



**Interface Between
Globalization
and Islam
with special reference
to Post-Soviet Central Asia**

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من البحوث المشاركة في
مؤتمر العميد العلمي العالمي الاول
المنعقد تحت شعار
نلتقي في رحاب العميد لنرتقي
للمدة من ٢٥-٢٦ تشرين الاول ٢٠١٣ م
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...Abstract...

Globalization has become an advanced discourse of contemporary academic activity. However, its roots can be traced to the early Islamic period.

March of scholars in the far off lands, dissemination of knowledge and learning, establishment of madrasas and maktabas, the process of migration, the grand translation movement and the concept of pluralism and co-existence encouraging interconnectedness at doctrinal and practical levels are some of the salient attributes of Islamic heritage which inter alia greatly benefited the Central Asian civilization.



... ملخص البحث ...

أمست العالمية خطاباً متقدماً للنشاط الأكاديمي المعاصر. لكن جذورها تعود إلى مرحلة الإسلام الأولى من خلال الدارسين في صقاع الأرض النائية وان تسارع المعرفة والتعليم وإنشاء المدارس والمكتبات وعملية الهجرة وحركة الترجمة الواسعة وبزوج مصطلح الشمولية والتعاون كل هذا أدى إلى تشجيع التواصل العابر للمسافات على الأصعدة العقائدية والعملية وهذه بعض المساهمات البارزة للتراث الإسلامي الذي من خلاله نالت حضارة آسيا الوسطى الفائدة العظيمة.





Islam resurfaced in Central Asia in the 1990's after being in hibernation for more than 70 years.⁽¹⁾ Consequently, not only the Muslim World but also the Western World has equally been involved in this region. Countries like India, Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia began to re-establish its relations with the Muslim regions of the former Soviet Union in terms of polity, trade, commerce, religious affinity and cultural synthesization. Some observers believe that Islam could play a substantial role in rebuilding the nation and the political structure of the region, to facilitate the process of a "return to civil society". The proposed paper is an attempt to discover the roots and origins of globalization both as a concept and as a process in the early Islamic period. The study of history reveals many parallels in different regions of the world, particularly between the places interlinked due to geographically proximity and the common cultural heritage. The study as such is an endeavor to identify the role of Muslim world in the Islamization of Muslim republics of Central Asia in the furtherance of its relationship with the region. Furthermore the paper will focus on two fundamental issues; (a) Has there been a policy change by the leaders of the region since independence. (b) Has Islam the potential to play a substantial role in the socio-political arena of the region, which was so much obscured during the Soviet rule. Finally an attempt has been made to refer to the implications of the process of globalization to ascertain the Islamic future towards which the Central Asian region is heading.

Although many historians have identified globalisation as a 20th Century phenomenon, more commonly characterized as a by-product of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war in 1990, globalisation in its true perspective started with colonialism and trade centuries ago.⁽²⁾ One of the characteristic feature of globalisation in the modern age has been expanding commerce between countries, extensive interaction between different civilizations and societies as well as travel over vast distances across



regions of the world. The roots of this phenomenon reach far back in history. The international trade network that was initiated in the early centuries of Islam brought the whole world into a single network of trading activity. For instance the boatmen of Bosphorus in Ottoman Empire were paid token that could be cashed from the banks around the Oxus River. This speaks of the process of globalisation - that has already got roots in the civilization of Islam. The historic Silk Route network in this connection, connected almost all trading routes leading to Europe via Central Asia during Medieval Period. Notwithstanding the significance of trade, the Great International Highway was instrumental in transformation of ideas and influences leading thereby to trans-cultural dialogue, global contexts and human integration. The links of Arabs with Central Asia, the spread of Islam and its subsequent consolidation in the region are by and large connected with this grand route.

