

Islamic Responses to US hegemony and world order

Tomas Drobik

Department of Human Geography and Regional Development

Ostrava University, Czech Republic

It has almost become a pattern to include the assessment of 9/11 impact into every analysis of international relations. Probably the most successful terrorist attack in history has become a crucial issue for many intellectuals and non-intellectuals to refer to uncertainty, indeterminacy, darkness, disorder, turbulence, irrationality, ungovernability, terror or anarchy etc. in recent world politics. We have been witnessing the processes which have transformed all these already mentioned aspects of world politics into the constitution of the recent power relations between nations. As Walker and Ashley clearly put, these abovementioned words demarcate marginal places and times as voids of truth and meaning that must be feared, exiled, and, if they persist, disciplined by the violent imposition of the certain voices of truth they lack. (ASHLEY, WALKER, 1990) If we use their concept non-literally, we are able to recognize that the referred terms play a key role in nowadays processes of creating and imposing order over the world. We are living in the period characterized by a universal discourse of human rights, which is in a juxtaposition to brutality and darkness, world order against to world disorder, ungovernability, turbulence and unpredictability, liberal democracy opposites to conservative non-democratic or quasi-democratic regimes and global cooperation which is in opposition to isolationisms, anarchy and irrationality.

Power and geopolitics

Powerful states or even superpowers work as criteria imposers – in international institutions, bilateral relations and in imperialistic policies. We can well describe this three-fold structure geographically. Relations of the US with the other states of the “first world” are undertaken through institutions (NATO, OECD etc.) by the virtue of soft power. The second pattern of relationship is based on bilateral relations between the US and important, but non-allied states. Towards the rest of the world the US acts imperially. Although American imperialism is not typical form of imperialism, two fundamentals can be well identified – ability of geo-political writing of space and dispersing and cultivating globalisation all over the world.

Dealing with these issues, the paper is going, in the first part, to follow critical geographical approach. In this approach geopolitics is not conceived as science, or strategy, but

as a method of policy-making and geo-graphing the space. It is inspired by writings of Gramsci, Foucault and Ashley's dissident international relations. O'Thuathail

"places the study of geopolitical reasoning within the context of the study of hegemony in a nonstatist, Gramscian-inspired sense. A hegemonic power like the United States is by definition a "rule writer" for the world community. Those occupying positions of power within the United States have "become the deans of world politics, the administrators, regulators and geo-graphers of international affairs. Their power is a power to constitute the terms of geopolitical world order, an ordering of international space which defines the central drama in international politics in particularistic ways." What is important here is the activity of rule making and rule following rather than state dominance, for hegemony is more than the primus inter pares power of a state" (O'Thuathail, 1996, 61)

In the realm of writing the space and criteria definition, globalisation driven by economic neoliberalism has to be mentioned as a suggestive concept, used to support one's position. As Gills (2000, 4) claims one of the basic characteristics of globalisation is the "political exclusion of dissident social forces from the arena of state-making, in order desocialize the subject and insulate the neoliberal state form against the societies over which they preside, thus facilitating the socialization of risk on behalf of capital".

The aim of the paper is not to discuss whether the US is or is not a hegemon, however we intent to show how the power, hidden in institutions, rules and economy, has been dispersed in the new worlds order and how it is being resisted.

Power in relations and world order

From general perspective, power as a capability is always connected with most human activities. From that point of view, power has two dimensions. The first is ability to control, dominate, co-opt, seduce, and resent. Agnew describes it as negative power. The second dimension, positive power, is the capacity to act, resist, cooperate and assent. Therefore, political power can be considered the sum of resources and strategies involved in struggles over collective goods in which parties act with and upon others to achieve binding outcomes. (Agnew, 2005, 39)

As a matter of fact, recent dimensions of power are much more complicated, sophisticated, less transparent and legible. The various concepts of power like the pluralistic approach of Dahl or Polsby, nondecision making of Bachrach and Baratz, conflict prevention from Lukes, were recently interchanged in social science by Foucault's approach to power as a relational phenomenon focusing on the creation and establishment on conceptions of the way things are. As far as techniques of power are concerned, they are organizational, classificatory, spatial, representational and ethical-show up as an effect on the actions of

others. There are no direct constraints on behaviour, no overt sanctions, only indirect techniques of regulations through which people free fashion their own sense of self. (...) As Allen (2004, 19) noticed, “power turns up everywhere because it comes from everywhere”.

