again, the Norwegian Nobel Committee gave the impression that the French and German policy was its favorite (and that the prize was highly dependent on politically correct sentiments). No matter what we believe, the 2002 Nobel Peace Laureate eventually gave an outstanding speech during the Oslo ceremony, slamming the concept of *preventive war*.

Sixty years are quite a time. So, there is plenty of data to come up with a fair decision—and the Norwegian Nobel Committee has certainly evaluated all the available information with care. Nonetheless, there are legitimate doubts. Someone might have a sneaking suspicion that the Norwegian Nobel Committee did not want to miss a golden opportunity to send a clear message: the Norwegian people and their leaders should seriously think about joining the Union. In other words, the Norwegian people and their leaders should increase the size of the state machine and create more government jobs (don’t forget that Norway, nowadays, is *not* a politically correct country and is not a member state of the European Union).

Of course, this is just a supposition. So, let’s be serious and forget all this rubbish. Instead, let’s focus on some practical achievements of the European Union, apart from mere declarations of principles, which can also be found in documents issued by the worst totalitarian regimes.

Is “the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe” a peculiarity of the European Union or is it the obvious consequence of historical developments (not only in Europe)? Are Norway or Switzerland or Japan (non-member states) extraneous to “peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights”? Had the United Kingdom taken a stand against the concepts of “peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights” until 1973, when it eventually joined the European Union? Did the citizens of the Czech Republic (together with the citizens of Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) fall in love with “peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights” in 2004 (when their countries became member states)? Or did they have objective problems before the collapse of the Soviet Union? Was the European Union the main actor when Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin started to undermine the Communist regime? Or was the Bolshevik system knocked down by the historical evolution of the Russian society? Would it be out of

place to assume that a major contribution to the end of the Cold War was given by the *information spread* (typical of the American way of life)? Isn't it likely that the failure of the Afghan adventure sealed the fate of the Soviet Union? Is it crazy to believe that Reagan's *star wars* gave a fatal blow to the Communist empire?

When "peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights" come into play, does the Norwegian Nobel Committee implicitly express appreciation for the attack on Slobodan Milošević's Serbia? If this is the case, did the European Union launch that attack as a unified political entity? Apparently, just a few European countries took part in the air raids—and they seemed to be moving in the wake of the American fighters. Or was the Norwegian Nobel Committee highly impressed by the massive attack on Muammar al-Gaddafi? In that operation, again, just a few countries were involved. The European Union, as a whole, did not appear to be linked by a common policy—even though there was something new: when Gaddafi came under fire, the Americans seemed to be moving in the wake of their European allies (especially France and the United Kingdom).

Someone might reply that the European Union does have a unit that takes care of Foreign Affairs and Security Policy—and this unit does represent all *member states*. Therefore, it can be claimed that there was a significant contribution to "peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights" in the name of the entire European community on several occasions—for instance, in July 2010. At that time, Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (and Vice-President of the European Commission) visited Gaza and "urged the international community to pressure Israel to end the blockade", just while the Israeli town of Sderot used to be "regularly targeted by Palestinian rocket attacks", as reported, e.g., by BBC [cf. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-10675713>, still available in March 2013].

Probably, Catherine Ashton's words really were a significant contribution. Indeed, you are likely to have peace (maybe eternal peace) if you are ready to accept your enemy's conditions. For instance, there is no denying that the Second World War broke out when France and the United Kingdom took the insane (!?!?!?) decision to oppose the invasion of Poland. Instead, Hitler had kept reasonably quiet after the Munich Agreement that allowed Germany to occupy the Sudetenland districts (and Neville Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister, did not hesitate to express his enthusiasm for the outcome of the Munich Conference). Similarly, Catherine Ashton (and the European Union) seemed inclined to believe that the Middle East could easily become a peaceful region, if Israel, instead of reacting to terrorist attacks, had followed a different approach. For the sake of peace, Israel had to silently accept a process that was already underway, as shown by a rain of rockets on Sderot—and the final goal of that process is clearly stated in the Hamas Covenant: "The Hamas has been looking forward to implement Allah's promise whatever time it might take. The prophet, prayer and peace be upon him, said: The time will not come until Muslims will fight the Jews (and kill them); until the Jews hide behind rocks and trees, which will cry: O Muslim! there is a Jew hiding behind me, come on and kill him!" [cf. Hamas Covenant, Article 7]