In fact, many of the features of the current wave of globalisation are acknowledged, encouraged and persuaded by the specific directions of the religion. The Quran stresses on the need of historical knowledge as a moral exhortation to the faithful, when it says;

"Have they not travelled in the land to see the nature of consequences for those who disbelieved before them".(al-Qur'an)

To travel on the earth has been deemed as a substitute for a formal study of history. Celebrated scholars of Central Asia as a result of this began to travel to far-off lands for trade and acquisition of knowledge. **Khurasani** merchants acquired rare books from most parts of the globe and Central Asian Sufis established their silsilas in different parts of the world. Renowned works like **Chihar-Maqala by Nizami Uruzi Samarkandi**, **Sikandarnama of Nizami Ganjui**, **Futuh-al-Buldan of Al-Yaquti** and **Safarnama of Ibn Fadlan**, besides providing a descriptive sketch of socio-cultural conditions of Medieval Central Asia refer the quantum of relationship between India and Central Asia. **Zia-ud-Din Barani's Tarikh-e-Firoz-Shahi** gives an account of the activities of the people of Central Asia with India during the 13th and 14th Centuries. **Abul Fazal's Aini-Akbari** contains several themes on which some important aspects of the history of



Central Asia and India can be formulated.⁽³⁾ The celebrated scholar gives a long list of different varieties of embroidered clothes, carpets, from **Yazd, Kashan, Herat, Mashhed, Kabul, Persia, Goshan, Khuzistan and Kirman** that were brought to India. It was during this period that the merchants criss-crossed the trade routes with all kinds of merchandise.

Globalisation as a phenomenon has not emerged in Vacuum but has evolved out of a process. The integration of religions and its cultures took about a natural course with the merging of civilizations and their evolving trade routes, which ultimately led to the colonisation of the Asia, Africa and most parts of the world. Religions as such becomes an integral part of globalisation and vice-versa.⁽⁴⁾

In order to estimate and evaluate the role of Islam in a phenomenon called globalisation, its concept of migration has further enriched the scene when 2% of world population is passing through different stages of migration.

“Don’t you find earth spacious to immigrate”? (al-Qur'an)

Not only the first migration from Arabia to Abesanya that was followed by another migration from Mecca to Medina, the fundamental process of diaspora itself is found taking place in the early centuries of growth of Islamic Civilization. Thousands of Sahaba from Arabian peninsula undertook mass movements that were fully organised and settled down in all parts of the then known world. Between 705 to 715 within a short span of ten years, 65 thousand Arab families migrated to the territories of Central Asia for permanent settlement and these communities have throughout been studied as diasporic communities.⁽⁵⁾

The great translation Movement that was initiated at Baghdad as early as 2nd half of the 8th Century was one of the pioneering steps towards the globalisation of knowledge. The canons of learning from East and West were studied on a global level. The results of this movement that was started at Bait-ul-Khilah were realised in the academies of Spain, Alexandria, Africa, Nishapur, Samarkand and Bukhara and Sindh.





The characteristic feature of globalisation may be thought of initially as the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of social life; from the cultural to the criminal, the financial to the spiritual. The 12th century in this respect was “the Golden age of Islamic Globalisation”.

The Hadith of prophet directing his followers to seek knowledge even if to go to China calls for globalisation at doctrinal and practical levels. Distinguishing the current wave of globalisation from early ones, Thomas Friedman has said that today globalisation is farther, faster, cheaper and deeper.⁽⁶⁾

Islam is more than a system of theology. Being a complete civilization, the classical history of Islam proved the Islamic Universality offering a living demonstration of the qualities of ethics, values, morals, compassion, mercy, tolerance and love, to which all human beings can relate. It in unequivocal terms rejects discrimination, racism and teaches men and women to disperse within the land and seek the bounty of God. Islam throughout the course of history advocate globalisation at the most general level, that refers to a process of change which affects all regions of the world in a variety of sectors including the economy, science and technology.⁽⁷⁾

The claim that Islam cannot juxtaposition with the process of globalisation is devoid of merit and value. Its emphasis on the concepts of pluralism and co-existence, which in essence is the intrinsic nature of Islam and upon which a viable system of justice and equality can be disseminated is an essential feature of Islamic perspective of globalisation. The conquest of multiple territories, intermixing of races and synthesis of various cultures demonstrate the global vision of Islam. The most significant example of pluralism and co-existence is reflected in the Charter of Madina, whereby it established the security of the community, religious freedom, security of women, stable tribal relations, a tax system to support the community at a time of conflict, parameters for exogenous political alliance, a just social system to ensure protection for individuals and a judicial system to resolve disputes.⁽⁸⁾ The system as such advocates inclusive as against the exclusive tendencies. Contemporary Mus-



lim majority nations of Central Asia can make a difference provided they adhere to the dictum of “inclusiveness”, Pluralism, coexistence which in turn will ensure a world of love and peace free of vices, hatred and prejudice. Such an approach on the part of Muslim States will ensure significant role of Islam in the process of Globalisation.