In the 1991, President George Bush stated that we were living in a new period of history. In the political realm a few concepts were declared – self-determination, cooperative deterrence, joint action against aggression and newly emerged phenomenon of terrorism. Later The National Security Strategy of the United States of America (henceforth NSS) also deepened the phenomenon of global terrorism and presented intention of building up a world where great powers compete in peace. (NSS, 2002) In the economic realm which was introduced relatively shortly, however, quite bluntly, focus was applied on liberalization of international trade and active role of the US economy in it. (Bush, 1991) This marvellous vision of a future where everybody wins was, on the contrary, constructed on the background of repeating above mentioned characteristics of international order to prepare a stable and strong position for imposition of global domination. Nevertheless, although declared NWO has promised equality, cooperation, self-determination, fair global governance, only a few states could join the project as fully profiting partners. Globally given promise to the rest of states of the world to solve all negative things through cooperation and partnership was balanced by almost hidden demand for unconditional trust and obedience from the states towards the world-leader.

Other stage of building a hegemonic position can be seen in the Project for a New American Century, where the United States declared security and peace in Europe, Asia and the Middle East as its vital interests and followed by enumeration of four basis consequences:

- we need to increase defense spending significantly if we are to carry out our global responsibilities today and modernize our armed forces for the future;
- we need to strengthen our ties to democratic allies and to challenge regimes hostile to our interests and values;
- we need to promote the cause of political and economic freedom abroad;
- we need to accept responsibility for America's unique role in preserving and extending an international order friendly to our security, our prosperity, and our principles. (Project for the New American Century, 1997)

Fear from uncertainty was warded and the new concept of governance in form of New World Order could be imposed, justified and gradually securitized until it was almost fully recognized. War on terrorism with declared privilege to wage a preemptive war if the vital interests of the USA are threaten was accompanied by the final stage of hegemonic

verbalisation: “But over time, it's going to be important for nations to know they will be held accountable for inactivity. You are either with us or you are against us in the fight against terror. And that's going to be part of my speech at the United Nations. (The White House, 2001) Confidence of successful imposition was clearly stated in the preface to the NSS (NSS, 2006) - “America must continue to lead”.

Classic figure of realism in international relations Kenneth Waltz wrote during the Cold war in the 70s that “England claimed to bear the white man’s burden; France spoke of her *mission civilisatrice*. But for the United States, in like spirit, it is necessary to act to make and maintain world order. For countries at the top, this is predictable behaviour” (Waltz, 1979). From this point of view, let us discuss the recent effort to fulfil Waltz’s prediction how the world order is maintained and how it is resisted.

Muslim response: refusal and inspiration from the West

Creation of hegemonic position of the United States was accompanied with many responses to its policy. However, from the very beginning of such a situation, new complications have entered the world. As Dodds argues, most geopolitical authors with significant impact on practical policy (Kissinger, Brzezinski, Gray, Huntington, etc.) were trapped in national interstate perspective and thus approached the problems from a very nationalistic point of view and rarely embrace cross-cultural an/or cross regional understanding or perspectives. (Dodds, 2005, 2) Therefore it was striking that new reactions for the new threats and new forms of disagreement or refusal were introduced with considerable delay and institutions which has been predominantly intended to predict or even solve problems were incapable to react properly. (O’Thuathail, Dalby, Routledge, 1998)

In the age of global geo-politics and neo-liberal globalisation, both Western concepts, space and place has been reduced, become less important and only places involved in particular networks deserve special care and treatment. The rest are seen as on the inevitable path to join (Fukuyama) or are labelled as places of clash and resistance or even as rough states (Huntington).

This situation has led into the emergence of wide range and multi-scale resistance to such teleological inevitability of globalisation led by the only superpower. Repercussions from all over the world have started to come slowly and from various and very different places, in different times.

