

REVUE INTER-TEXTUAL

ISSN: 2663-239X



Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences

Revue semestrielle des Lettres et Sciences Humaines du
Département d'Anglais adossée au **Groupe de recherches en
Littérature et Linguistique anglaise (GRELLA)**
Université Alassane OUATTARA, Bouaké

Numéro 12 juin 2026

www.intertextual.net

ISSN : 2663 – 239 X

REVUE INTER-TEXTUAL

Revue semestrielle en ligne des Lettres et Sciences Humaines du Département d'Anglais
adossée au Groupe de recherches en Littérature et Linguistique anglaise (GRELLA)

Université Alassane OUATTARA, Bouaké

République de Côte d'Ivoire

Directeur de Publication: M. Pierre KRAMOKO, **Professeur titulaire**

Adresse postale: 01 BP V 18 Bouaké 01

Téléphone: (225) 01782284/(225)0789069439/ (225) 0101018143 :

Courriel: pkramokoub.edu@gmail.com

Numéro ISSN: 2663 – 239 X

Lien de la Revue: www.inter-textual.net

ADMINISTRATION DE LA REVUE

DIRECTEUR DE PUBLICATION

M. Pierre KRAMOKO, Professeur titulaire

SECRETARIAT ADMINISTRATIF ET FINANCIER

Dr Affoua Evelyne DORE, Assistante

COMITÉ DE RÉDACTION

- M. Guézé Habraham Aimé DAHIGO, Professeur Titulaire
- M. Vamara KONÉ, Professeur titulaire
- M. Kouamé ADOU, Professeur titulaire
- M. Kouamé SAYNI, Professeur titulaire
- M. Koffi Eugène N'GUESSAN, Maître de Conférences
- M. Gossouhon SÉKONGO, Professeur titulaire
- M. Philippe Zorobi TOH, Professeur titulaire
- M. Jérôme Koffi KRA, Maître de Conférences
- M. Désiré Yssa KOFFI, Maître de Conférences
- M. Koaténin KOUAME, Maître-Assistant
- Mme Jacqueline Siamba Gabrielle DIOMANDE, Maître-Assistante
- Mme Amenan Eunide KONAN, Maître-Assistante

COMITÉ SCIENTIFIQUE

- Prof. Ouattara AZOUMANA, Université Alassane Ouattara, Côte d'Ivoire
- Prof. Daouda COULIBALY, PhD, Université Alassane Ouattara, Côte d'Ivoire
- Prof. Kouamé SAYNI, Université Alassane Ouattara, Côte d'Ivoire
- Prof. Arsène DJAKO, Université Alassane Ouattara, Côte d'Ivoire
- Prof. Hilaire Gnazébo MAZOU, Université Alassane Ouattara, Côte d'Ivoire
- Prof. Lawrence P. JACKSON, Johns Hopkins University, USA
- Prof. Léa N'Goran-POAME, Université Alassane Ouattara, Côte d'Ivoire
- Prof. Mamadou KANDJI, Université Ckeick Anta Diop, Sénégal
- Prof. Margaret Wright-CLEVELAND, Florida State University, USA
- Prof. Kenneth COHEN, St Mary's College of Maryland, USA
- Prof. Nubukpo Komlan MESSAN, Université de Lomé, Togo
- Prof. Ataféï PEWISSI Université de Lomé
- Prof. Obou LOUIS, Université Félix Houphouët Boigny, Côte d'Ivoire

THE UNITED STATES WAR ON TERROR IN THE MIDDLE EAST: AN ADVERSE CONFLICT OF STIMULI

Serge Lazare OUEDRAOGO

Université Norbert Zongo

serge582@live.fr

Abstract

This paper attempts to bring out some factors of the US war on terror in the Middle East. It basically tries to know why despite American determination from the September 11, 2001 Attacks to eradicate it, the US fails to eradicate it in the region. The study also sets up the conditions in which the US can really win its war on terror. Reverting to Marta Crenshaw's (1987) instrumental and organizational approaches to terrorism, the study reveals that the US stills fails to eradicate terrorism in the Middle East because of the adversities associated with conflicting stimuli which prevail between America and Middle East societies. While the US endeavors to eradicate terrorism, such a war cannot be won unless the US works with Middle East governments to improve its relationship with them by removing the adversities that foster the conflicting stimuli. The study shows that as long as the US persists in its cultural and political overwhelming domination over Middle Eastern societies, terrorism will linger on. Actually, as the study reveals, any definite victory over this plague presupposes a healthier American-Middle East relationship.