To discuss the role of Globalisation in the post-Independent Central Asia, one must therefore, reckon with the fact that each of the successor states in this broad geo-cultural zone displayed distinct and diverse trajectories in both internal and external spheres. During its long march of historical development, the region has witnessed the rise and fall of many empires – the Kushan, the Greek, the Chinese, the Persian, the Arabs, the Mongol-Tatar and the Russian –Soviet empires. This has left indelible marks on the history, culture, traditions and the character of Central Asian Society. This historical process of cultural interaction and assimilation gave birth to such process of acculturation and enculturation that lies at the roots of the phenomenon of globalisation. Infact the dynamics of Islamic Culture has continuously contributed towards the process of globalization of Central Asia for, Islam exposed Central Asia to the global process of economic and cultural growth and threw its corridors open for diverse activities of globalisation. Within this phenomenon, local cultures however need to retain their sense of identity and dignity in the face of onslaught of globalisation – non-stop satellite television, instant high tech communications and so on. This phase of globalisation bulldozed all native cultures homogenizing them in one sweep through various media channels. This homogenising is being promoted through gross commercialisation of culture, resulting in the demise of all religious, cultural and civilizational values. It is in fact this aspect of globalisation which has created strong reaction from traditional religious elite, resulting in what is being termed as “Religious Fundamentalism”. This is a major challenge that has emerged during current phase of globalisation.

Referring to one of the most famous theories of Samuel P. Huntington, “The clash of civilization”, states that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideologi-



cal or economic. The great discussion among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation-States will remain the most powerful actors in the world affairs but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nation and groups of different civilizations. The Harvard Professor argues that the clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle line of the future. Furthermore, since the end of the cold war “the iron curtain of ideology” has been replaced by a “Velvet Curtain”.⁽⁹⁾

Islam resurfaced in Central Asia in the 1990s after being in hibernation for more than seventy years during the Soviet era. Since 1989, ‘popular’ Islam under the aegis of parallel Mullahs re-emerged in Central Asia.⁽¹⁰⁾

Since Russian colonization in the 19th century was driven primarily by geo-political, not religious concerns, Russian colonial administrators who already had centuries of experience accommodating Muslims in the Empire, where for the most part willing to allow local people to practise Islam in peace. The Soviets in contrast launched a full scale assault on the Islamic institutions and practises in the mid-1920’s, a campaign that intensified dramatically during Stalin’s “revolution from above and the purges of late 1920’s and 1930’s”. The majority of mosques were destroyed as a result and most members of the Islamic clergy were imprisoned or shot. The forced collectivisation of nomads and peasants led to large-scale persecutions and the flight of Muslim population to neighbouring countries. In 1917’s, there were some 20,000 mosques in Central Asia but by 1929 less than were functional, and by 1935, there were only 60 registered mosques in Uzbekistan.⁽¹¹⁾

With the launching of Gorbachev’s reforms, the region began to witness and “Islamic revival”. The number of Central Asian’s making the Hajj to Mecca increased dramatically and many new mosques were built, much of it with funding from Islamic governments, charitable organizations and wealthy individuals abroad. Islamic literature and Quran were brought in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. This religious resurgence revealed the depth of the routes of Islam, which



had flourished underground in defiance of the repressive Soviet state.⁽¹²⁾

As of 1994, an estimated 7,800 mosques and prior houses have been opened in Central Asia.⁽¹³⁾ Between 1989 and 1991, the Uzbek government returned a number of religious sites to the believers, including the Abu Isa-al-Tirmidhi Mausoleum in the republic's south, the Kalon mosque, the Ata Walikhai mosque in Namangan, the Imam al-Bukhari Mausoleum in Bukhara, and the Jamia mosque in Khokand. In Tajikistan, 126 mosques and 2870 prior houses were established by the year 1991-92.⁽¹⁴⁾

