Resisting Racism and Xenophobia

Global Perspectives on Race, Gender, and Human Rights

Edited by
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ALTAMIRA
PRESS

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Resisting Occupation

Fadwa El Guindi

IN a compelling television interview on the subject of gender and resistance carried out recently, Laila Khalid expressed support for al-Muqawama (Arabic for "the resistance") in all its forms and by both sexes, She is the Muslim Palestinian heroine who nonviolently hijacked two commercial airliners in 1972, taking the world by surprise regarding the resilience of Arab womanhood (EI Guindi 1992b) and steadfastness of Palestinian resistance, In the interview, Khalid eloquently describes how Israeli and US bombs and bullets do not distinguish age or gender, indiscriminately killing men, women, children, and elderly. She points out that it is neither fair nor right that men sacrifice their lives to liberate land from occupation and restore dignity to the people while women sit back and later reap the fruit of men's sacrifices. Women, like men, can sacrifice their lives and boldly resist in various forms to accomplish the same end-liberation. She considers all forms to resist occupation and liberate one's land to be legitimate, which should be the responsibility of the entire society. It is a universal and legitimate right. A colonized people have the internationally legal right to resist occupation of their land.

PALESTINE

Laila Khalid succeeded in putting at center stage of worldwide politics and consciousness the long-muted Palestinian *nakba* (Arabic for "catastrophe")-a term and a remembrance associated with the coercive formation of Israel on Palestinian land in 1948. The *nakba* was a forgotten and muted issue in global politics, U.S. domestic academics, and diplomatic circles-an illusion. The Palestinian Arabs and the rest of the Arabs and Muslims would

never buy into this Zionist-constructed illusion. Palestinians are real, and their tragedy is historical. Their story is not memories, their roots not mythical, and their community not imagined. Whether in refugee camps or elsewhere after fleeing by coercion, threat, or intimidation since 1948, they still carry their home keys-awaiting return. It would have remained an illusion, as Zionism wishes it to be, had it not been for the resistance by women like Laila Khalid and the *kaffiyeh-wearing* youth *(kaffiyeh-Arabic* for men's checkered headscarf worn by Palestinians, which is now a universal symbol of Palestinian steadfast struggle for liberation; for more, see EI Guindi 2005b) of the Intifada (Arabic for uprising against Israeli occupation of Palestine) throwing stones at the Israeli colonists, the Istishhadiyyun (men and women who weaponize their own bodies by choice as the ultimate form of sacrificing one's life for one's country), along with *'amaliyyat fida'iyya* (armed struggle).

Israel is engaged in practices muted by the media: massacres and genocides, trafficking of human organs, genetic experimentations, inhumane torture. It has repeatedly ignored UN resolutions, the Geneva Convention, all peace accords, international law, and human rights over and over. It is the only country colonially planted in the midst of the Arab world that possesses weapons of mass destruction. Until occupation ends and Palestinians return, the issue of Palestine will remain at the center of the Arab-Islamic region's tension with the United States. Palestinian resistance is confined within the borders of Palestine 1948, yet the problem is linked to the overall resistance movement in the Arab and Islamic world. Attempts by Israel and the United States to delink the Palestinian problem from the Arab regional context have failed.

SEPTEMBER 11: SHOCK AND AWE

On September 11,2001, the American people saw an unprecedented kind of attack in Manhattan, New York, and the nation's capital (see Chomsky 2001, 2003), in which the United States was powerless to prevent or contain an attack on two monuments-the World Trade Center and the Pentagon-representing two pillars of American global power: the economy and the military. This sent shock waves across North America. The American people were traumatized by shock and awe. They felt grief, guilt, depression, and anger. Many American people were reported to have depression.

President Bush set the tone for the U.S. response. A paradigm posing both good versus evil and civilized values versus desperate terrorism was unleashed by the administration as it simultaneously demanded unquestioned public loy

alty, by flying flags and resuming consumerism, "buying and flying normally so we win this war against terrorists who are attacking our freedom and lifestyle." He framed the events as those perpetrated by evil forces lurking in the shadows and that America will take revenge so that good (Christian America) prevails over evil (Arabs and Muslims). President Bush initially used the term *crusade,* which sent alarm bells to all Arab and Muslim states, and although he corrected it afterward, it had instantly captured evangelist imagery and pleased the Christian extremists, particularly the Armageddonists.

