Terror and the Politics of Containment

Analysing the Discourse of the 'War on Terror' and its Workings of Power

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Abstract: Since 11 September 2001, the discourse of the 'war on terror' has become one of the most over-used and hegemonic discourses that has shaped domestic politics and international relations worldwide. This paper focuses on the workings of the discourse of 'anti-terrorism' and its linkages to power structures and the institutions that are supported by them. It will look at how the discourse of the 'war on terror' has been used by the governments of Southeast Asia and Western Europe in particular in relation to oppositional forces, both legal and extra-legal; and its wider implications on the development of democracy and democratic spaces in these societies. The aim of this paper is *not* to study the growth, development or modalities of those movements that are—rightly or wrongly—labelled as 'militant', 'extreme' or 'radical'. Nor does it deny the reality of violent oppositional politics in some societies in both the developed or developing world. What it seeks to do instead is to critically analyse and appraise the political utility of such a discourse when it falls into the hands of ruling elites and state institutions, as well as opposition groups that take an equally instrumental approach to it. Crucially, the paper will attempt to do several things: First, to demonstrate that the discourse of the 'war on terror' is neither new nor unique, and that its antecedents date back to the earlier security discourses of the Cold War; secondly to show how this discourse differs very little from other discourses of identity-construction in its reliance of constitutive oppositional dialectics; and thirdly to show that as a discourse of containment and control the language of the 'war on terror' is just another manifestation of maximalist political power in an age of uncontrollable variables and political uncertainties, which in turn serves the controlling interests of both anti-democratic regimes and religiously fundamentalist forces alike.

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I. LYING TO STAY RELEVANT: HOW THE DISCOURSE OF THE 'WAR ON TERROR' SHAPED THE WORLD WE LIVED IN

'Colonial domination, because it is total and tends to over-simplify, very soon manages to disrupt in spectacular fashion the cultured life of a conquered people...Nothing has been left to chance, to convince the natives that colonialism came to lighten their darkness'.
—Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*

'The existence of the disabled native is required for the next lie, and the next, and the next...'
—Homi K. Bhabha, *Articulating the Archaic: Cultural Difference and Colonial Nonsense*

In the wake of the events of 11 September 2001, we have been overtaken by the discourse of the 'war on terror' that was articulated and foregrounded by the Bush administration. Simply put, the discourse of the 'war on terror' was used as one of the key tools to extend the diplomatic, military and cultural outreach of the United States over much of the world, and it has to be added that many a government in the Muslim world also paid lip service to the discourse for reasons and agendas of their own.[1]

Capitalising on the anger and paranoia that had been unleashed in the United States and her allies in the wake of the attack, the rhetoric of the 'war on terror' soon took on a life of its own.[2] The declaration of a 'global crusade' against 'Islamic terrorism' only succeeded in antagonising vast sections of the global Muslim community when it was the last thing the US needed to do. The inept handling of the complex and sensitive matter of co-operation with Muslim governments also helped to ignite local tensions that had been simmering under the surface in many Muslim countries. The first to suffer were the governments of countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Philippines — all facing growing unrest due to the activities of local Islamist opposition movements within their own borders. The 11 September attacks had many long-term and far-flung consequences for Muslim and non-Muslim relations. For Asian countries with sizeable Muslim minorities, it opened up old wounds after decades of internal civil conflict, and served as a justification for clamping down on local Muslim resistance movements.

The highly emotional tone of these exchanges did not, however, help to address the real underlying issues at the root of the problem itself. Worse still, the fear of Islamic militancy was exploited by some as a convenient way to whip up anti-Muslim sentiment, disguised as part of the now global 'War on Terror'. In Southeast Asia, the worst affected country was the Philippines, where fears of renewed militancy by Islamist movements in the south were intensified after the New York attacks. Across the globe in Western Europe a new wave of anti-immigrant sentiment, directly mainly at Arab and Asian-Muslim migrant communities, indirectly gave support to the rise of a host of right-wing ethno-nationalist parties that used the discourse of the 'war on terror' as a means to mobilise the masses against the minority communities in their midst.

Much has been written about the discourse of the 'war on terror' and its ethical as well as political impact. Amato (2007) and Gay (2007) have commented critically on how the discourse was made to serve the geo-political needs and agendas of the Neo-Conservatives who capitalised on the mood of the time to further extend the reach of America's military might abroad, and to justify a wave of unilateral military

actions on the part of the United States in places such as Afghanistan and Iraq.[3] Presbey (2007) and Peterson (2007) have raised the ethical questions that are necessary to deconstruct the workings of the discourse and to expose its manifold ethical contradictions as well.[4]

My concern here is to recount the effects of this discourse and to analyse its internal workings, specifically by looking at how the discourse on the 'war on terror' was used by governments both in the West and the Muslim world in their own campaigns against domestic oppositional movements. Of particular interest to us is how and why this discourse managed to have the discursive effect that it did, which was to divide societies and communities along ethnic-religious lines and how it was simultaneously used to silence and marginalise oppositional groupings. Analysing the discourse of the 'war on terror' should not be seen as an attempt to by-pass or deny the importance of the material and institutional component of that military campaign, but rather as a means to understand how the 'hard politics' of the war on terror was premised, supplemented, rationalised and justified by a 'soft' discursive component that allowed state elites to not only embark on such military-security ventures, but to also justify their actions on the basis of a discursive construction of reality that framed the oppositional Other in terms of negativity.

Discourse analysis cannot change the world, but it can tell us how the world works and why it works the way it does. I do not propose a lengthy elaboration of what discourse analysis is here, but will merely state some of the fundamental premises of the sub-discipline that today falls under that heading.

One of the foundational premises of discourse analysis is that Reality is *discursively constructed*. By this I mean that reality is something that has to be engaged with socially, and that this social engagement or interaction with Reality—*including political realities*—takes place on the level of discourse (which is to be differentiated here from language as general phenomena). We engage with the political realities around us on the plane of the political discourses we use and instrumentalise in our description of the social realities we see around us, though the relationship between the subject and that reality is far more intimate as it is our discourse which also shapes the realities we engage with. The discourse of the 'War on Terror' sees the world as a space that has been infected by the contingency of 'terror' simply because 'terror' has been framed as an infectious, contaminating and violent disruptive element by the very same discourse we use.

Discussing the discourse of the war on terror therefore necessitates a deeper and more critical enquiry into how and why the concept of 'terror' has emerged as one of the salient concepts—one of the key *master signifiers*—in political discourse. It also means having to identify the actors and agents who were and are responsible for the elevation of that concept to the pivotal position it now occupies; and how this discourse can and has been made to work as a political tool that serves other needs and agendas beyond the merely descriptive.