According to the Qazi of Kyrgyzstan, Kimshanbay Ben Abdu-r-Rahman, 1000 mosques have been operating in the republic, more than 60% of which are located in the Osh and Jalalabad oblasts. In Kazakhstan, 300 mosques had been officially registered by the Kazakh Religious Board, and as many as 200 were under construction in 1993. An estimated 80 mosques have been reopened in Turkmenistan, of which 20 are located in the capital city, Ashgabat. In 1994, the government reported that the construction of 180 mosques had been completed and that another 100 mosques were under construction. As per the reports of George I Mirsky, 10 new mosques open each day in Uzbekistan as after 1991 re-establishing a network of mosques became a priority of Muslims. Besides mosque special Madrasas are established to impart knowledge. One of the leaders of Islamist movement in Uzbekistan, Abit Qari said in an interview that our soul aim at the movement is to educate the people, enabling them to create a society based on the principles of Islam, where all matters would be regulated by the Ulama according to the injunctions of Holy Quran. Consequently Islamic education has gained momentum among young Muslims who wish to make a career in religion. An estimated 380 madrassahs have been opening in Uzbekistan since independence. The number of students enrolled in Barak Khan and Mir Arab, the two major madrassahs, has nearly tripled. In addition, other religious schools have been reopened, including the Kukuldash madrassahs which has started functioning since 1991.



The enrolment in Al-Bikhari Higher Islamic Institute has doubled since independence. It is reported that as many as 5000 students have been receiving Islamic education in various mosques. In 1990, the largest Islamic Institute for higher education was opened in Dushanbe. One source says that around 1700 students are receiving Islamic training by the mid 1990's.⁽¹⁵⁾

In addition to these scholars, several students have been despatched to various Middle Eastern countries to receive Islamic knowledge. For instance, Kazakhstan has sent 100 students to Turkey, 40 to Egypt, and 40 to Pakistan. There are also 96 Kyrgyz students in Turkey and 26 in Egypt. Turkmenistan has also sent some 200 students to Turkey to acquire religious knowledge in 1992. The Central Asian Islamic school curriculum cover courses in Arabic, Shariah law, Fiqh, Islamic history and civilization and Islamic culture. However shortages of Arabic instructors have been a serious problem in providing an in-depth Islamic education. Consequently Kazakhstan Mufti has recently translated the Quran into Kazakh, but most Central Asian scholars believe that the meaning of Islamic precepts can only be fully understood in Arabic. Despite the availabilities of these institutions, the educational process has been severely hampered by an apparent lack of Islamic literature. It is in the backdrop of these circumstances that in 1990, Saudi Arabia donated 10,00,000 copies of Quran to the Religious Board of Uzbekistan, Egypt, Turkey, Pakistan and Kuwait have also contributed in the dissemination of Islamic literature in the region.⁽¹⁶⁾

The observance of the Islamic rituals has also been steadily on the rise, and on the whole it has followed the general, regional and republican patterns of proclivity. It is interesting that of all Islamic practices, the most widely observed are the rituals of circumcision, marriage and burial which are in essence , the most marginal aspects of Islamic conduct. Circumcision is practiced in almost all Muslim families in Central Asia. A study conducted in 1987 show that Kalym(the bride price) was reported to be widely observed in the region.⁽¹⁷⁾ Attendance at Muslim burial sites has shown a significant rise in recent years. Participation in Friday prayers has



been on the rise in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.⁽¹⁸⁾ Fasting during the month of Ramadan has made a significant comeback especially in Uzbekistan. The Uzbek president should a decree whereby working Muslims were permitted to avail holiday facility on the first day of Ramadan. Muslim pilgrimage from Central Asia to Mecca also increased steadily since 1990. In 1992, 40 pilgrims made the trip to Mecca from Kazakhstan and in 1993, 300 were sent directly to Saudi Arabia. The Kyrgyz religious authorities in 1993 sent around 1000 pilgrims to Mecca. The largest group of pilgrims from Central Asia belongs to Uzbekistan. In 1990, 500, in 1991, 1250, in 1993, 3500, pilgrims paid a visit to Mecca.

Other manifestations of the religious zeal and fervour like woman using Burqa, men using white cap and growing beards have also been on rise in all over Central Asia in spite of the possible crackdown by the authorities. Traditional Islamic dress in Uzbekistan is preferred on an increasingly greater scale. In Namangan, and Ijhan, Khokand, Bukhara, Khiva and the south of the republic, woman are dressed according to Islamic Shariah. Another major development of the region after 1991 is Arabicised form of the Cyrillic script began to appear in public notices, street signs, milestones and letter heads as well as other communicative tools which could establish and project the self-image of the region.