One of the loudest negative reactions the New World Order has originated from the Muslim world, followed by Latin America. We have been witnessing blatant reaction which

came predominantly from the circles of 'civil' (Latin America) or 'civil-religion' societies in the Middle East. This was unprecedented situation since till the 80s or the 90s only symmetrical treat in international relations has been calculated and asymmetrical threat from sub-national or trans-national actors were seen as marginal.

The reasons of Islamic resistance are observed from a few perspectives. Islamic religion, its nature and socio-political structures, is to be seen as original source of violence or, on the contrary, the role of Islam is conceived to be insignificant. Between such different extremes there is relatively great variety of modified perspectives. One reverse is represented by Huntington, Lewis, further moderate stream, balancing influence of policy and religion is represented by Roy, Kepel, Esposito, Kropacek, and on the distinct pole stand Halliday, Lahoud, Maalouf and others, claiming that "Islamism is not about what Islam is but about what Islam can be made to be if politically manipulated." (Lahoud, Johns, 2005, 23)

Geographical approach to the phenomenon of Islamism is principally inspired and influenced by "cultural turn" and "locality debate", approaches of the late 80s. Territories are not frozen, static frameworks where social life occurs. Rather, they are made, given meanings, and destroyed in social and individual action. Hence, they are typically contested and actively negotiated. (Paasi, 2003, 110, see also Paasi 2003a, 479, Harvey, 1989). Place can be understood as a context for political activities and cultural embeddness.

From the geographical perspective, the principal aim of Islamists is to return their place into world scene again. The value of place has remained in the world of Muslims still worthy and has served as a factor of common 'adoration'. Their effort is to re-territorialize their space – to persuade others in order to respect and reconsider their attitude towards the Muslim world and to see how Western modern "exported modernity" working in the post-modern era in Muslim world.

Notwithstanding Hardt's claim about resisting 'Empire' (USA) by creating 'non-placed' world opposition, it is possible rather to refer to Bhabha's works that very marginalized cultures intend to become visible. The voices are voices of "exiled groups" or „exiled minorities“ speaking with language of dissidents and framing the space for communication. According to Bhabha (2004) there is a radical shift from the state to sub-state convoluted social reality and cultural areas.

Effort of re-territorialization as such has become part of geographically flexible networks, and has become embedded in different places all over the world and at a variety of spatial scales (global level, states, regions, localities). These different geographic scales and places are mutually constitutive parts creating links of various lengths and strengths in the

network. Networks of agents act across various distances and through diverse intermediaries. However, some networks are relatively more localized, while others are more global in scope and the relationship of networks to territories is mutually constitutive: networks are embedded in territories and, at the same time, territories are embedded in networks. (Dicken, et al. 2001, 97)

In the Muslim world such networks have been constituted for the long time with the Western inspiration or even imitation. Western presence began to have a tangible cultural impact in Muslim countries, where a new cultural model began to be quietly introduced by enthusiasts and admirers of the West, or was more forcefully imposed by the colonial authorities. (Tamini, 2007, 45)

Although qualitatively different socio-political institutions are not easily distinguishable, some are, from the position of Islamist considered to be a Western origin, and thus criticised, however, some, mainly indigenous, are appreciated. Nevertheless, the border between is very fuzzy and politically contested.

Also the realm of traditional authority has been contested. Mass education and increasing level of literacy in the Muslim society and the emergence of new technologies and modes of communication caused that structures of authority become increasingly diffuse, disparate, polyvalent and translocalized. (Mandaville, 2007, 103)

In this regard, *salafiya* movement must not be omitted. Their legacy was followed by two distinguished groups – modernist and traditionalists, however, every group interpreted it in a different way. The modernists have drawn on with using concepts of civil society, equalities between men and women, equal citizenship and democratic principles. These groups follow the legacy of *salafiya* in an area of inspiration from the West, however, they tried to combine particular Western principles and real Islamic conditions.