Looking at the workings of the discourse on terror therefore means having to understand, expose, analyse and in the end criticise the workings of a discourse of power that frames its subject in a negative light, in order to fulfil other political agendas and objectives in the long run. It would be akin to looking at how the discourse of racism works to suppress minorities in our midst, or akin to looking at how the discourse of the Orientalists was used to frame the non-Occidental other in negative terms within a violent hierarchy of differentiation that was later used to justify colonial policies of imperialist expansionism, colonisation and the construction of colonial economies on the basis of a racialised capitalist

model.[5]

Though the discourse on the war on terror operates on a stock repertoire of clichés and stereotypes that often has little bearing on reality, it is nonetheless crucial to understand the fact that these negative stereotypes maintain a degree of emotive and ideological force in the manner that they are deployed for often strategic reasons. As stereotypes they may or may not be based on the truth per se, but as discursive devices within the economy of the war on terror discourse they nevertheless function as markers of identity and difference which allow the enunciators of that discourse to further construct boundaries and distinctions that may serve other ideological and political ends. This is why it is futile to engage in a debate about the truth value or epistemic status of a cliché such as that of the 'mad Muslim fanatic' or 'Arab as terrorist', for these fictions—erroneous though they may be—nonetheless serve politically useful purposes in the same way that other racist stereotypes do. Fictional they may be, but they remain *instrumental fictions* nonetheless (to borrow the phrase often used by Edward Said) that can have considerable emotive power.

The other premise of discourse analysis is that discourses have the tendency to make totalising claims about all of Reality while at the same time work to gain hermetic closure and epistemic arrest. This is, in fact, a common feature of all discourses, be they political or not in nature, as discourses cannot work unless and until some degree of semantic cohesion and coherence is established. All discourses have rules of their own that need to be adhered to, in the same way that even the discourse of lying has as its simple rule the need to not tell the truth (failing which, lying doesn't happen of course!)

As such discourses tend to have this totalising aspect to them and this is particularly apparent in the workings of political discourses. Such discourses make universal claims that are often couched in terms of oppositional dialectics which in turn serve as the basis for identity-construction and knowledge-creation. The Foucauldian observation that language/discourse, power and epistemology have intimate links that bind them is particularly pertinent in this regard; and it is a general observation that all political discourses share this tendency to make universalist claims about the world while disguising their own particularist, subjective origins and solipsistic perspectivism.

We see this at work in the discourse of the 'war on terror' in particular, where the violent oppositional dialectic between the so-called 'forces of good' and the element of 'terror' is laid bare for all to inspect: In the language of former US President Bush and his coterie of Neo-Conservative acolytes and advisors, the world was carved into two neat, oppositional blocs that could not possibly be engaged in any meaningful debate or dialogue with each other, simply because the constitutive Other of 'terror' or the 'forces of terror' was something that one could not engage with rationally in the first place.

Thus from the outset the discourse of the 'war on terror' had set the framework for an oppositional dialectic that was reduced to a zero-sum game contest of political wills rather than alternative rationalities; whereby the 'forces of terror' stood beyond the pale of rational dialogue, reasonable communicative action and co-operation, and sane co-existence. The framing of the Other as the disruptive, violent, contaminating element that constantly threatened the sanctity and safety of the 'forces of Good' meant that the Other was permanently placed outside and beyond the horizons of possibility as far as the proponents of the 'war on terror' discourse were concerned. This had the politically important signification that it also ruled out the need or possibility of rational engagement, mutual respect and recognition, or

even peaceful co-existence.

As such the discourse of the 'war on terror' presented itself as a totalised, hermetically sealed and self-referential discursive economy that was self-sufficient in its assessment of its own epistemic claims and truth value. Though during the period of President Bush's rule there were tentative attempts to engage in dialogue with the so-called 'moderate' voices in the Muslim world, these tepid efforts were nullified by the simple fact that according to the monochromatic logic of the 'war on terror' discourse, all those who were not 'on our side' were immediately and permanently condemned for being on the side of 'terror'. Feeble efforts were made to introduce some degree of internal differentiation among those who were deemed alien or foreign to the West (most notably in the casual distinctions between 'Good Muslims' and 'Bad Muslims' (Noor, 2008, 2007c), but Islam and Muslims were nonetheless recast and re-located outside the world of the sane and sensible as configured according to the dualistic logic of the Neo-Cons.

These then are the salient features of the 'war on terror' discourse, as it was instrumentalised by the Bush administration over the past decade:

- **The monochromatic world order:** The world according to the discourse of the 'war on terror' is split along the fault-lines of religion, culture and civilisation and as the discourse on terror was invented and articulated by the proponents of American hegemony it should come as no surprise if America and the West are configured in terms almost entirely positive. In the discursive construction of this world order, the Neo-Cons have appropriated practically all positive elements ranging from civilisation, reason, order, rule of law, democracy, freedom and liberty and appropriated it almost exclusively for the West. By extension this also means that all

that is wrong and negative about the world is lumped on to the *Constitutive Other* to the West, namely Islam and Muslim society; that is in turn framed as uncivilised, barbaric, violent, backward, primordial, irrational and immune to the appeals of reason, fettered and undemocratic. *These two chains of equivalences operate and exist parallel to each other, and indeed mutually sustain each other; though they are not in dialogue with each other.*

- **The frontier between the West and the Muslim world is a violent one:** Having set up such a violent opposition between the West and Islam, the frontier that demarcates the two can only be a zone of conflict in every sense of the word: discursive, ideological, religious, cultural and political. The integrity, cohesion and very identity of the 'West' as opposed to the 'forces of terror' has to be guarded by force and the threat of violence at all times, for there can be no peaceful co-existence and dialogue with the Other as long as it is cast as a malignant force that seeks to threaten the sanctity and safety of the West all the time. *Violence, or the threat of violence, is thus the operational principle that sustains the boundary between the West and Islam, and as such it is violence that gives the discourse of Western identity its contours and determines its form and contents as well.*

- **The irrationality of the Other:** As reason and truth have been sequestered into the precinct of what is cast as *Western*, the space of the Other is defined as the space of unreason and primordialism. This means that dialogue is doubly futile as there cannot even be a universal plane of discursive exchange between the two. The discursive strategy of labelling the Other as irrational is and has been used time and again in violent political discourses such as that

of the Western Bloc during the Cold War, where the 'forces of Communism' were likewise regarded as fundamentally and essentially opposed to meaningful exchange and thus unable to engage as dialogue partners. *The irrationality that is associated with and imposed on the construction of the Constitutive Other means that nothing rational or reasonable can emanate from the space of the Other as well. Which in turn means that the Other is denied any claims to reason and rational action, rational agency and rational will and choice as well.*