Broadly speaking the religious revivalism in Central Asia can be characterized by the following features; A considerable increase in the number of mosques, growing number of students in religious educational institutions, celebration of Muslim festivals, which have been now declared national holidays, holding of festivals on state level on memorable dates concerned with the names of outstanding religious scholars of the region, legal dissemination of information popularizing the values and standards of Islam through books, pamphlets, television and radio programs etc., expanding contact with Muslim countries of the world by joining the Economic Cooperation Organization and the Organization of Islamic Conference and deputation of students to higher institutions of learning abroad.



The collapse of the Soviet rule came both as a blessing and affliction for the societies of the region. It created a religious, cultural and political vacuum which needed to be filled by some alternative substantive system. As for Islam's role in restructuring the region, its importance as a factor affecting nation-state building is still being fiercely debated. Some observers believe that Islam could play a role in rebuilding the nation and even the political system.⁽¹⁹⁾ The leaders' intention has certainly not been to create Islamic theocracies. The political elite, especially Karimov, have been attempting a dangerous balancing act, emphasizing their personal commitment to Islam while suppressing and undermining any elements of 'political Islam' that might be outside their control. In fact, for these regimes Islam is neither a vision of the future nor a blueprint for action. The ruling elites made their careers in the Soviet Union. Consequently, they did not show any enthusiasm for Islamic ideology, and have continued the Soviet policy of controlling Islam in their societies.⁽²⁰⁾

Considering Islam as threat to its very existence, Uzbekistan's president Karimov, for example, views the Islamic religion as an 'ideological and political threat. In denying Islam a political role, the Central Asian leaders are not merely applying the old Soviet model, but assumed criteria of a modern state, similar to Turkey, where Islamists may occasionally hold power but where the military sees itself as guardian of the secular tradition instituted by Ataturk. In response to a question on whether Uzbekistan corresponds to 'the standards of the Muslim world', Karimov said a categorical 'no'. President Nazarbayev also revealed his deep secular belief when he said:

Having been a Soviet people, we are atheists, but Kazaks, background is Muslim. We do not allow religion to interfere with politics. And when working with Muslim states, we strictly define that there will be no religious interference in our country, and that goes even for literature, which is published in their countries.⁽²¹⁾

The consequence is that, after more than a decade, Islam has had no effective impact on the public's political establishments.



The leaders have been concerned about their own power and looking for investors rather than for Islam.

However, notwithstanding the pressure on Islamic movements in Central Asia, particularly in Uzbekistan, the rise of political Islam in recent years cannot be denied.⁽²²⁾ The increase in Islamic movements has prompted the governments to pursue a series of policies directed against them.

In accordance with the vicissitudes of Islamization, the Central Asian societies did not live through a same Islam. In Kazakhstan and Kirghizstan where the process of Islamisation was almost superficial and late and where a strong proportion of the population is Slavic, Islam had only little hold, unlike Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, where Islam had a heavy impact on these old Muslim societies living in the heart of Islamic cultural capitals like Bukhara and Samarqand.⁽²³⁾

However, in spite of these variations, some similarities can be noted between the different state policies in identifying the role of Islam. First of all, Islam is an integral part of all the national identity policies, without however going as far as including Islam in the Constitution. Also, all the States with the creation of muftiyat and kaziyat are ‘nationalizing’ old Soviet religious control organs that are regional: one in Baku for the Caucasus, the other one at Tashkent for Central Asia. If the control reflexes are comparable, the results do not match from one country to another. In Uzbekistan, the most populated country of Central Asia and where Islam is traditionally the most influential, the religious situation is defined by a high tension against several small fundamentalist groups tolerated and very active in the initial years of independence, and much later declared outlaw and as such opposed by central authorities. Refugees in Tajikistan where a terrible civil war ravaged (1992-1997), the main Islamist militants of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan then found refuge in the Taliban Afghanistan.

The American bombardments in Afghanistan in the aftermath of the 11th September 2001 attacks considerably weakened the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (MIO) of which one of the two chiefs, Namangani, was even killed.⁽²⁴⁾ Another obscure Islamist



movement, the HizbulTahrir (Liberation Party), the only active one in Central Asia but originating from the Middle East, millenarian and obsessed by the restoration of the Caliphate, started to win over minds. Its ultra secret structure does not allow us to evaluate its real force, but it is assumed that it is quite well established in the country.

In Tajikistan, the relations between Islam and the State could best be described as original. After several years of civil war, the main branch of the political Islam, the Party of the Islamic Renaissance, is legalized and even associated with power, a unique experience in Central Asia.