It is worth noting that Neville Chamberlain and Édouard Daladier (who were supposed to be allies of the Czechoslovak government), together with Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, decided what Czechoslovakia had to do in order to ensure peace in 1938—as well as Catherine Ashton felt free to suggest what Israel had to do in 2010. On both occasions, no one seemed to be worried about the consequences for the countries that were affected by the negotiations.

In 2010, however, pro-terrorist policies were not new in Europe. With her cautious remark about a critical Mideast problem, Catherine Ashton had definitely followed in the footsteps of other member states, such as Germany and Italy. In 1972, in the aftermath of the massacre during the Munich Olympics, three terrorists survived and were taken into custody, but were soon released as soon as some Black September members hijacked a plane (sure enough, the German authorities were aiming at "peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights" when they took their decision to free the prisoners). Later, in 1985, it happened that the Americans forced an Egyptian aircraft to land in Italy with the purpose of arresting some terrorists who were on board: they had hijacked an Italian cruise ship and killed a disabled Jewish American citizen. On that occasion, the Italian government did its best to make sure that the poor militants (including Abu Abbas, mastermind of the attack on the ship) could safely reach former Yugoslavia.

Finally, it may well be that the Norwegian Nobel Committee was fascinated by the Euro adventure, which definitely was a great idea, but did not seem to be based on strong foundations. Apparently, an impressive number of European leaders behaved in a naive way in the nineties. As likely as not, they preferred to enhance their own prestige, by getting involved in an epic change, instead of considering all the consequences of what they were doing.

There were no worries about economies that were poles apart. No one insisted that a *common* currency needed a real Central Bank (like the Federal Reserve in the United States). No serious action was taken

to enforce a *common* policy and, above all, a set of *common* rules in order to defend *common* interests. So, on the day when a good number of countries decided to introduce a *common* currency, their objectives and backgrounds were quite different. In the end, it is almost obvious that the debt bubble blew up, since each country (as expected) continued to maintain the key elements of its way of life:

- giant service sector on one side and excellent industrial production on the other side
- huge sovereign debt burden on one side and investment in foreign debt instruments on the other side
- unjustified loans on one side and overvalued housing markets on the other side

Today, it comes as no surprise that many European citizens reacted with anger, even with violence, to drastic wage cuts and high unemployment (although they were certainly satisfied with their sixty-year contribution to “peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights”). Even worse, when the whole affair became a survival matter, the continent was involved in an open fight between opposite factions:

- the governments who had been keeping inflation under control for decades *against* the financial systems that had been keeping afloat by continuing to print money
- the production world *against* the bureaucratic machine of poorly industrialized regions
- the high finance *against* the communities who used to live on agriculture, tourism and service sector
- the taxpayers who were forced to buy the foreign debt *against* the jobless citizens who had been induced to accept a common currency *in contrast* with their interests and *in contrast* with their historical traditions (with the aim of helping highly industrialized countries sell their products)

Although *Jihād Al-Kuffar* was published over two years before the European Union won the Nobel Peace Prize, Chapter 7 briefly deals with an issue, which is discussed in this post and has something to do with the Nobel Foundation. At the end of the year 2000, a radical militant makes some comments about a certain policy (which seems destined to foster and nurture “peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights”):

Stockholm, the home to the Nobel Foundation, seemed to be a proper place for the West to sign treaties of surrender, as I found out some months ago, in England, when I met a mujahid who used to study in Uppsala. He had excellent news, reliable information, about the current trend in Sweden. In his view, many citizens understand our struggle and want to help us in our efforts, starting with the Palestinian intifada. The word is that the time is ripe for the Swedes to pay tribute to our martyrs. Bewitched by the most progressive frontiers of modern art, Stockholm museums might soon display a new generation of exhibits—artworks which are specifically designed to acknowledge and reward the tireless efforts of the suicide bombers who continue to blow themselves up with the aim of killing as many Jews as possible. []*

[*] Sentence based on an episode reported by the media.