The trauma experienced by the American public is not unique, nor is the condition that produced it-the September 11 attacks. The reaction complex fits an identifiable universal pattern of behaviors in similar circumstances. According to the National Academy of Sciences terrorism subpanel report (2002), the textbook manifestations of cultural trauma include a heightened group consciousness, emotional numbing, collective mourning, national brooding, and reference to the sacred. However, there are many invasion-produced traumas around the world and many ground zeros-many caused by the United States and Israel. Israel, since its colonial beginnings, has been displacing Palestinians and violating sovereignty of Arab states and human rights of Muslims. But when in 1967 Egypt was defeated in a preemptive strike by Israel, the Egyptian people were traumatized, their psyche shattered. They became a public in despair. In their despair, Egyptians saw apparitions of Virgin Mary-a religious figure central to the theology and morality of Christian and Muslim ,Arabs. When the United States invaded Afghanistan and began to threaten invasion of Iraq next, again apparitions of Virgin Mary were seen in Egypt, this time in the south. Muslims and Christians traveled daily to the south to catch a view of her-a sign of hope and peace.

In their despair after September 11, the American people began to see an apparition of the devil. The image of a form resembling the devil appeared to people in the rubble of the twin towers of the World Trade Center and was circulated widely in cyberspace. It represents the evil half of the paradigm of polarity-good and evil, god and devil, with us or against us, or the famous Bush Jr. cowboy edict, "I want him dead or alive." America's apparition reflects the U.S. response to the crisis-retaliation and revenge.

In response to September 11, Americans flew U.S. flags (some Jewish Americans flew Israeli flags), and they assaulted immigrants, brown-skinned people, and those appearing to be of Arab or south Asian descent. They also went to church more frequently. Resorting to faith in times of crisis fits the overall pattern of such reactions by many societies throughout recent history. Assaulting other Americans because of their different ethnic origins, or brownskinned immigrants for the color of their skin or appearance, is racist-plain and simple. '

HOMELAND SECURITY AND INSECURITY

America, in revenge, declared a war on terror, one without borders and no end. At home, the climate became that of fear and intimidation. The process that had already begun a few years before September 11, by which racial profiling targeted Arabs and Muslims, gained a framework, a legitimacy, and an institution-namely, Homeland Security and Patriot Acts I and II. A sweep of civil liberty violations took the United States by storm, as the public and the Senate were in a state of shock and fear. Opposing such measure or war would be construed as being unpatriotic. Flag waving and bigotry permeated the landscape. Human rights and civil rights were being violated. High values such as "freedom, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" were phrases used alongside images of high-tech warplanes by corporations such as Lockheed. The link between militarism, patriotism, and all-American values was made. press codes, from Sikh turbans to *ktiffiyeh* to women's headcovers, became targets of assault (see EI Guindi 1999c and 2005b for details on origins and meaning of Muslim and Arab dress). Many were detained. In the eleven months after the September 11 attacks, 762 aliens were detained for immigration offenses, including overstaying their visas and entering the country illegally.

According to an internal Justice Department investigation, cited in the Council on American-Islamic Relations report (2002), "significant problems" were found with how detainees were treated in U.S. facilities in the wake of the September 11, 2001, attacks. The problems included physical and verbal abuse, extended detention without cause, and unacceptable conditions of incarceration. It also referred to officials' imposing a communications blackout for September 11 detainees immediately after the terrorist attacks, one that lasted several weeks. After the blackout period ended, the September 11 detainees became designated "witness security" inmates, a move that frustrated efforts by detainees' attorneys, families, and even law enforcement officials to determine where the detainees were being held. Frequently people who inquired about a specific September 11 detainee were falsely told that the detainee was not held at a certain facility.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations report also mentions that the American Civil Liberties Union saw the report as quite clearly being action against immigrants. "Immigrants weren't the enemy," ACLU executive director Anthony Romero said in a statement." But, the war on terror quickly became a war on immigrants. The inspector general's findings confirm our long-held view that civil liberties and the rights of immigrants were trampled in the aftermath of 9/11."

ARAB AND MUSLIM AMERICANS

In the aftermath of September 11, the climate of fear, bigotry, intimidation, violation of civil liberties, and suspicion affected Arab and Muslim Americans the most-a situation worsened by the absence of adequate education about them. According to the fifty-page study alluded to *earlier-Stereotypes and Civil Liberties,* released by the Washington-based advocacy organization Council on American-Islamic Relations (2002)-Muslim Americans are facing serious discrimination in the form of ethnic and religious profiling, detentions, and interrogations. This worsened the climate for Muslims and tacitly encouraged their official and public targeting. Anti-Muslim incidents nearly tripled during the twelve-month period ending March 2002. The report mentions twelve hundred Muslims that were unjustifiably detained and presumed to be terrorists by immigration officials, five thousand legal visa holders submitting to "voluntary interrogations," and fifty thousand detained for giving donations to charity and relief organizations that got shut down by the government after September 11. The cartoon by Danziger in figure 14.1 depicts this scenario quite well.