In Kirghizstan, a very clear dichotomy can be observed between the North, hardly Islamized and where Islamist movements activism is almost absent, and the South, more religious, where on several occasions clashes take place with the Uzbek and Kirghiz police, allies of convenience.

In Kazakhstan, the same dichotomy as in Kirghizstan exists between the North and the more Muslim South but it escapes from any Islamist fundamentalism.⁽²⁵⁾ In Turkmenistan, Islam has never been very influential. The mosques, constructed by the President to serve his personality cult are empty and are not going to be filled up any more with the new President, Kurbanguli Berdymuhamedov. In Azerbaijan, the admittedly less radical but quite politicized Islamist movements are tolerated by the central authorities, which, without giving them any legal status, do not ban their existence and expression in public space. As for the North Caucasus, the irredentism of Salafist organizations ended up in confrontations with the Federal authorities even if the situation is relatively calm since a few years, except in the separate case of Chechnya.

By and large all the Republics are confronted with the dilemma: how to enter globalization and occupy a place in the international scene and guarantee internal stability at the same time. Above all, promoting order in a world context where Islamism is perceived as the main source of unrest, most of the Central Asian States are in a dilemma as how to manage people belonging to a religious order.



Fearing that any concession to Islamist speeches might be misconstrued as an admission of weakness, all these regimes favor intransigence; thus indefinitely putting off any hope of dialogue and national reconciliation.

The Role of Islam in the Central Asian Foreign Relations

The unprecedented epoch – making event of the 20th Century, culminating in the attainment of independence by five central Asian Republics opened the doors of global connectedness and made the age old relations, Central Asia has build with the neighboring countries more viable and fruitful. Since then, not only the Muslim world but also the western world have equally been involved in this region. However, Russia still remains the most influential player in the region. The factors that have attracted the interest of outsiders in Central Asia are economic, political, cultural and religious in nature. Islam resurfaced in Central Asia in the 1990s after being in hibernation for more than seventy years during the Soviet era. India developed its relations with Central Asia and the countries like Turkey and Iran in terms of trade, commerce, religious affinity and cultural synthesis. In the early years of their existence it was Turkey who sought to establish its links on the basis of Turkik affinity. Flow of funds for the establishment of mosques and madrasas was an apt and influential factor in the resurgence of Islam in Central Asia. Saudi Arabia on the other hand further strengthened the Wahabism in the region through its numerous efforts which include the orientation of religious scholars and the establishment of mosques in the region. This friendly atmosphere materialized a joint stage at Ashakabad in May 1992 wherein the leaders of the five Central Asian Republics along with Turkey, Iran and Pakistan met to devise a coordinated strategy. Consolidation of Central Asian States in the form of Great Turkistan was thought about which however could not materialize.

Unlike western anxieties, the Iranian Islamic influence remained marginal. It has been the Sunni majority region throughout the course of history and the Shiite movements were not taken



into consideration. Only Tajikistan let itself be penetrated relatively, more by linguistic ties than an inclination for the Islamic Republic's religious philosophy. On the other hand, due to a very close sectarian proximity between Iran and Azerbaijan, the Iranian influence became more effective in the Shiite areas of South Azeri, Baku, Aras and Nakhichevan.⁽²⁶⁾ This relative success was the work of private organisms, linked with big Ayatollahs like Lenkerani and Sistani, who attracted the young into the hose, Iranian Islamic campuses. Their impact had to be however put into perspective because the political degradation between Baku and Teheran considerably slowed down missionary fervor from 1995.

Turkey, although secular, was more successful than Iran. Religion being a full-fledged dimension of its regional policy, Ankara's diplomacy equipped each one of its embassies with the Religious Cooperation Bureau, entrusted with promoting the Turkish Islamic model, and at the end creating a sphere of influence. Thus, the Diyanet, official Turkish organism of Islam management in Turkey, financed mosques, theology faculties in all these countries and distributed Islamic literature in abundance, without neglecting the creation of new religious structures by promoting student accommodations.