Cf., e.g., <http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,2763,1125679,00.html>, still available in March 2013.

FOUR MORE YEARS



November 8, 2012

It is time to look ahead—and keep our fingers crossed. Sure enough, this is a horrible period in our time and everyone looks forward to a positive future. In the meanwhile, we can hope that *four more years* are exactly what President Obama needs to repay his supporters and all the people who have put their trust in him. Actually, there is reason to assume that a brighter tomorrow is possible—and even the fiercest enemies of the US President cannot claim that everything went wrong in the past.

Just to name a few achievements of the last four years, President Barack Obama did revive the US auto industry, did put an end to Bin Laden's dreams and did save companies such as AIG (together with the relevant jobs) without wasting taxpayers' money (today, the US government still holds AIG stocks and has already made a profit on the initial investment of \$187.3 bn).

Of course, the overall economic situation did not improve significantly under the current US administration and the national debt has almost exploded, reaching incredible new heights. However, it is absolutely true that the whole world has been suffering terrible hardships (which inevitably had a huge impact on the American economy). Perhaps more importantly, both the gross and public debt had dramatically increased during the period 2001-2008, well before Barack Obama's first election. Last and not least, the current financial crisis was ignited in 2007.

Therefore, I think it would be unfair to slam Obama's policy and only insist on the fact that he has failed to fulfill several promises he made in 2008. As always happens in similar cases, his opponents have plenty of arguments, but no one will ever be able to prove that the world would be in better shape with a different US president.

It should also be acknowledged that there are too many unknowns in a world that is driven by continuous interactions. Definitely, it is nearly impossible to implement a fail-safe strategy: whatever happened in the past did depend (and whatever happens in the future will highly depend) on global developments. Needless to say, there are intriguing international affairs, which are mostly out of control for Barack Obama—as well as they would be mostly out of control for any other political leader.

Here, however, I do not intend to focus on Barack Obama's economic strategies, nor do I want to discuss alternative ambitious plans, which might have been able to create twelve million jobs and rein in health care expenses. Instead, I simply wish to draw attention to a few issues that are often ignored by the most fervent opponents of the Republican Party or by the over-generous philanthropists who feel a strong need to do good all the time or by the professional pacifists who are damn scared of a right-wing US president.

I will start with an interesting article that was posted on the web some weeks ago and looked like a great scoop: *Obama finds support among Chavez faithful in Caracas* [cf. <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/10/24/opinion/caracas-postcard/index.html>, still available in March 2013].

As pointed out in the picture on the right (a detail of a photo posted on the same web page), "Barack Obama received a somewhat surprising endorsement in early October when Hugo Chavez called said, «I'd vote for Obama.»"

No doubt, I felt glad for the US President—but I could not refrain from thinking that, instinctively, I would feel more comfortable with a US president who is branded a *devil* by a man like Chavez.

Similarly, if I had to express fears over the consequences of the US elections, I would not focus on the fiscal cliff or *ObamaCare*. I would rather be worried about a statement



Barack Obama received a somewhat surprising endorsement in early October when Hugo Chavez called said, "I'd vote for Obama." In 2009, Chavez shook hands with the president and gave him the book "Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent" during a summit.

by Hugo Chavez: “With the likely triumph of Obama, and the extreme right defeated both here and there [in Venezuela and the US], I hope we can start a new period of normal relations” [cf. <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/10/24/opinion/caracas-postcard/index.html>, still available in March 2013]. Above all, I would seriously wonder if it is a good idea to vote as well as Chavez would do.