- **Closed horizons of the same:** The zero-sum logic of this discourse ensured that the horizons of the safe and familiar would be kept closed and narrow all the time. This was and is a typical discursive strategy used by political elites and governments that do not wish to engage in any constructive negotiations with the other party, and was aptly demonstrated during the time of Margaret Thatcher's rule in the United Kingdom when her Conservative party government adopted the 'no dialogue with terrorists' policy vis-à-vis the outlawed Irish Republican Army (IRA) then. By labelling the IRA and its supporters as inherently and essentially violent terrorists who were opposed to the state, the Thatcher government constantly refused to engage with the Other on any meaningful basis, stating that 'dialogue with terrorists' was never an option and therefore beyond the horizons of political possibility. *By closing the horizons of possibility thus, the discourse of the West sought to perpetuate and animate itself on a self-referential basis. The irrationality of the Other which spelled the end to dialogue meant that the Other also could not speak to and of itself, which allowed the 'West' to comment on the ontological state of the Other as the negative Other.*

All in all, we should not be surprised by the workings of the discourse on 'terror' for its salient features should be familiar to all of us who have studied the discursive conflicts of the Cold War era. Indeed, if there is one discourse that the discourse on the 'war on terror' can be compared to, it is precisely the discourse of the 'war on Communism' that was, after all, the most dominant and near-hegemonic discourse that determined the form and content of international politics from the end of the Second World War right up to the late 1980s.

One may legitimately criticise the workings of the discourse on the 'war on terror' for its fictional categories and erroneous premises; and one may expose its working of power and the hidden agendas that are frankly not all too well hidden at all. But as a *discourse of containment* and power-violence, it succeeds (and has succeeded) well enough by drawing a neat division between the West and the Muslim world, divided as they were between the 'coalition of the willing' and the so-called 'axis of Evil'.

This is not a critique of the fallibility of language, or even the promiscuous nature of discourses that lend themselves to a plethora of (sometimes underhanded and sinister) goals, but is rather an observation about the power of discourse as a tool of identity-construction as well as mass political mobilisation. To critique the truth-claims of the discourse of the 'war on terror' would have been futile, as Said suggests, for the simple reason that political discourses do not rest on epistemic claims to have the emotive and ideological power that they wield. What matters more is how such discourses were and are instrumentalised, and in the case of the discourse of the 'war on terror' this was one case where a blatantly political and politicised discursive economy was used to the hilt in the most brazen manner to secure political, military and diplomatic objectives that were deemed paramount to the interests of Washington at the time.

II. A CLOSE-UP LOOK AT THE POLITICS OF CONTAINMENT AT WORK: FROM DISCURSIVE CLOSURE TO POLITICAL ARREST

'An important feature of colonial discourse is its dependence on the concept of *fixity* in the ideological construction of Otherness.'
—Homi K. Bhabha, *The Other Question*

It is not an exaggeration perhaps to say that we now live in a world where the notion of *Terror* has been commodified.

The past decade has witnessed nothing short of the creation of a veritable *anti-terror industry*, which has fed into the collective insecurities and anxieties of a post-modern global population already plagued by a host of fears both real and imagined—from transmigrating viruses that eat at the flesh to airborne diseases that migrate from animals to human beings. I need not repeat the same claim that the modern age is the age of fear, or rather *regulated fear*; and that the moral panics of our times are symptoms of the workings of the age of late industrial capitalism with its propensity towards domestication, public control and discipline and the manufacturing of consent.

Again I wish to return to the earlier premise of this paper and re-state the obvious: That the 'hard' material of political control, violence, domestication and social policing would not get anywhere without the 'soft' component of discourse and in particular the discourse of *othering* that which is deemed alien, foreign and beyond the pale of the ordinary and acceptable. While the discourse of the 'war on terror' provided many a government with the discursive material needed for such a politics of containment and exclusion, the hard component of this process came from the myriad of security-related establishments and institutions that were set up in the wake of 11 September 2001 to operationalise that exclusionary mode of politics.

My own concerns have been directed towards the part of the world I know best, namely Southeast Asia, which witnessed a sudden boom in the so-called security industry not long after the events of 11 September. It must be remembered here that throughout the Cold War, Southeast Asia was dubbed the 'second front in the war against Communism', before it was re-christened the 'second front in the war against Terror'.

Owing to this long history of political containment and exclusionary politics that had been normalised since the end of the Second World War, the political and academic landscape of Southeast Asia was already festooned with a number of security-related institutions ranging from security centres, counter-insurgency institutes, dedicated special forces units and the like. After all, it was in Southeast Asia that the Cold War was fought in earnest and for at least four decades it was here that a number of pro-Western right-wing nationalist and militarist regimes found their best supporter in the government of the United States of America and her allies. It should be remembered that throughout the Cold War, it was America that was widely seen as the main supporter of the governments of Southeast Asia. The American government openly endorsed and supported the governments of Malaysia[6] (under the leadership of Tunku Abdul Rahman (1957-69), Tun Razak (1970-1976) and Hussein Onn (1976-1980)), the Philippines, Thailand, South Vietnam as well as Laos and Cambodia. The US would also support the government of Indonesia after the fall of Soekarno and the rise of the right-wing military-backed General-turned-President Soeharto (1966-1998).

The Bush administration's declaration of the 'war on terror' was not surprisingly taken up with relish by the long-entrenched conservative forces in South-

east Asia as a pretext to not only maintain the security industry and the politics of containment in their respective countries, but to extend it even further: For many of the political strongmen of the Cold War era like Indonesia's General A. M. Hendropriyono[7], Washington's call to arms against the unseen enemy of holy terror was greeted with welcome relief, for it extended the lifespan of the military-security complex they had laboured to cultivate and nurture for so long during the 'war against Communism'.

Washington's support of strong ASEAN leaders who were willing to join President Bush in his global 'crusade' against terrorism reawakened widely-held fears of 'Big Brother' America intervening in the affairs of Southeast Asia all over again. Washington's active endorsement of the anti-terror campaign in ASEAN; its recognition of Thailand as a major 'non-NATO ally'; its open endorsement of ex-military strongmen like Thailand's Thaksin Shinawatra[8] and Indonesia's Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono[9], contributed to the popular perception that America had simply reverted back to its old tactics of gunboat diplomacy and mercenary support of dictators working to serve the needs of Uncle Sam.