    Arab Americans had been lobbying actively to seek a separate classification for Arabs so that they could access benefits such as social and economic services
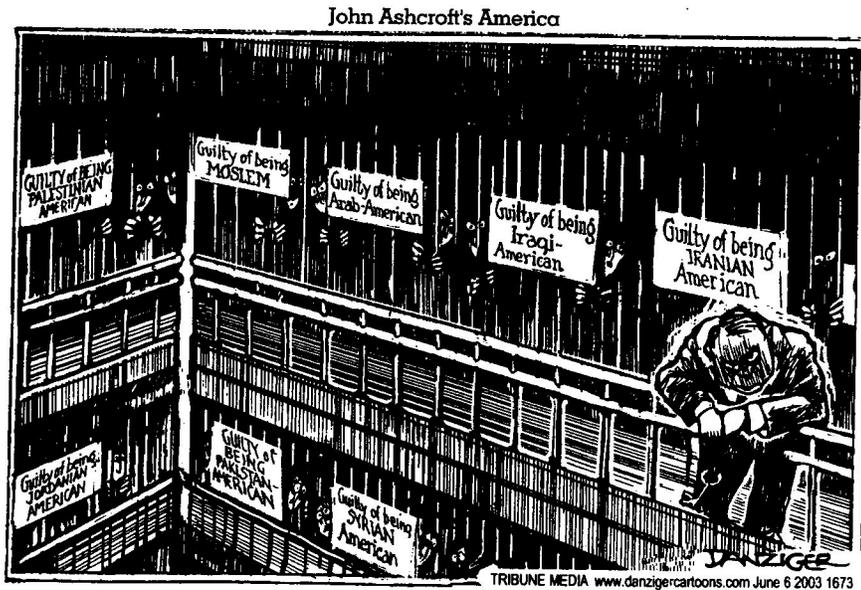

Figure 14.1.

or simply produce research data. In this atmosphere, some Arab Americans are now quite comfortable with checking the box labeled "white," fearing that a separate classification of "Arab " or "Muslim" would be a government attempt to identify them for profiling purposes. There is a general reluctance reminiscent of pre-Holocaust Jewish fears in Europe of being classified or numbered for fear of possible abuse by government or law enforcement agencies. Many now fear that in the present political climate, adding an "Arab American" category on any government form can be used in current campaigns to round up those who check the box. Tensions rise as the multiple-pronged conflict in the Middle East intensifies. Arab and Muslim Americans directly experience these conflicts in their lives.

Arab and Muslim Americans had already been suffering from racism and discrimination not unlike some other ethnic/racial groups in America (African American, Japanese American). But the problem has become deeper and the relationship more complex. Conspicuously, there is not one studies program or center (plans are considered at the Dearborn campus of the University of Michigan) dedicated to the study of, research on, or the teaching about Arab and Muslim Americans, an American ethnic and religious group that has grown into a population exceeding ten million, now well organized and quite active in American public and political life and directly related to America's most volatile area of foreign policy.

The bias extends to academics and scholars of the same origin, especially in the social sciences, few of whom hold positions in Islamic and Middle East studies, contrary to the nationwide initiative to recruit African Americans for African American studies, Jews for Jewish studies, and Asians for Asian and Asian American studies. Ironically, Jews tend to be recruited (without scrutiny for likely bias against Arabs and Muslims) to teach Middle East and Islamic studies. You will not find many, if any, Muslim scholars occupying Jewish chairs in Jewish studies. Is it not time to institute Arab and Muslim American studies in the curricula of major universities? Arabs and Muslims constitute the only segment of the American ethnic landscape officially left out of academe (see El Guindi 2003).

CONSTRUCTING AN ENEMY

The enemy was described as the amorphous evil that lurks in the shadows. Terrorism is the enemy. It has no borders, no timetable, no place. But America's might comes from superior military air power designed for conventional war. To take revenge and destroy the enemy, the United States needed a concrete embodiment of evil, a person and a place. The process began with words. Sep-

tember 11 was framed as an act of terrorism and a declaration of war against the United States. An enemy without borders allows the United States to have endless wars chasing the phantom. Defining it as a "declaration of war" allowed the United States to escape the charge of preemption. This would correspond to a literalist simplistic framing of U.S. foreign policy. It cannot deal with intangible movements resisting hegemony. The enemy has to be in a form that America understands: cells, active and sleeper. It is a concrete logic that u.s. foreign policy use a strategy to turn a people's resistance into enemies that it can fight conventional wars with and win. But there were no wars. The disparity in power and the act of preemption and its illegality make them invasions, not wars. These invasions, just like the medieval Crusades, are driven by narrow religious ideologies and for economic gain, carried out in the name of security and a mission for liberation and democratization. Beyond the euphoria and false patriotism, the question becomes Has the United States won? Certainly not. So, what has the United States achieved?