Another key point is the possible (or increasing?) *europization* of the United States of America. It is well known that Mitt Romney sent a warning against the risk of ending up like Greece or Italy. Immediately, he was bitterly criticized (especially in Europe). Yet, his remark does not seem to be entirely out of place. As well known, the national US debt appears to be not too far from one hundred percent of the Gross Domestic Product. So, what do the Americans think about it? Are they willing to win a competition with Italy (about one hundred and twenty percent) or with Greece (about one hundred and forty percent)?

I guess the answer is *no*. Thus, it would be nice to avoid the road that was taken by countries like Greece and Italy. In other words, it would be nice to forget that poor people can become rich by receiving subsidies and state money through unnecessary government jobs, uncontrolled health care spending and ridiculous pension schemes—and any US president (as well as any candidate) should beware of certain social models.

Just to give you an idea, the Italian lawmakers even had the brilliant idea to give a pension to women who had been working for some fourteen years and men who had been working for twenty years. That privilege, introduced in 1973, was abolished in 1993, but it still contributes to the national debt. As if it were not enough, in 1974 an Italian lawmaker also succeeded in introducing a bill that allowed former members (or former alleged members) of trade unions and left-wing political parties to pay an insignificant amount of money in order get a pension—just because they had been involved (or just because they pretended they had been involved) in sweated labor during the fifties.

Finally, I would like to make some (*politically incorrect*) comments about an enlightening “Euro opinion on the US election”. More specifically, I would like to mention a “seven nation poll” that came out with the following result: “If Europeans could vote in the US election Obama would win by over 90%” [cf. <http://today.yougov.com/news/2012/10/31/euro-opinion-us-election/>, still available in March 2013].

It is reasonable to assume that such an enthusiastic support is related to a couple of fundamental axioms of most Europeans:

- *peace* is to be identified with the Democrats’ policy
- *solidarity* is a central component of the Democratic Party’s platform

Interestingly enough, the “seven nation poll” had to do with the UK, Germany, France, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Norway. Note that Germany is the country we know today because someone was prepared to fight a Cold War, which came to a (victorious) end thanks to Ronald Reagan and his radical change in the US policy after the (dramatic) *Carter experience*. In addition, Germany is the country we know today because someone was prepared to fight a Second World War, which is commonly regarded as a milestone against the worst horrors of tyranny.

It is also worth noting that Germany and Finland do not feel very comfortable with the Greek bailout (instead of showing feelings of solidarity). As for Denmark and Sweden, they are very cautious, too: when money is needed to help Greece, it looks as if the Danes and the Swedes (as everyone else) prefer to keep it at home. In addition, they do not belong to the Eurozone (with the aim of protecting themselves from dangerous experiments???), while Norway is not even a member state of the European Union.

In other words, there seem to be a couple of valuable rules, which are often applied when peace and solidarity come into play:

- *peace* is a must, provided that our interests are not affected (*i.e.*, provided that terrorist groups and rogue states do not attack our communities, do not pose a threat to our business, do not limit our freedom, do not occupy our lands)
- *solidarity* is a must, provided that we are not asked to seriously share the fate of people who are suddenly denied an escape route (maybe after being lured into accepting a common currency, in order to increase the imports from highly industrialized countries, as happened in the case of Greece)

By the way, don’t think that I want to forgive the Greek politicians and authorities who issued incredible financial statements. I only have a feeling that the average Greek citizen was deceived by those

politicians and those authorities (and I also suspect that many incredible financial statements were candidly approved by European politicians and authorities, who did not ignore what was going on, but were interested in making Greece a member state of the European Union).

As clearly evident in this site, *Jihad Al-Kuffar* mostly deals with the terrorist threat. However, the book is occasionally concerned with general subjects. So, in Chapter 9 we find a paragraph, which has something to do with the issues discussed here. Some words sound like a warning to those politicians who seem to live in a world of fantasy. And the same words are addressed to the enthusiastic crowds who are often unable to see the truth (or refuse to see the truth):

The Earth is full of fashion victims who believe that the wealth of a country does not depend on hard work but on the amount of money that a government decides to give in terms of salaries, pensions, and unemployment benefits. Nobody wonders where this money will come from.