With and through this vast network of interested parties and individuals, anti-terror centres, research institutes and governmental agencies, the discourse on the 'war on terror' was effectively reproduced and hegemonised via the respective agencies of the state.

Over the past decade we have witnessed—in Southeast Asia, certainly—the inauguration of hundreds of international conferences, seminars, panel discussions, talk shows, public debates and a sustained media campaign that pathologised Muslims and dissected Islam to no end. Even more significantly, much of this discourse on the 'war on terror' has also breached the walls of academia and has become a subject of intense academic and pseudo-academic discussion, with scores of academic and pseudo-academic works being written about the subject. It is an open secret that many of us in the academic field, hard pressed as we already are with our budgetary limitations and the constant need for funding, have been forced at one point or another to contemplate the prospect of hopping onto the anti-terror bandwagon in order to secure much needed financial support for research projects that could and should have been directed elsewhere. While in the field of the humanities, sociologists, anthropologists and political theorists were pressured to conduct their research work in an environment uncontaminated by political concerns, it is well known to all that adding the buzzword of 'terror' to a research proposal would have expedited the process of funding in many cases.

The manufacturing of consent that followed was focused on one simple notion, namely that Islam was to be equated with terrorism and violence and that there was the overriding need to somehow understand Islam better in order to nullify the potential threat contained in it. Knowledge-production in this case was more akin to the process of consensus-generation as precious little sociological, anthropological and theoretical knowledge was ever produced in any of the international conferences and seminars organised on the subject. Furthermore, the secondary negative impact of this political manipulation of ideas and knowledge-generation was the proximity that was created between academia and the military-security complex of many of the countries concerned.

A decade on, we are still left with the question of what terror is, and who the terrorists are. With the exception of a few research endeavours that sought to locate the roots of anger and antagonism towards the West in the workings of neo-imperialism, neo-colonialism and the uneven

power and economic differentials of post-colonial Muslim societies (e.g., Lubeck and Britts, 2001[10]), many of the pseudo-academic studies conducted on the subject were of a more superficial character, prompting idle speculation about how religiously-inspired violence was derived from textual sources, or worse still, from inherent essentialist traits unique to Muslims.

The other aspect of the 'war on terror' discourse that has perhaps not been fully appreciated is the extent to which it was also taken up, reversed and reproduced by many an exclusivist Islamist actor and/or movement as well. For if the discourse on the 'war on terror' was used ultimately as a means of creating and maintaining the cultural-ideological boundary between the West and Muslim world, then it surely also serves as a *double-boundary* that marks the frontier of the *Other* as well.

Thus it came to pass that during the first decade of the 21st century, we witnessed a corresponding increase in the number of conferences, seminars, assemblies and meetings of Islamists the world over, reacting to the 'war on terror' that had been waged against them and leading to a predictable reply from the aggrieved party. As a tool that seeks to create and perpetuate the distinction between the West and Islam, the tropes and metaphors of the 'war on terror' discourse were likewise taken up with gusto by a range of right-wing, exclusive and communitarian Islamist organisations and movements the world over, who were likewise disinclined to engage in a meaningful dialogue with the West over real issues, and who were likewise prone to see the Western world in equally monolithic, two-dimensional and stereotypical terms. In my writings elsewhere I have commented on this tendency of Islamists to replicate the very same discourse of the 'war on terror' which they condemn on the basis of its racist and essentialist biases, but whose logic they have nonetheless inher-

ited and continue to reproduce despite their own misgivings about such violent oppositional dialectics—the scenes of the Muslim protestors damning all that is Western and American during the world-wide protests after the Danish 'Muhammad cartoons controversy' of 2005 being a case in point. (Noor, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c[11]).

The net result of the workings of the 'war on terror' discourse is that it has helped only to maintain and further reinforce the cultural and historical biases that have long since served as the obstacles to genuine intra-cultural and inter-cultural dialogue between the West and the Muslim world.

Premised as it was on the notion of an identity that was under threat from subversive and contaminating elements without, it served the agenda of the politics of containment by giving governments and elites the right and reason to maximise their control of their respective communities. By erecting a violent boundary between the *Self* and *Other* thus, the discourse of the 'war on terror' simplified and essentialised inter-cultural politics while overriding the realities of cultures as complex, hybrid and evolving phenomena. Needless to say, such a discourse does wonders for the needs of authoritarian regimes bent on hegemonic domination and the elimination of internal pluralism and difference, and it is hardly surprising therefore that the highest cost of the 'war on terror' discourse came in the form of the steady erosion of fundamental political liberties in the West and the denial of internal difference and heterogeneity in the Muslim world.

There has yet to be a systematic study of the political economy of the 'war on terror', and even today we can only speculate on the exact amount of money and resources that have been spent (or wasted) in this colossal enterprise. Obviously the most interested parties that are made up of the various networks of arms manufacturers, private security companies, mercenary

agencies, anti-terror research centres, state agencies and the armed forces of many a country have been at the front of the trough, reaping considerable benefits from an instrumental discourse that served the needs of capital and the state in the most explicit manner. We, however, have become poorer as a result of it.

III. CONTAINING THE 'MUSLIM THREAT': HOW THE DISCOURSE OF THE 'WAR ON TERROR' HAS REINVENTED MUSLIM SUBJECTIVITY AND IDENTITY

The political economy of the 'war on terror' operates on both the discursive and material levels, and it is clear that in both cases what we have witnessed over the past decade or so is the inflation of the notion of the Muslim as a potential threat to society.

Perhaps in the years to come there can and will be a sustained attempt to compile the discursive material that has been produced so far, through the myriad of books, seminars, conferences and other mediatic events that have taken place all over the globe where the issue of religious fundamentalism and notably Islamic fundamentalism were discussed. As someone who has participated in many of these conferences over the past ten years, I can summarily describe the image of Islam and Muslims that was discursively constructed over this period.

In so much of what has been written about the subject of 'Islamic terror', we encounter the same and often-repeated themes and tropes: Muslim terrorists are presented as being cunning, nefarious, two-faced, capable and willing to resort to whatever means necessary and to use whatever means at hand to achieve their stated political objectives. It is this image of the all-pervading and all-powerful Muslim terrorist that in turn feeds the discourse of the 'war on terror' and which provides

securocrats and technocrats with both the practical and moral justification for the perpetuation of certain stereotypes about Islam and Muslim identity.

This inflation of the powers and capabilities of Muslims in turn explains and justifies the inflation of expenditure that goes into sustaining the material economy of the discourse on the 'war on terror' as well. For as the perceived threat of 'Islamic terror' multiplies and is magnified, so are the methods used to contain the perceived threat as well.