FROM OSAMA BIN LADEN (AFGHANISTAN)

In an effort to prevent war, the Muslim world and the UN called for a conference to discuss terrorism and produce a unified body of resolutions and actions to take. Egypt favored this path. But the United States would not accept it; it was ready for revenge, immediate and spectacular. Long-term consequences for the United States were not well thought out. Other factors took priority: corporate profit, direct access to oil, control of oil pipelines, demonstration of superpower status, domestic partisan politics, creating consumers and markets for U.S. military weapons and consumer goods to satisfy an insatiable corporate appetite, and pleasing Israel. The United States coercively globalizes markets, homogenizes cultures, and tries to pacify people who resist.

In the Gulf War, constructing the enemy for the American people and the world was much easier. This time, however, a phantom had to be made concrete using Christian vocabulary and hegemonic language. By adding a phrase of collective punishment, "terrorists and those who harbor them," the Anglo-American axis gave itself the go-ahead to attack one of the poorest nations in the world and a people who have been suffering for decades from resisting the Soviet invasion, droughts, civil unrest, power struggle, and extreme poverty.

Bin Laden was made the symbol of evil and terror perpetrated on the United States. To others elsewhere, however, he was a messenger of resistance to tyrannical and greedy globalized power, chiefly by the United States. The place was called al-Qa'da (Arabic for "the base"). The location was Afghanistan. The phrase "terrorists and those who harbor them" widened the

targeted landscape to encompass countries, particularly oil-rich or economically strategic countries, such as Afghanistan. The Taliban were charged with harboring terrorists who trained in a camp run by bin Laden and his followers. Al-Qa'da is a term used by the United States to refer to a training camp in Afghanistan for people from all over the world but primarily Afghan Arabs. Al-Qa'da and the Taliban are not the same thing. The Taliban form a local Afghani group engaged in post-Soviet civil war and struggle for power. They were gaining ground in the civil war. It is interesting that, as one listens carefully to all of bin Laden's early messages and tapes in the original language (Arabic), the term Qa'da was never a term he or any of his companions used. It could possibly be a term created by U.S. intelligence to construct a targetable entity, referring to this general training that may not have been as localized nor centralized as we were led to believe.

In his op-ed column, Thomas Friedman states that the "real reason" for this war, which was never stated, was that after September 11 America needed to hit someone in the Arab-Muslim world *(New York Times, June* 4, 2003, A31). Terrorists are Muslim. It is Islamic terrorism. There is a factor of racism here. Note that Timothy McVeigh, the man charged with bombing the federal building in Oklahoma, was never labeled as a terrorist, let alone a Christian terrorist. The media never talked about Christian terrorism after that tragedy. Nor did America bomb McVeigh's hometown.

Friedman writes that America attacked "because we could." This "mightas-right" must have been the drive behind the Mongols' sweep across the Middle East in violent destructive conquests. However, one must heed lessons and irony from history. The Mongols conquered, ravished, destroyed, and then converted to Islam and vigorously carried the message of Islam wider and deeper.

Other nations found it handy to imitate the United States and call their enemies "terrorists." Resistance became terrorism. Chechnyans became Russia's terrorists, and Palestinians became Israel's terrorists. Calling its target a "terrorist" permitted atrocities and justified gross violations of human rights. Israel engaged in racist and inhumane practices against Palestinians. Still, as Friedman puts it, Afghanistan was not enough. The United States invaded using hightech firepower from faraway distances, and troops simply walked into Baghdad. It was one-sided. The United States attacked Iraq. There was no war and no victory.

TO SADDAM HUSSEIN (IRAQ)

Undermining resistance to hegemony, Friedman outlines what I consider to be a roadmap to the abyss, justifying end)ess wars against Arabs and Muslims. He

refers to a "terrorism bubble" that poses a real threat and has to be punctured. He seems to argue for endless, elusive wars, oblivious that these would bleed America's economy and deplete its moral capital around the world.

He goes on to say that the only way to puncture that bubble is for American soldiers, men and women, to go into the heart of the Arab-Muslim world, house to house, and make it clear that we are ready to kill, and die, to prevent our open society from being undermined by this terrorism bubble. Smashing Saudi Arabia or Syria would have been fine. But we hit Saddam for one simple reason: because we could, because he deserved it, and because he was right in the heart of that world. Friedman's piece is a call for vendetta, an eternal one, and seems to serve Zionist rather than u.s. interests. Friedman may be right about U.S. intent, but he is wrong about Arab and Muslim discontent.