That said, I look forward to a bright future (during the next four years) and I would like to quote an encouraging statement by President Barack Obama: “We know what real change looks like. And we can’t give up on it now.”

[cf. http://www.cnn.com/2012/11/02/opinion/obama-vision-for-america/index.html?hpt=us_mid, still available in March 2013].

What else? At this stage, all we need to do is hope that the US President knew very well what he was talking about.

THE POOR VICTIMS WHO CHANT, SING AND SHOUT “ITBACH EL YAHUDI!”

November 15, 2012

Both in this website and in *Jihad Al-Kuffar*, special attention is paid to a most interesting document, known as *The Hamas Covenant*, where we find a good number of enlightening statements, amazing guidelines and political priorities. A major objective of that document is defined in a clear and



unequivocal way in *Article Seven*: “The Hamas has been looking forward to implement Allah’s promise whatever time it might take. The prophet, prayer and peace be upon him, said: «The time will not come until Muslims will fight the Jews (and kill them); until the Jews hide behind rocks and trees, which will cry: *O Muslim! there is a Jew hiding behind me, come on and kill him!*»”

To make it short, it’s the same old story: *Itbach el Yahud!* (*Slaughter the Jews!*)

The readers who yearn for true peace and are aware of the contents of *The Hamas Covenant* probably come to the conclusion that the policy of Israel, after all, is fully justified, but—who cares? Hamas and its fellow militants have good friends all over the world, starting with the Muslim Brotherhood and the so-called *peace activists*. For instance, there’s plenty of supporters in Egypt, where President Mohammed Morsi has just accused Israel of the *brutal killing* of martyrs and sons of the Palestinian people. He has also vowed that he will never accept, under any circumstances, a continuous *aggression* on the Gaza Strip.

More friends can be found in Turkey, where the Foreign Ministry *harshly condemns* Israel’s offensive, which proves its *hostile policies* (incidentally, what about the *Armenian genocide*?) Meanwhile, Jordan’s information minister is on the same wavelength: in his opinion, Israel’s *aggression* is to be stopped and the Palestinian people need to be protected—by the way, do they need to be protected as well as they were protected in Jordan some forty years ago, when thousands of Palestinians were killed and thousands were expelled to Lebanon at the end of the conflict that had started in the *Black September* of 1970???

Even Russia is full of Hamas fans and its official reaction is definitely what the al-Qassam Brigades want to hear: it’s not possible to tolerate the Israeli *disproportionate shelling* of targets in Gaza. I might be wrong, but I have a feeling that this statement sounds a bit awkward. In fact, if the bureaucrats in Moscow are so concerned about the human rights in Palestine, they have quite likely forgotten what happened in Chechnya, where the situation is relatively calm and stable because the Russian Army did what the Israelis have not done in the Gaza Strip (for humanitarian reasons). I also assume that the Russian leaders candidly believe that Gaddafi’s reaction was proportionate (since the Kremlin opposed military action in Libya) or that Assad’s crackdown on the rebels is legitimate (maybe because the only Russian naval base in the Mediterranean is located in Syria).

Apparently, the Western World is still quiet—perhaps unexpectedly quiet, but do not panic. If the Israeli military really launches a large-scale attack, there will certainly be a strong mobilization of the international community. And Europe will probably be in the frontline. After all, according to a Eurobarometer poll that was released in 2003 (and was also mentioned in *Jihad Al-Kuffar*) the majority of Europeans feel that Israel is the greatest threat to world peace. And this result was confirmed by more recent polls.

Actually, certain beliefs (and the consequent outcome of opinion polls) are almost natural, because too many people tend to forget. Because too many people are inclined to ignore historical facts. Because too many people (especially in the Western world) are driven by the media hype. Because too many people never make a serious effort to distinguish the truth from the lies when they read papers or watch TV or listen to the radio. Because too many people feel obliged to condemn military actions and do not think that wars can become absolutely necessary at the most dramatic moments of a nation’s history (as happened when France and the United Kingdom waged war on Hitler).

