

Middle East Dialogue 2015...Glorious Past, Uncertain Future

GLOBAL ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM

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The global Islamic fundamentalism, are going to redefine human civilization in the same way as the two World Wars redefined human civilization by resulting in unification of European countries that were fighting each other for thousands of years. The global Islamic militancy may lead to a temporary establishment of an Islamic empire in the Middle East and North Africa, with fundamentalist Islamic parties taking power in democratic elections. These ruling parties will try to turn back the clock by imposing sharia rules. But in the end, it will lead to the formation of secular and democratic nations, such as Turkey, in the region. Until World War I, Turkey, whose population is 99% Muslim, had been the seat of the Ottoman Empire (1299–1922), an Islamic empire, and the Islamic caliphate. It is now a secular, democratic nation since 1923. Hence the current rise in Islamic militancy worldwide does not reflect Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations," but is instead a violent prelude to the modernization of Islam, and a major step toward the integration of human civilization.

Islam is the only religion that is being enforced by several countries today, i.e. in countries having Muslim majority population. The Quran and sharia discriminate against non-Muslims and give limited rights to women.

Until the Middle Ages (1300 AD), nearly all Christian rulers in Europe and the Middle East were enforcing Christianity and imposing restrictions on non-Christians. The Hindu rulers of India, too, ruled by discriminating religious terms. Gradually, by sociopolitical enlightenment, it was realized that it is wrong to limit religious freedoms. Secularism became the norm. This evolution can be termed as the modernization of those religions. Non-Christians are able to practice their religions freely in the Christian majority United States not because their forefathers fought for their religious freedoms but because of the secularization of the majority of Christians. Such a secular majority is missing in nearly all Islamic countries.

During the period of modernization of Islam, the world may be experiencing turmoil while it moves toward stability. Europe, India, the United States, Israel, and perhaps even China will constitute war fronts, particularly for homegrown terrorists. If Pakistan's nuclear arsenal falls into the hands of Islamic militants, we may witness large-scale nuclear attacks on these countries.