It is therefore hardly surprising to note that alongside the dissemination and sedimentation of the discourse of the 'war on terror' across Asia and Europe, we have also seen the creation of an even bigger and potentially more destructive anti-terror security industry and state security apparatus. In the case of the Philippines, for instance, the discourse of the 'war on terror' provided justification for joint military exercises between the armed forces of the Philippines and the USA. Under normal circumstances, this would have gone against the spirit of the post-Marcos 1986 Constitution of the country that specifically forbids any Philippine President for allowing or inviting foreign armed forces to operate in the country. In the case of Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia the same discourse of the 'war on terror' has sustained and helped to create even more security institutions and anti-terrorism agencies, funded by local government sources as well as foreign donor support. In the case of Thailand, whose decades-long insurgency in the South was re-cast as a 'terror threat' by the government of Prime Minister Thaksin and subsequent leaders of the country, the 'war on terror' has even served as a justification for greater and grander arms-purchasing projects, including the proposal to buy jet fighters from Sweden, which would presumably be used to somehow contain the threat of Muslim terrorism in the South.

Here lies the double-edged nature of the 'war on terror' discourse and the manner in which it can and has been used to create a new Muslim subjectivity altogether. On the one hand Muslim terrorists (and Muslims in general) are cast as individuals with extraordinary powers and abilities to communicate, organise and orchestrate acts of wanton violence and excess. Muslims are also endowed with almost super-human powers and abilities, and this is reflected in the way in which state security agencies see the need to acquire stronger and greater weapons of mass destruction to deal with the security threat posed by Muslims. (The Thai government's proposal to purchase jet fighters from Sweden is a case in point, as if Muslim insurgents in the South are immune to ordinary bullets and can only be killed by rockets launched from jet fighters.)

What, then, is the final image of the Muslim that we arrive at? It would seem as if in the context of the 'war on terror' discourse Muslims have been endowed with a superhuman subjectivity that presents them with an extraordinary degree of agency, intelligence, endurance, the capacity to mobilise themselves and of course the super-human capability to withstand attack by conventional weaponry (which necessitates the purchase and use of greater weapons of destruction). Muslims have, in short, been re-invented as a super-human threat that can no longer be contained and defeated by conventional means alone.

It is this super-human character that is imposed on the narrative device of the 'Muslim terrorist' that justifies the creation, expansion and perpetuation of the military-industrial complex in so many of the countries in Asia today. Having inflated the image and power of Muslims to that of super-human beings who perhaps can even be said to be the next stage of human evolution, the very same discourse of the 'war on terror' aims to contain this potential threat of Muslim terrorism with the threat of even greater state violence.

This marks one of the other features of the discourse of the 'war on terror' and how it has expanded not only the scope, depth and magnitude of Muslim subjectivity beyond the level of the mundane and ordinary; but also the scope and magnitude of state violence and power to a level hitherto unreached. The introduction of more and more anti-terror laws, norms and conventions across Southeast Asia has led to the expansion (both virtual and real) of a state security apparatus even bigger than the one that existed during the Cold War, and which now presents itself to the public in the form of new legislation that allows for even more phone-tapping, checks in the internet, routine interrogations, detentions without trial etc.

All of this, of course has been justified on the grounds of public safety and the desire to contain the potential of excess and violence that has been embodied in the symbolic figure of the super-human Muslim terrorist. Not even at the height of the Cold War has Asia witnessed such a neat and effective combination of discursive and material-economic interests working hand-in-glove with each other. And not even during the Cold War was the subjectivity of the oppositional *Other* constructed in such magnified proportions. Even Communists could be killed by bullets, but it would appear that Muslim 'terrorists' can only be slain by rockets and cannons. Muslims have consequently been elevated to the status of giants and monsters, almost on par with King Kong or Godzilla.

IV. CONCLUSION: THE END OF BUSH AND THE DEMISE OF THE 'WAR ON TERROR'? IS IT THAT EASY TO TRANSCEND OPPOSITIONAL DICHOTOMIES?

With the demise of the Bush government and the rise of Barack Obama as the

new President of the United States of America, it would seem as if the events of the decade have been reduced to a thing of the past. Already many commentators have speculated about the eclipse of the 'War on Terror' and the end to the bad old days of oppositional dualism between the Western and Muslim worlds.

Certainly it cannot be denied that Obama's tentative moves to woo the public opinion in the Muslim world has yielded positive results: The decision to send Hillary Clinton on the first probing mission to the world's biggest Muslim nation, Indonesia, was met with overwhelmingly positive results.[12] Obama's trip to Turkey was likewise deemed a success in the way that he dealt frankly and fairly with the Islamist parties and movements in the country, and there are equally high expectations of his intended visits to Egypt and Indonesia scheduled for 2009-2010.

It is not an exaggeration to say, therefore, that the end of the Bush government and the rise of Obama as the latest President of the United States was greeted most warmly by Muslims all across the Muslim world; and that his mixed ancestral background and his childhood experience of growing up in predominantly-Muslim Indonesia was a subjective variable factor that placed him in the enviable position of being the best natural ambassador to the Muslim world at large. So great is this shift in perception that in the course of my interviews and meetings with hard-line anti-Western Islamist leaders in countries like Indonesia, I have even been told that the loss of Bush was an equally great loss to them, for in the absence of Bush the radical hardline Islamists have lost their best enemy (Noor, 2007a, 2007b)!

This does not, however, mean that we have transcended the logic of oppositional dialectics and that the culture of negative stereotyping is over. If anything, what needs to be studied even closer than ever now is how the dialectical relationship between the West and the Muslim world will be re-configured according to the new terms of a new 'partnership' between the West and the Muslim world; two cultural-religious blocs that—according to the logic of the new rhetoric of Obama—are distinct.

If this premise were to be taken at face value, we are nonetheless left with the perennial question that has been the bane of identity politics: How can there be distinction and difference without recourse to the logic and discourse of alterity—with all its attendant complexes of liminality, marginalisation and the creation and perpetuation of difference based on oppositional dialectics and violent hierarchies? In short, how can we be different and yet friends?

Let us return to the earlier observations that I made in this paper: One of the features of all discursive economies is the propensity towards hermetic closure and epistemic arrest. If this is taken as one of the premises of discourse analysis, then we need to ask the question of how the discourse of Western and/or Muslim identity is to be maintained without there being the accompanying discursive strategies of differentiation as well. Identities may be relational, but the relationship between a table and a chair, or a dog and a cat, is hardly the same as the historically complex and contested relationship between the West and Islam.