Misconceptions are especially common when the Middle East comes into play. No doubt, the Gaza Strip looks like an enormous prison or a huge concentration camp, where Palestinians cannot live a normal life. However, what we see today is the painful heritage of sad events that did occur years ago and continue to happen and cannot be forgotten just to denigrate Israel.

My basic argument is that it is wise to have a look at the past in order to understand the present—and this issue is often discussed in *Jihād Al-Kuffar*. For instance, in Chapter 17 a militant is talking about *double standards*. He is glad to observe that many Western pundits, opinion-makers and political leaders even explain that there is a moral justification for violence and massacres. In their opinion, terrorist organizations are the fruit of short-sighted policies, military power and economic strategies—and the richest countries are unable to see the evil they have done. As if it were not enough, their rogue governments and unscrupulous companies are always ready to adopt *double standards* when they try to enforce their will. In other words, we are often told that the West is full of people who only pretend to defend universal values, but will never care about the sufferings of backward countries. Even worse, it may well happen that the West does not hesitate to cause hardship and promote injustice.

There is no denying that the Western model has created a lot of damage all over the world, but it's damn true that the most troubled areas simply suffer the consequences of their stubborn determination to refuse democracy, mutual respect, peaceful solutions, human rights (especially for women) and modern working practices. That said, anyone is free to set his own morals. Anyone can erase key events from history books and candidly state that poor terrorists (or, better, poor *freedom fighters*) are often forced to react, because some governments of the so-called civilized world do not hesitate to “use indiscriminate slaughter to advance their foreign policy” [*].

Let's go back to the radical fighter who is talking about *double standards* in *Jihād Al-Kuffar* (Chapter 17). According to the story, he made his comments in late 2001, after the September 11 attack. His words clearly show how satisfied he is with the feelings of sympathy and friendship from the *politically correct* part of the Western world:

Most Western governments (and most of the Western media) don't mind that Arab countries waged war on Israel in 1948, in the hope of completing Hitler's job—the cleansing of the Jews. Most Western governments (and most of the Western media) don't mind that the Jews were attacked again in 1967, and once again in 1973. Most Western governments (and most of the Western media) don't mind that Hamas and Hezbollah deny Israel the right to exist. Most Western governments (and most of the Western media) don't mind that there is a common desire among Muslim communities to destroy Israel. Most Western governments (and most of the Western media) don't mind that the large majority of Islamic countries still refuse to hold diplomatic ties with Israel. Most Western governments (and most of the Western media) don't mind that the Arab world used to dream of a new war against Israel between 1949 and 1967, instead of working on the development of a modern Palestinian state. Most Western governments (and most of the Western media) don't mind that mujahideen oppose any process toward democracy. Most Western governments (and most of the Western media) don't mind that free elections are hardly considered in Islamic countries, and that the fight for democracy is often a pretext for imposing a different form of absolute power, as happened in Iran, or for promoting holy war, as would happen in Palestine, if the people of this land were allowed to vote. Most Western governments (and most of the Western media) don't mind that 'double standards' are a current practice in the case of refugees, for nobody has ever kicked up a fuss about the people expelled from Silesia or East Prussia or the Sudetenland or Istria or Dalmatia or Arab countries. Most Western governments (and most of the Western media) don't mind that the entire world continues to cry over Palestinian refugees who are descendants of people who were not expelled, but left their homes in order to slip away from the bloodbath that was planned during the invasion of Israel in 1948. Most Western governments (and most of the Western media) don't mind that suicide bombings are not limited to the Middle East. Most Western governments (and most of the Western media) don't mind that the lymph of the Afghan jihad passes through our blood system and has been flowing through the veins of good believers for a long time. Most Western governments (and most of the Western media) don't mind that holy war is not a local accident, but a worldwide miracle—an outburst of hatred that is shattering countries like Nigeria and the Philippines, thousands of miles away from the Middle East.

[*] Cf. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/4698963.stm, still available in March 2013