Now two Arab countries are occupied: Palestine under Israeli occupation since 1948 and Iraq under Anglo-American occupation starting in 2003. Intellectuals must wonder whether the postmodernist notion of postcolonialism is of any value, being merely an intellectual ploy in polemics and an exercise in denial, since coloniality is real and continues in its original form. To refer to a postcolonial phase is to deny that people and lands (Palestine and Iraq) are occupied by colonial powers and, hence, to deny their right to liberation.

Despite the gross disparity in power between U.S. unprecedented might and Iraq-a devastated developing country-the resistance in Iraq at the time of invasion succeeded in bringing down invading Apaches, Cobras, and tanks, and it took prisoners of war. Since the occupation, Iraqis continue to down Apaches and F16s, ambush troops, and kill marines. The Anglo-American occupying force in Iraq is not wanted there. In Palestine, resistance has been going strong for years. Both Palestinians and Iraqis are determined to continue the resistance as long as their land, homes, and resources are occupied.

Could the first Gulf War have been prevented? The Arab countries tried. They had in fact reached a mediated solution, a *sulha* (Arabic for "reconciliation") building on traditional institutions of *khuwwa* (Arabic for "brotherhood") between both parties of the original conflict, Iraq and Kuwait. But the United States was determined then, as in the recent invasion, to go ahead with war. The Anglo-American war machine had been greased. The same pattern is repeated. A Pakistan-mediated offer made with bin Laden's approval to submit to international procedures of trial and justice was ignored, as again the Anglo-American military machine was unleashed in 1990 and on October 7, 2002, and again in March 2003. In between, there were many strikes (the Sudan) and frequent bombings (daily bombing of Iraq).

The war of 2003 could also have been averted. A UN-sponsored inspection team had demonstrated that Iraq did not possess weapons of mass destruction, but America insisted on war, shifting pretexts from regime change,

to WMDs, to a al-Qa'da link. The world, countries and people, objected. But the United States moved ahead with another invasion, this time preemptively, against human rights, against the United Nations, against the Geneva Convention, and against the peoples of the world who demonstrated daily in every city in every country-the World Street (more on this later) spoke loudly against the war. The U.S. attack was preemptive, unilateral, unsupported by the international community, and in violation of international law and universal human rights; it took place despite disapproval of the United Nations and against the will of all the peoples of the world, as seen in the worldwide protests by women and men against the war.

It is as if Iraq had not suffered enough. A decade of sanctions and continual attacks since the devastating Gulf War had caused inhumane suffering for the people and destruction of society and services. Other than the damage from direct attacks ongoing since 1990, according to reports by the United Nations (n.d.) and the International Action Center (n.d.) each month a conservative estimate of about 6,000 Iraqi children perished from sanction-related causes. For instance, at least 133 children each day, nearly 50,000 a year, had died from complications from malnutrition and sewage-contaminated water; from diarrhea and pneumonia; and from diseases such as polio, cholera, and typhoid. I have not included the genetic deformities of an entire generation caused by depleted uranium. The proportional equivalent for the United States would very conservatively be 69,000 children dying each month. Compare this figure with the one-time event of fewer than 3,000 deaths at the twin towers for perspective on ground zero and tragedies.

Despite this bleak picture of extreme human suffering, the United States invaded Iraq, without any legitimacy, armed with unconvincing pretexts and the disproportionate weight of vengeance-a long-awaited reprisal for all the humiliations experienced by the United States at the hands of elusive groups or individuals in Yemen, Somalia, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Lebanon, and so on. It is a war that the United States began but has no power now to end.

WAR AGAINST CIVILIZATION

Former prime minister Margaret Thatcher of England, former president George H. W Bush, former secretary of state Madeleine Albright, and current U.S. president George W Bush have all described Iraq as being barbarian and needing to join the civilized world. This is colonial vocabulary and racist thinking that are part of an attitude reminiscent of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scheme that put societies on a ladder from savagery to barbarism to civilization. This scheme is empirically wrong. Archeologists know

what civilization is and that these claims are racist misuses of well-defined terms. Why have archeologists remained silent? Anthropologists know about violence and about the value of heritage for peoples with civilizational culture. Why have anthropologists remained silent? Samuel P. Huntington (1998) used the phrase "clash of civilization." Politicians used it to promote their strategies.