After centuries of continuous inter-civilisational conflict and dialogue, we need to ask if the two categories of the 'West' and 'Islam' can be made to sit side-by-side on equal terms that do not frame the Other according to the register of negativity. In short, can Muslims ever think of the 'West' outside the framework of the 'Non-Muslim'; and can the West think of 'Islam' in terms of the framework of the 'Non-Western'? For as long as the Other here is being framed in terms of the 'Non-Self/Identical', we cannot hope to transcend the logic of binary opposition. Nor can we dream of forming a discourse of

sameness/identity that operates outside the framework of a politics of containment that does not see the Self/Same as vulnerable, and constantly in the need of defence.

This, then, is the fundamental problem that we are left with in the wake of the end of the Bush administration and the opening of the new global politics we see around us: After nearly a decade of cultural frontier-building and border-policing, can we move on to a politics of identity that does not pose the Other as the permanent enemy/threat or contaminating element?

Barack Obama's tentative probing in the direction of the Muslim world must therefore take as its premise the idea that that 'Muslim world' he is trying to reach out to is not another planet populated by aliens, but rather another part of the world where a range of variable subjectivities exist and where these different Muslim subjectivities are just as entitled as anyone else to have opinions and values of their own with regards to the West, the United States and themselves. In the same vein, the Muslim world that also retreated into its own politics of containment and self-defence must wise up to the reality that there is now a substantially different American political public and audience that has demonstrated its capacity to think out of the box, vote outside the norms of inherited conventionality and is equally plural, heterogeneous and complex. For as Bobby Sayyid (1997) has argued, those of the Islamist camp have been equally wont to spin their own grand narratives of *Islam versus the Rest* in similarly hyperbolic, exclusive and absolutist terms.[13] In short, one can only get out of the politics of containment if we accept the deconstructive and post-structuralist view that identities are multiple, fluid, complex and beyond discursive closure.

If the discourse of the 'war on terror' sought to divide the world according to such neat and exclusive binaries, then surely the deconstructive thrust of any cri-

tique against it would have to emphasise the impossibility of such hermetic closure, reductionism and essentialism. We may not be able to wholly transcend the narrow confines of oppositional dialectics, but we can at least render such dialectics problematic by problematising the categories of identity and difference in the first place.

Deconstructing the workings of the discourse on the 'war on terror' and its linkages to power would, however, take us beyond the level of 'soft' discursive politics to the level of 'hard' materialism and political economy as well. For as I have argued above, the discursive dimension of the 'war on terror' was used to underpin and rationalise the creation of a vast network of security institutions, think-tanks, research institutes and governmental agencies—all of which were founded on the false but instrumental premises of the very same politics of containment they sought to secure.

What might be the end result of such a deconstructive enterprise? Well, for a start it may well spell the end of many a research institute or security agency whose job it was to 'monitor the enemy' for the sake of doing so. It has to be added here that over the past decade the amount of pseudo-academic material that has been produced by many of these self-proclaimed 'security experts' and security agencies has added its own costs as well, not least in the amount of paper used in the thousands of books, monographs and research papers that were written to analyse an 'enemy' that could have been better understood via other disciplinary approaches known to social scientists. (This in turn has also contributed to the global environmental problem, for nobody knows how many trees were chopped down to produce the material needed for these books.)

Undoubtedly institutional inertia and resistance will rear its head in defence of the security and 'anti-terror' industry that has been created over the past decade and

which is now worth billions of dollars, with interested parties the world over heavily invested—both politically and financially—in it. The instrumental fiction of an unseen enemy that wields the weapon of terrorism can also be modified, adapted and made to evolve to meet new agendas and geo-political ambitions as well. I need not re-state the observation of Said who noted that such instrumental fictions retain their emotive and ideological force despite being proven to be false.

It is for these reasons that we cannot conclude that the discourse of the 'war on terror' has breathed its last, or that we have somehow been miraculously transported to a new world of universal love and humanism thanks to the glib rhetoric and smart dress sense of the new President of the United States of America. A discursive analysis of the workings of the discourse on the 'war on terror' would remind us of the fact that political discourses are, fundamentally, instruments of power. False though the premises of the 'war on terror' discourse may have been, as a means of attaining the politics of containment beloved by authoritarian regimes worldwide it remains as one of the most powerful weapons in the arsenal of anti-democratic forces the world has ever seen.

ENDNOTES

1. It should be noted here that the election of George W. Bush was greeted with considerable approval by several Muslim groups in America that shared his conservative values, aspirations and lifestyle. Many Arab and Muslim interest groups hoped that the new President would be more sympathetic to their demands, which ranged from the thorny issue of Palestine to the question of religious schools in the US. Little did they realise then that the man they chose to back would turn out to be the first US President to call for a 'crusade' against the 'menace' of 'global Islamic terrorism'. George W. Bush's own conservative agenda—backed up by the business and industrial interests that supported him—became obvious within months after he took office. In less than a year, the new President had: cut the workforce training programmes for dislocated workers by $US200 million; cut funding to the childcare and development programme by US$200 million; cut US$700 million from numerous public housing repair projects; reduced by 86% funds for the community access programme; cut funding for environmentally friendly vehicles and transport facilities by 28%; cut federal government spending on public libraries by $US39 million; pushed through a new package of tax cuts, 43% of which went to the richest 1% of American citizens; pushed for the development of a 'mini-nuke' programme to create smaller nuclear weapons for 'limited combat use' (which violated the Comprehensive Nuclear Ban Treaty), and pulled America out of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol Agreement on global warming that had been signed by 178 other countries.

2. The paranoia and xenophobia stoked by the media were soon echoed by the establishment itself. The US government responded with calls for revenge and retribution. President George W. Bush vowed that those responsible for the attacks would face retribution and that the US would lead the new global 'crusade' against terrorism—an unfortunate choice of words that only added to the confusion and anxiety of the

time. Other American politicians and intellectuals were even more blunt in their public pronouncements. Notorious Republican Senator John McCain surpassed even his own inflated standards where he hysterically stated: 'These were not just crimes, they were acts of war, and they have aroused in this great nation a controlled fury and unity of purpose not just to punish but to vanquish—vanquish our enemies. Americans know now that we are at war and will make the sacrifices and show the resolve necessary to prevail. I say to our enemies: We are coming. God may show you mercy. We will not.'

3. Re: Peter Amato, Crisis, *Terror and Tyranny: On the Anti-Democratic Logic of Empire*, in: Gail M. Presbey (ed.), *Philosophical Perspectives on the 'War on Terrorism'*, Value Enquiry Books Series, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 2007; and William C. Gay, *Bush's National Security Strategy: A Critique of United States' Neo-Imperialism*, in: Gail M. Presbey (ed.), *Philosophical Perspectives on the 'War on Terrorism'*, Value Enquiry Books Series, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 2007.