The opposed, traditionalist groups like Muslim Brotherhood, Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya, Committee for Defence of Legitimate Rights, Front of Islamic Salvation or Hizb ut-Tahrir, drawn on *salafiya*'s legacy to transform society according to the image of the Prophet's ideal society, nevertheless, by using only particular Western instruments. However, overwhelming aim remained – through the spiritual resurgence to throw off extraneous governments, military forces and businessmen and to recreate the old glory of Muslim world by using the methods of world leaders.

Searching for a New Ummah – Islamic World Order

To say “Islamist resistance” is unequivocally generalized term saying nothing about wide-range currents competing in the Muslim society. In this part a few responses to external influence and dominance will be introduced. Dominance of the US is in the Muslim world often interpreted as a product of postcolonial and neo-imperialist policy towards the Middle Eastern countries.

Sajjid Qutb, probably the best known figure of Islamic revival, was striking example of it. His ideas have served as an emphatic blame of the West, which had caused social problems, economic dependency or political division of *ummah* (Islamic civilization). A vast new trend in mutual relationship between the Western and the Muslim worlds has come into effect. Mainly in the 80s and presumably even more in the 90s we were able to determine efforts trying to represent anti-Western positions and to blame the West policy for many weaknesses and threats. Esposito in his monographs shows how people are still being held back by the baggage of the past and geographic imagination about the different regions. West, usually with favour, questions or even categorically affirms that Islam is not conducive to democratization and modernization and modernity or that Islam itself is antidemocratic. (...) A combination of ignorance and stereotyping, history and experiences, as well as religio-cultural chauvinism on both sides, often blind even the best intentioned when dealing with the Arab and Muslim world also all well minded efforts and changes in Arabic and Muslim world. But also Muslim’s approach to the West is often monolithic as well and Europe and USA are often blamed from the origin of all problems in their world. (Esposito, 1999, 215) The same findings are demonstrated by Lewis dealing with poverty and tyranny in the entire Muslim world. Both of these problems are attributed to America – the first to American economic dominance and exploitation, now thinly disguised as “globalization”; the second to America’s support for the many so-called Muslim tyrants who serve its purposes. Globalization has become a major theme in the Arab media, and it is almost always raised in connection with American economic penetration. (Lewis, 2003, 113) We might continue with Halliday (1995) who describes reciprocal stereotyping from the West and from the Muslim world which leads to mutual refusal.

Thus it is no surprising that in the Muslim world there is a gradual constituting of resistance against the “blamed West”, but, on the other side, followed by efforts to introduce some counter plans or blueprints how to handle the situation. Some of the Muslim leaders, often well-educated at the Western universities, have found out that “power of blame” is compatible with temptations of certain groups in Muslim society. Opposing the urge to free

trade, international justice, law, universally labelled but not universally accepted principles of human rights and the concept of equal opportunities in managing their own destinies, have been found as a dynamic, unifying instrument how to raised new type of policy.

In order to achieve these goals Islamists propose to offer also universal solutions – imposition of “Islamic World Order” based on Koranic-revealed principles of societal order. They follow two parallel targets. In the first one, they intend to shake off religious humiliation since there is evident, unhappy contrast between the political legacy of the Prophet Muhammad lead first *ummah* and today’s reality. The second target is conceived from the secular point of view – to defend their own power and to profit from it. Generally speaking, Islamists’ perspectives are not restricted to national and regional boundaries. In this respect, Islam resembles Western civilization, in the sense that this is universal in both its claims and its outlook. (Tibi, 2002) Nevertheless, there are cleavages on both sides of so called ‘civilizations’ – there is no universal consensus to undertake mission under the banner of civilizations. Spreading *da’wa* (invitation to Islam), *mission civilisatrice*, white-men burden or world order over the world is, as I dare to claim, only particular geo-political imagination which serves for the purposes of power control at the global level. But meanwhile the West has had potential to impose universal order, since it has been backed by the strongest nation states, transnational corporations and world-widely acting international governmental organizations, endeavours from the Muslim world have had no opportunity to succeed in the imposition of their own “Islamic world order” over the world, but they can create disorder, on a vast scale. (ibid., also see Halliday, 1995)

We can demonstrate project of the “Islamic world order” on the work of sheikh Safar al-Hawali (henceforth Hawali) who is one of the key figures of the Islamic opposition in Saudi Arabia. His ideas are ideal examples of the effort how to return the concept of territory into general perspectives. He played the role as a “defender of Islam” in the Saudi Arabia, but also all over the world. His concern is to protect his country and his culture from foreign domination. Global-local interplay in such policies is very usual, since connection between scales provides him with broader space which can be used for articulation of the political discourse.