But where is anthropology? There is a technical definition for the notion of civilization, which if applied would discredit the scenario of a clash altogether, since the term represents a stage in the developmental history of human societies, its cradle being Mesopotamia and Egypt (now the Arab world), culminating in the development of industrialized and electronic technologies. Civilization does not characterize the Western level of development. It marks the revolutionary developments of the East-Mesopotamia, Egypt, and so on. The clash is not conducted between civilizations but rather is created by a militaristic, unilateralist, preemptive, hegemonic force from the West *against* civilization in the East (EI Guindi 1991). The West has not shown any moral, social, or cultural superiority over the East. It has only demonstrated its hegemonic force. It is particularly ironic when U.S: missionaries rush to Iraq to convert the original Christians.

What complicates the picture is that although power shifted from the East to the West, most vital natural resources coveted by the West are present in abundance in the East. In today's world, countries trade on the basis of international laws and agreements. Instead of "civilized" trade relations, America in racist arrogance wants to acquire these resources by a hegemonic use of force and invasions to remove sovereign regimes, which results in killing and destruction.

Recurrently throughout history, peoples from land or sea invaded settled prosperous civilizations and ravished, killed, and conquered seeking wealth and resources. Today we have U.S. invasions by air using weapons of mass destruction, part of the largest arsenal in the world, which can incinerate the world over in minutes. It seems as if, other than being motivated by greed, America is also trying to eliminate or deface the evidence of a civilizational record. What happened to Iraq's antiquities and civilizational heritage in damage and loss, under U.S. occupation and in the presence of u.s. forces, attests to this view. There was no effort to prevent thefts, and more evidence suggests complicity. These are antiquities that have survived seven thousand years despite invasions and conquests. There was theft by colonizing countries of valuable items that ended up in European and American museums. The Iraqi regime is to be credited for preserving its heritage despite all of that. The antiquities of Iraqi heritage are part of Iraq's sovereignty, although knowledge about it belongs to the world. The United States is a country with might but with no civilization now destroying a country that began and preserved civilization for the world but has might of resistance against being colonized.

WOMEN, *BURQU, HlJAB*

Feminists may be proudly counting the number of U.S. women in the service, but is sisterhood served when U.S. women invade and kill invaded women and children? A commentary by James Flanigan ran in the *Los Angeles Times* (April 16, 2003, C1) with the title "U.S. Policy on Iraq Is Banking on Women." The word *banking* rings alarm bells-it smells of corporate greed sending its tentacles to women. This runs shivers down my spine. Women and feminists on both sides are again exploited for power and wealth for a selected few and for corporate gain. In this story, Flanigan takes us to women on the invaded side, the other side of the war equation. He writes how Iraq was an advanced society in which women participated at all levels--studies, observations, and statistics bear this out. Even the notorious deck of cards drawn by the u.s. Pentagon to identify the most wanted from Iraq's Baathist regime has a number of women at the highest level of positions in science.

Deterioration in health and status for women, as for men, can be traced to the regional war; United States-imposed sanctions; deprivation of food, medicine, and services; and invasions by the United States-and it is not caused by the Iraqi regime, Islam, or Arab society or culture. We know that Iraq's regional war against Iran cannot be blamed on Iraq alone but mainly on the United States' role in arming both sides, with the goal of "dual containment," as it is called in vocabulary intended to sanitize the destructive character of such strategy.

 Middle East women are considered the center of sacred and ordinary Arab and Muslim life and culture. They are the pivots that hold together the family, the core of the social group (EI Guindi 1985, 1986a). What women do and what happens to women become of concern to those in charge of society and religion. In times of threat, instability, and crisis, women are subjected to
restrictions and controls that have no basis in scripture (EI Guindi 1992a). These are historical behaviors in historical times. In the context of Islamic groups seeking state control or power, as in the Islamic revolution of Iran in 1979, rigid restrictions are initially enforced at every level of society. In its third decade as a successful revolution, liberalization takes place. We are familiar with this process, which was theorized in anthropology in the 1960s. So if we look at movements of change, such as the Islamic movements in the Middle East, we need to take a longitudinal, processional approach in which we witness
how the movement passes through different phases until reaching the phase of routinizing, stabilizing, and liberalizing its measures.

This takes us to the *burqu'.* There is a difference between *burqu'* (Arabic for "face mask") and *Hijab* (Arabic for "women's Islamic headcover"; for a full discussion, see El Guindi 1995, 1999c, 2005a). The burqu' is secular tradition.