Finally, the third wave of influence originated from the Arabic peninsula and to a lesser extent from the Indian Sub-Continent. Designated in a caricatural way using the term wahhabite. This very austere Islam, dominant in most of the Gulf countries, Pakistan and Afghanistan, was marginally established in the valley of Ferghana but especially in the Caucasus, Dagestan and Chechnya, where its instrumental role in the war against the Russians allowed a certain national cohesion. In this space where a brotherly and syncretic Islam borrowing from Anti-Islamic practices predominated, the progress of this Salafist Islam struck fear to the official authorities by its protest dimension capable of challenging the powers. That's why the State machineries, inheritors of the Communist Party, did not hesitate to take over the traditional Islam once again and raise it to the status of an official religion.



These foreign processes did not anyway have to live down the local origins of the Islamic revival, already at work at the end of the Soviet era. As a matter of fact, the ambivalence of the Soviet regime vis-à-vis Islam meant that even under repression, some Ulemas had led an intense theological activity and trained some disciples who are today the players of Islamic revival.





... Conclusion ...

The epoch making event of 20th century accelerated the natural historical process conducting to speed-up moves of society and state through the means of transport, communication and information, to reduction of room and time of the sectioning people. In these conditions Central Asian civilization exhibited in new quality and with new capabilities for onward march to progress and prosperity. In the process of the interaction between local and global Islam to in Central Asia, most of the states are in a state of worry and anxiety about their policy on how to rule people belonging to the Islamic orders. Yet, it is not easy to view the Central Asian republics as part of the modern Islamic world. Islam has affected the society, but not influenced the politics. To one degree or another these countries remain concerned about preserving the secular governments and societies they inherited at independence, and resist attempts to be categorized as Islamic. This is partly because of the long isolation of Central Asia from the main centers and cultural processes of the Muslim world, and shortage of religious literature and restricted religious practice and the decline of the level of religious education. The ruling elite have given only lip service to traditional Islam as a factor of social conservatism. They have tried to retain the Soviet-era system of control over the official clergy, which has power over the great mosques in the region. In short, the Muslim Central Asian republics cannot stop the spread of impact and influence of Muslim world at large because it is a real phenomenon which is imposing itself by the forces of political influence, economic pressure, media and information domination exerted by the new world order. In fact, interaction and inter connectedness is based on economic power, political stability, social justice and progress in all fields of life. These can be attained by the implementation of necessary reforms, correction of the situation of Islam and establishment of the



bases of joint Islamic action at all levels, so as to enhance cooperation among these Muslim countries towards a more promising perspective and prosperous future.

In order to carve out a place of influence for itself in the socio-political structure of the region, Central Asian Muslims need to further strengthen the process of Islamization of the region, free of aggression and discrimination by adhering to the principle of pluralism and co-existence. Such a view although invite all citizens of the region to a platform of mutual understanding, Muslims without passing on the buck certainly carry the heaviest responsibility since Islam has been consistently described as the epitome of radicalism and terrorism. Within hours of the planes hurtling into the World Trade Centre of New York and Pentagon on 9/11, American anguish was echoed throughout the Europe. The fear and paranoia thus generated, have set Muslims at the back seat having badly affected the process of mutual accommodation between Muslims and European population and the integration of both Islam and Muslims into Europe's socio-cultural and political landscape. The destruction of Bamiyan Idols in Afghanistan is yet another example which became the focal point of criticism throughout the globe. This in fact refers to the most orthodox and conservative interpretation of Islam at the hands of Taliban. Defending his order with regard to the demolition of Bamiyan Idols, the then Taliban minister for information Qudratul-Allah Jamal said, "decision to destroy the Buddhas was taken on the advice of 400 Ulema across Afghanistan". Islam on the other hand advocates respect and protection for the place of worship of other religions and does not permit for their destruction. It has been nicely observed by scholars that "while the Taliban were ostensibly smashing idols, what in reality they were doing was demolishing Islam". History bears witness to the fact that a Muslim General during the reign of al-Mutasim AD 833-842 ordered an Imam and a Muadhin to be flogged for having destroyed a fire-temple in Sughd and building a mosque in its place.⁽²⁷⁾ The image of an Ideal man of 21st Century, in the quest of promotion of co-existence and a pluralistic social order is reflected in a celebrated UNESCO publication "A History of Mankind", published by Harper and Row.

"The morally perfect man should be of Eastern Persian Origin, of Arab faith, of Iraqi Education, and of Hebrew subtelety. He should have the standard of conduct of Christ, and the piety of a Syrian Monk; he should be the equal of Greek in the sciences and an Indian in the interpretation of all the mysteries. Lastly and preeminently, he should live his spiritual life like a Sufi".⁽²⁸⁾





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