4. Re: Richard Peterson, *Dilemmas of Intervention: Human Rights and Neo-Colonialism*, in: Gail M. Presbey (ed.), *Philosophical Perspectives on the 'War on Terrorism'*, Value Enquiry Books Series, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 2007; and Gail M. Presbey (ed.), *Philosophical Perspectives on the 'War on Terrorism'*, Value Enquiry Books Series, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 2007.

5. One of the best studies on the subject of colonial Orientalist discourse and its intimate relationship with colonial power structures can be found in: Alatas, Syed Hussein, *The Myth of the Lazy Native: A Study of the Image of the Malays, Filipinos and Javanese from the 16th to the 20th Century and its Function in the Ideology of Colonial Capitalism*, London: Frank Cass, 1977.

6. Following the end of the Second World War, the returning British colonial authorities were keen to re-establish control and influence over their colony by whatever means necessary, and their priority was to disarm the militia units of the communist forces (which they themselves had helped to train and arm). Like the French in Indochina

(who desperately tried to promote the enfeebled Emperor Bao Dai whose Nguyen dynasty they had previously disempowered), the British identified a number of Malay rulers and leaders they could rely upon to prop up the tattered remains of their colonial establishment. In September 1945, the British Military Administration (BMA) was set up in Malaya; it effectively ruled the country until the end of March 1946. Tagging along with the British was a detachment of security and intelligence personnel from the US Office of Strategic Services (OSS) which surveyed the political terrain in the region. The American agents were based at the OCBC bank offices in Kuala Lumpur, close to the Chinatown district where they could observe the activities of the Chinese communist and leftist movements. Among the American OSS agents were Brig. General R. C. Pape, Lieutenant J. W. Smith and Captain Post. The OSS agents attempted to lure members of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP).

7. During the Suharto era General A. M. Hendropriyono was one of the key senior officers who ran the Indonesian army's intelligence and counter-insurgency apparatus, and under his guidance the Indonesian special forces and covert ops units were responsible for some of the worst human rights violations in Indonesia's history. It was he who was put in charge of the operations in the Lampung district in South Sumatra, where the Indonesian army was given the task of 'containing' the 'threat' of Islamist activists and an alternative Sufi-inspired mass movement there. After a series of covert actions and psy-ops warfare (where the public was told that the Islamists were a 'terrorist threat') the army was ordered to move in for the kill. The end result was the massacre of hundreds of innocent civilians, and this earned Hendropriyono the nickname of 'the Butcher of Lampung'. But like all Indonesian generals, Hendropriyono managed to survive after the fall of Suharto inn 1998 thanks to his political skills and ability to win friends and allies. When President Suharto met his end, Hendropriyono took a step back and began to support the President's contenders. Sea-

soned Indonesia-watchers regard him as the man who was behind the meteoric rise of Megawati Sukarnoputri, and it was he who brokered the deal between Megawati's PDI party, the predominantly Chinese-Christian urban business elite and the army prior to her coming to power. When the beleaguered Megawati was in desperate search for partners to keep her feeble government together, she turned to her one-time benefactor and supporter, Hendropriyono. Under President Megawati Hendropriyono was promoted to the head of Indonesia's new counter-insurgency intelligence service based in Jakarta. From the beginning, Hendropriyono was the most vocal advocate of more aggressive measures to be taken against the so-called 'Islamist threat' in Indonesia. Long before anyone else, it was he who claimed that *al-Qaeda* was now spreading to Indonesia and that the Indonesian army and intelligence services should be given more sweeping powers to deal with the threat. Hendropriyono continued to serve under President Megawati until she lost the elections of 2004. Shortly after Indonesia came under the leadership of ex-General Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Hendropriyono announced his decision to retire from his post and public life. Till the end of his career he was never prosecuted for the alleged crimes against humanity he was said to be responsible for in Lampung.

8. Lieutenant-Colonel (rtd.) Dr. Thaksin Shinawatra's rise to power was, in many ways, an indirect result of the collapse of the democratic project in Thailand and the return of authoritarian, counter-reform tendencies in the country. Thailand's economic boom came to an end in 1997, with the devaluing of the Thai Baht that precipitated the catastrophic Eastasian financial crisis of 1997-98. As a result of this crisis, the pro-democracy and pro-reform movement was delivered a fatal blow as the urban business elite switched their support to strong political leaders who proposed a stronger, centralist, even authoritarian state model for the country. It was at this time that Thaksin Shinawatra came to prominence. The man was himself an ex-security forces commander,

who held the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel of the Thai Police. With a similar educational background to that of the senior leaders of the Thai army, police and security services, he commanded considerable respect and support from the armed forces and security services. He then branched out into the world of business and rose to become a tycoon in the telecommunications field. With strong business and army links as well as an independent financial base, he formed and led the *Thai Rak Thai* (Thais Love Thais) party and swept to power with the support of the urban middle class and business community (as well as the backing of foreign capital). Thaksin's rise to power coincided with the promulgation of the 1997 Thai Constitution, which was reformist in appearance but which in reality was directed at the expansion and consolidation of the power and authority of the Executive (Prime Minister) over the Legislature and other wings of the government. Part of Thaksin's project was his 'new social contract' with the Thai public, which promised the restoration of law and order at any cost. Under his leadership the Thai public was constantly fed with a stream of state propaganda about internal threats within Thailand, ranging from drugs gangs to Islamist militants in the South of the country. In the wake of the terrorist attacks on the United States of America on 11 September 2001 and the alleged terrorist attacks in Indonesia in 2002, Thaksin has used the rhetoric and discourse of the 'war on terror' to further extend his power and the scope of activities of the Thai security forces. In particular the government of Prime Minister Thaksin was keen to demonstrate to the Thai public and the international community that the troubles in the Muslim provinces in the South of the country was part of a global trend of 'Islamic terrorism' that required a strong, even violent, response from the state. Contrary to the image of Thaksin as a civilian politician that is disseminated by his supporters, the man himself has maintained close links to the Thai armed forces and security agencies, and has further politicised the latter through his direct intervention in the re-shuffling of Thai senior army

commanders. Thaksin has even appointed one of his relatives as a commander of the Thai army. General Pisarn has a close relationship to Prime Minister Thaksin (via his cousin Chaksin) and the Thai royal family (he is said to be on personal friendly terms with the Queen). [For further analysis on the development of the democratic reform movement in Thailand and its subsequent regression thanks to the rise of counter-reform tendencies, see: Kasian Tejapira, *'Reform and Counter-Reform: Democratization and its Discontents in post-May 1992 Thai politics'.* Paper presented at the workshop *'Towards Good Society? Civil Society Actors, the State and the Business Class in Southeast Asia – facilitators or impediments to a strong, Democratic and Fair Society?'* Organised by the Heinrich Boell Foundation, Berlin, 27-28 October 2004.]

9. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) was born in 1949 in Pacitan, East Java to a family that already enjoyed close links to the Indonesian armed forces. In 1970 he enrolled in the Academy of the Armed Forces of the Indonesian Republic (Akabri) and was selected for further education and training by ABRI both within the country and abroad, particularly in the United States of America. In 1976 he took part in the US Airborne and Rangers course at Fort Benning, Georgia, while attending an American Language course at Lackland, Texas, at the same time; in 1982-83 he took part in the Infantry Officers Advanced course at Fort Benning (where he graduated with honours); in 1983 he took part in the Jungle Warfare Training course in Panama; and in 1984 participated in the Antitank Weapons course that was conducted in Belgium and Germany. In the course of his academic work and training he also took part in 'on the job' training with the 82nd US Airborne Division at Fort Bragg (in 1983). Bambang's working relationship with the USA continued well into the 1990s, and in 1990-91 he was at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He was later made the Commander of the Indonesian Infantry Training Academy between 1983 to 1985, and served with a number of important units in various military opera-

tions both in Indonesia and abroad. Within the country he was known as one of the senior commanders who were put in charge of military and security operations in East Timor. His first tour of command there was between 1979 to 1980, and his second between 1986 to 1988. Despite the global outcry over the violent military invasion and subsequent annexation of East Timor in 1974, many of the Indonesian officers who were stationed there were trained by the USA and other Western states, and Bambang was one of them. The Asian financial crisis of 1997-98 led to mass demonstrations by students and civil society groups, who called for the resignation of Suharto and the trial of key ABRI leaders. In the midst of this upheaval, Bambang was one of the few senior officers who could still maintain a dialogue with civil society organisations and the student demonstrators. While other senior army leaders like Major-General Wiranto were being accused of crimes against humanity in places like East Timor, Bambang was promoted and made the head of the ABRI representation at the People's Assembly (ABRI-MPR) in 1998. Following the resignation of Suharto in May 1998 and the collapse of the New Order regime, Bambang was promoted to the post of Chief of Territorial Command (1998-99). Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's political career began as soon as he retired from the army in January 2000. While still holding the rank of Lieutenant General he served as the Minister for Energy in the cabinet of President Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur). Following the withdrawal of General Wiranto from politics (due to charges of criminal abuse of human rights in the East Timor campaign), Bambang was then put in charge of national security by Gus Dur as well. Bambang was one of the few faces of the New Order era who managed to survive the transition from military to civilian rule. As the man in charge of security and the maintenance of law and order, Bambang was asked by President Wahid to set up the National Crisis Centre in 2001, a loosely-structured information-gathering and policy-setting group that reported directly to the President. Thus despite his

status as retired general, Bambang was allowed to maintain close working links with the Indonesian army, police, intelligence and security services. In 2001 Bambang fell out with President Wahid. In the elections that came soon after, Bambang formed an alliance with Megawati Sukarnoputri. Following the victory of Megawati, Hamzah Haz was made Vice-President and Bambang was brought into her cabinet. Finally in September 2004 Bambang—along with his running mate Muhammad Jusuf Kalla—stood against the pairing of Megawati Sukarnoputri and Kyai Hasyim Muzadi. Owing to his reputation as a leader who stood firm on the question of law and order, and his track record as an army officer and key player in the Indonesian security/intelligence network, Bambang managed to persuade most of the voters that he was the man who could deliver on his promise to restore calm and stability to the country. After seven years the Indonesian economy had yet to recover from the financial crisis of 1997-98 and the spate of bombings in Bali and Jakarta had sullied Indonesia's image abroad—particularly among foreign investors and tourists. Promising that he would rid the country of religious extremism, terror networks and communal violence, Bambang and Jusuf Kalla managed to secure 61% of the votes during the elections of September 2004. In October 2004 he was declared the winner and President of Indonesia.

10. Re: Paul M. Lubeck and Bryana Britts, *'Muslim Civil Society and Urban Public Spaces: Globalisation, Discursive Shifts and Social Movements'*, in J. Eade and C. Mele (eds.), *Urban Studies: Contemporary and Future Perspectives*, London: Blackwell, 2001.

11. Re: Farish A. Noor, *Jihad Revisited? Shifting Dynamics of Radical Movements in Indonesia Today.* Institute for Strategic and International Studies (ISIS)-Malaysia, ISIS Working Papers Series, Kuala Lumpur, 2007a; Farish A. Noor, *Feuer und Schwefel: Yogja und Solo, Zentraljava 2006,* In: Documenta Magazine No. 3, 2007: Education. Documenta 12 Expo, Taschen, Cologne, 2007b; Farish A. Noor, *Western Discourses on Islam and Mus-lims in the West,* Annual Report of the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) of Pakistan, Islamabad, May 2007c.

12. Hillary Clinton's visit to Indonesia in early 2009 was met with a rapturous welcome on the part of Indonesians in general, and was used by both the American and Indonesian governments as a signal that US-Indonesian relations were on the mend. It has to be noted, however, that there are a host of internal and external variable factors that accounted for this shift in diplomatic relations and perceptions on both sides: On the side of the Indonesians, Indonesian public opinion was decidedly hostile towards the US during the tenure of President Bush thanks largely to the negative impact of the war in the Gulf and the US-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Both military campaigns mobilized extremist Islamist movements such as the *Laskar Jihad, Fron Pembela Islam* (FPI), *Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia* (HTI) and *Majlis Mujahidin Indonesia* (MMI) who presented this as yet more evidence of the apparent hostility of the West towards Islam and Muslims in toto. The fall of Bush, however, was a turning point in the sense that it removed from the equation the polarizing factor of Bush and his personality (Noor, 2007a). Barack Obama's personal family history was also a major factor that made him particularly popular in Indonesia, owing to the fact that he spent a considerable number of his childhood years in the country, endearing him to Indonesians in general. Hillary Clinton's visit was initially rejected by hard-line groups like the MMI, HTI and FPI, but despite the public protests organized by these movements, her visit turned out to be a resounding success and was also read as proof of the waning influence of Islamist hard-line groups in Indonesia.

13. Re: Bobby Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism*, London: Zed Books, 1997.

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