In the most sacred space of worship, as during pilgrimage in Makka, the burqu' would not be allowed. It is not Islamic. Hijab is Islamic; burqu' is not. Covering the woman's face is not permitted in Islam's most sacred moments of worship. In approaching Islam, one had better not separate religion from culture but rather talk about Islam as that lived, experienced, reformed, and debated by Muslims. What Muslim women wear or do not wear, or do or do not do, is the concern of the women and their families and cultures (El Guindi 1983, 1987, 1995, 1999b). The feminist majority spearheaded an intense campaign against the women's burqu' in Afghanistan that served the goals of military campaigns. Intervention, particularly hegemonic provocations such as that by the feminist majority and evangelist missionaries, which tend to precede military attacks, serves only to foster anger. Such actions are based on ignorance and arrogance. I ask, How can we discuss gender and the role of women in the Arab and Islamic region without discussing the hegemonic role of United States-driven wars and colonial occupation by the United States in Iraq and that by Israel of Palestine and the related roles of hegemonic fundamentalist Western Christian missionary work and hegemonic feminism? U.S. feminism must liberate itself from the hold that hegemony has over it.

ISLAM AND ISLAMIC RESISTANCE

And then there is Islam. There is a tendency to frame it in boxes. *After* September 11, President Bush reiterated the box approach to Islam. He drew a geography of evil, encouraging Israel to call the resisting Palestinians terrorists and then attack them, their mosques, their homes, and their olive trees, mercilessly.

President Bush began to carve Islam into good Islam and bad Islam. The bad is, of course, the one that does not agree with the United States and its military and economic encroachment plans. Good Muslims (the term is moderate) are the Stepford wives, docile citizens who attend to their worship. This is at a time when fanatic televangelist Christians called Islam a religion of violence and its prophet a terrorist. They found the devil in Islam but also in Harry Potter. Clearly, they are possessed and obsessed by the devil.

Indeed, simplistic American foreign policy imagined it possible to press the button and turn Muslims on, then off. When we needed them to fight the Soviets, as did Reagan with the mujahideen, we found Islam useful, giving Muslims the right kind of energy to implement our plans, so we lavished arms and funds on them and their activities. After they won the war for us, we decided to pacify them, assassinate their leaders, destroy people's lives and cultures, and reconfigure Islam itself. Afghanistan now has an American-made! American-guarded leader,

an economy of opium, German-issued banknotes, refugees all over the world, poverty, disintegration, and disruption. Despite all the intervention, to the total bewilderment of the feminist majority, Afghan women, exercising their freedom, continue to wear the burqu'. Another ignorance, another miscalculation.

Oversimplification is new neither to U.S. policy nor to the all-American worldview: this worldview combines immediacy in action (short-sightedness), immediate gratification, and simple polarity. Polarity is fundamental to the American psyche, not simply a model of policy: black and white, cowboy and Indian, civilized and barbaric, good and evil-it is fundamentally Christian and American. The real world is much more complex than that, but who has time for complexity? Or for knowledge? The Bush administration shoots first and finds information later. It struck Afghanistan before demonstrating to the world persuasive evidence of perpetrators, and the soldiers blew up a wedding because the local Afghanis shot rifles in the air in celebration, as is the custom throughout the region.

Despite the secondary status of many Islamic countries and the poverty of many Muslims, Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world today, larger than Catholic Christianity and larger than Protestant Christianity. Let us imagine, as schoolteacher David Smith (2002) asked students to do, the globe, which has over six billion people, as one village of a hundred people, while maintaining the ratios equivalent to the demographics of world ethnicities, nationalities, religions, and languages. Who would be in this village? It would have 19 Muslims, 16 Catholics, 13 Hindus, 6 Protestants, and 1 Jew. How are dominance and power, food and wealth, and general discontent distributed? In the answer to this question lies the key to what the United States ought to be doing but is not.

Let me share a few simple points and general observations about Islam. First, it is unproductive and inaccurate to approach Islam as if there were many Islams or as if there were cultural variants. There is only one Islam. Not understanding this point leads to core misunderstandings of the unified notions of community, identity, religious language, and individual and collective worship. In general, religion in the Middle East plays a central role in people's daily, ordinary lives. Islam's modern role in politics of identity and resistance is afunction of modern historical events and situations of conflict, appropriation, and confrontation. It is important that we (and, particularly, u.s. political decision makers) understand how conditions of colonial occupation and legacy, the imposed U.S. military bases, and the imposition of Western consumerist values become largely responsible for creating climates of anger and discontent, leading to resistance and globalized confrontations. There is also the inhumane United States-imposed sanctions and bombing of Arab and Muslim countries and groups. I must stress in particular the occupation of Palestine and the hu

man and international rights violations against the Palestinians. As observers of Middle East politics point out, before 1948 the United States had no enemies in the Arab world.

RESISTANCE TO HEGEMONY: ARAB
STREET BECOMES WORLD STREET

The resistance to hegemony is worldwide--without borders, without govern-ments. In media interviews, I had spoken of the phenomenon of the Arab Street. I had also mentioned the notion to President Clinton during a meeting in the Cabinet Room of the White House, with scholars and activists of Arab origin brought together to discuss domestic and foreign policy issues (see EI Guindi n.d.).