Unlike many Islamists, whose sermons are articulated only in specific nation-based context, Hawali’s speeches and writing include the larger Islamic world and its collision course with the West. Surprisingly, he uses the West both as an example and as an enemy, (Fandy, 1999, 64) nevertheless, it is relatively usual in the realm of the Islamic world. Notwithstanding other Islamists, he does not emphasize necessity of creating the *ummah*,

which would shore up the political roof over the Muslim world, however, he tries to coordinate Muslim societies all over the world in order to resist from the West. The principal problem is seen in economic submission, military dependency, political disunity and disability to produce advanced technological products. These identified weaknesses of the Muslim world hold Muslims back from taking the fair portion of world power they should deserve. The West is in Hawali's sermons portrayed as a subject operating for the sustenance of such a situation of dependence and unfair handling. He contends with all above mentioned problems by advising to implement particular anti-Western focused activities such as a censorship of media, withdrawal from international financial institutions, regulation of tourism etc. Looking at him from the geopolitical perspective, his views are to be observed as strategic concepts. He identifies the role of the West, headed by the USA, as a strategic battle for natural resources of the Gulf and against Islam. And fight against Islam has been found as a key purpose of the Gulf war, not oil, as many claim, 'but the humiliation of Islam through the subjugation and destruction of the Islamic movement'. (Fandy, 1999, 71)

We need to discuss the source of Hawali's ideas. Although he is one of the key actors in the Islamist current, we are to be aware of the similarity in his sermons to arguments of 'Western' authors. He does not argue in the name of different (Islamic) values, but in the name of universal geo-political values on the field of common geo-political culture. His crucial argument is equality of exposing power, ideal concept, and some amalgam of realistic and idealistic approach.

What is more, regarding the Islamic world order he uses Gramscian perspective to criticise the policies of the US. According to Hawali, American New world order was imposed to cover control over the only part of resistant world and to securitized domination. He also employs concept of geographic imagination to persuade masses about the threat from the West, with using the Said's concept of Orientalism to support his claims about the Western conspiracy against the Muslim world. Also his example is striking in a way how he employed (neo)Marxist findings into his narration. Concept of the class struggle was interchanged into Koranic categories like the world arrogance (*instikbár*) and the world of oppressed (*musta'dafín*). (Kropacek, 2002)

Although Hawali spoke to quite a broad audience, only a small number of Muslims has drawn their radical inspiration from him, and, moreover, after he was released from prison, his concept was pushed aside by more radical approaches, based on harsh refusal and allowance for use of violence. However, it is evident that anti-geo-political argumentation and demands have dispersed through the region. In spite of fact that we are unable to trace his

direct influence on other important figures, his visions have repercussion in the sermons and speeches of Zawahiri, Osama b. Laden etc.

Conclusion

As a matter of fact, we are forced to deal with paradox point out by Gill (2000) that whereas world is being more and more interconnected by networks, resistance against such tendencies will emerge and become essential. However, it is not globalisation which is being opposed, but the USA and the West, respectively their imperial policies causing uneven distribution of wealth. In the “realms of resistance” actors employ ideological frameworks in order to describe the fundamentals of the West societies as spoiled by consumerism and selfishness. The concept of the New World Order is has been criticised as solely dividing policies of “us” and “them”, using stereotyping, and popular imaginations. Subsequently all trends were embodied into the so-called Bush doctrine, with the war on terrorism and pre-emptive wars. Against such policies, the polyvalent form of resistance has emerged in many regions and also in the “heart of the Western world”. Islamistic resistance was driven by the religio-political principles and as such, the strength was considerable. Also this efforts has contributed to the world-wide diffusion of anti-geo-political discourse and supported the dissident voices of anti-Americanism, anti-Westernalism and anti-imperialism and promoted the emergence of alternative world concepts of order.

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