The Arab Street is a spontaneous expression of protest by the people without the mediation of politically controlled election booths (which, as seen during the presidential election of Bush Jr., is not foolproof) or other rigid po-litical structures. The Arab Street is a truly an alternative democratic expression. Bin Laden himself predicted its rise, in one of his taped messages.

Now there is an emergent World Street. The world has joined the Arabs and Muslims in protesting U.S. might and Israeli colonial occupation. We have seen its passionate expression in vigorously protesting war arid u.s. economic domination, on the television screens through European and Arab satellite channels. Peoples all over the world protested the Anglo-American wars. There is a worldwide rift between peoples and states. If history teaches us anything, we learn that resistance is not managed by single leaders. Once the idea is adopted, killing the leader or ideologue does not kill the idea. Christianity itself attests to that.

The power of the street lies in its very nature, its very character-it is intan-gible, it is prevalent, it is passionate and popular. It has no borders, no states, no politicians. Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak told President Bush, when Bush was determined to invade Afghanistan and "get" bin Laden, that killing bin Laden would give birth to thousands of bin Ladens, that they would sprout everywhere. This caution captures the nature of the Islamic current that began in the 1970s and the Islamic resistance that was born in Egypt to confront regional hegemony of politics and products in order to end Israeli colonial occupation and put a check on their complicit governments (EI Guindi 1981a, 198b, 1982a, 1982b, 1982c). Islamic currents are popular. Arab states today are fully aware that allowing truly free elections will lead to Islamic parties, if not Islamic governments. Algeria tried and reneged (El Guindi 1998). The United States today has just discovered this in Iraq. The people are demanding elections and demanding an

Islamic state. If America is to export democracy and free elections as it promised to do, it has to expect an Islamic state in Iraq. To prevent this from happening, the United States dictates, it controls, and it kills. The Shiites, along with all elements of the majority of the Iraqi population, want An1erica out of Iraq. They are demonstrating daily against U.S. occupation. U.S. troops respond by shooting them. Muslims throughout the region are on the road of a Shiitization-the answer to U.S. hegemony and Israeli brutal occupation.

But U.S. thinking on the Middle East is literalist, simplistic, dualistic, evangelistic, and concretistic. America and Israel use the same model and the same tactics searching for "leaders" and "cells" because they cannot deal with ideas, movements, and streets. They motivate their attacks by false arguments of national security. And both extend their revenge by collectively punishing an entire people, a nation, a region, and a civilization. Although he himself made such mistakes (EI Guindi 1993), President Mubarak of Egypt wisely reminded the United

States, in response to U.S. threats of war, that "Egypt was subjected to many actions of terror, and I myself was subjected to terrorist attacks. I do not respond in retaliation by unleashing the wrath of military power on an entire nation. There are other ways." Israel knows no other way. America should consider alternatives.

DATES AND ARABIC COFFEE DIPLOMACY

What can such trigger-happy policy produce? More anger, more hate. What is the consequence of humiliating, defeating, crushing, killing, dislocating, and silencing? Those who do not own B52s and other killing machines will use whatever they can get their hands on. America experienced September 11fear, depression, withdrawal, shock, humiliation, and anger. But the American people have not experienced starvation or devastation from homes bombed mercilessly in the name of freedom, as those in Afghanistan and Iraq have.

Instability, famine, humiliation, and occupation can only breed anger and rage. The United States cannot expediently censure resistance against foreign occupation, or dissent against injustices by labeling such legitimate processes as terrorism. The Arabs, in their lively debate since September 11, which can be heard on Arab satellite television, have come up with a more realistic identification and a set of more sophisticated distinctions about terrorism.

How can the situation be different? From an unquestioned position of power, America can learn to understand, have the patience to dialogue, demonstrate respect to poor nations, establish normal relations with weaker countries-in effect, end its own occupation of Iraq and Israel's violations of

Palestinian land and integrity, seek resources and labor by trade and not by invasion, and allow negotiation by diplomacy through the United Nations dur

ing crises. In a recent media interview, I was asked what I thought would be an alternative U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, an alternative to heavy-handedness and hegemony. My reply was phrased with ethnographic imagery: "dates and Arabic coffee" diplomacy. Diplomacy is invented to deal with situations in which the parties are trying to resolve conflict. Sit with any Arab leader and discuss matters of trade and compliance, even friendship and partnership, and make deals, as guest and host both enjoy the most delicious Arabic dates and coffee. This will make the difference between a world stately power leading the world and a corporate-run bully out of control.

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