Keywords: adversity, terrorism, war on terror, Middle East, United States

Résumé

Cette étude tente de mettre en lumière certains facteurs de la guerre des Etats-Unis contre le terrorisme au Moyen-Orient. Elle cherche essentiellement à comprendre pourquoi, malgré la détermination américaine à l'éradiquer depuis les attentats du 11 septembre 2001, les États-Unis n'ont pas réussi à le faire dans la région. L'étude pose également les conditions permettant de remporter une véritable victoire contre le terrorisme. En convoquant les approches instrumentales et organisationnelles du terrorisme développées par Marta Crenshaw (1987), l'étude révèle que les États-Unis ne parviennent toujours pas à éradiquer le terrorisme au Moyen-Orient en raison des adversités associées aux stimuli conflictuels existant entre l'Amérique et les sociétés du Moyen-Orient. Alors que les États-Unis s'efforcent d'éradiquer le terrorisme, une telle guerre ne peut être gagnée que s'ils travaillent avec les gouvernements du Moyen-Orient pour améliorer leurs relations avec eux en éliminant les adversités qui alimentent les stimuli conflictuels. L'étude montre que tant que les États-Unis persisteront dans leur domination culturelle et politique écrasante sur les sociétés moyen-orientales, le terrorisme perdurera. En réalité, comme le révèle l'étude, toute victoire définitive sur ce fléau suppose une relation plus saine entre les États-Unis et le Moyen-Orient.

Mots-clés : adversité, terrorisme, guerre contre le terrorisme, Moyen Orient, Etats-Unis

INTRODUCTION

From the September 11, 2001 Attacks to the 2020s, although the US war on terror was intensified in order to stop terrorism, it is obvious that this objective is still far from being reached. In fact, despite the US efforts in fighting against terrorism, this phenomenon continues to gain ground, most specifically in the Middle East where anti-American campaigns are being developed by terrorist organizations.

If the U.S. huge efforts to eradicate this plague have remained powerless so far, it certainly means that this war on terror is a complex phenomenon and, therefore, raises two basic issues this study intends to address: Why does the US fail to eradicate terror in the Middle East despite their steadfast determination? In what condition can the US really win the war on terror in this part of the world?

To investigate these two issues, I go from two basic assumptions: firstly, I assume that the US still fails to eradicate terror in the Middle East because of the persistence of adversities associated with conflicting stimuli. Second, I posit that terror on Americans can be stopped only when the US undertakes to work with and understand the dynamics of Middle Eastern societies in order to remove the adversities that foster the conflicting stimuli.

The present analysis rests upon Marta Crenshaw's combined instrumental and organizational approaches on terrorism, permitting to understand that terrorist activities are kept on by adversity in society due to negative human interactions. The effects resulting from this negativity of behaviors creates anger and frustration which finally lead to criminal acts. Factors contributing to strengthening violent actions include the withdrawal or threat of withdrawal of stimuli that terrorists perceive as positive, and the presence or threat of presence of stimuli that they fundamentally view as negative. In this regard, as Crenshaw (1987, p.13) contends, "Terrorism is a response to external stimuli" that terrorists perceive as negative. In such circumstances, the difficulty in eradicating terrorism resides in its organizational resilience. As Crenshaw (1987, p.13) further suggests, "[Terrorist] leaders ensure organizational maintenance by offering varied incentives to followers."

My first analytical step consists in unravelling the roots of various adversities associated with conflicting stimuli as the main reasons for the US failure to eradicate terrorism in the Middle East. My second step undertakes to come up with solutions, consisting in removing the adversities and conflicting stimuli, in order to eradicate terror on American interests in the Middle East.

1- THE ROOTS OF ADVERSITY-INDUCED TERROR ASSOCIATED WITH CONFLICTING STIMULI

If the US still struggles to eradicate terror on American interests in the Middle East, it is certainly because a number of impediments prevail. That is why no solution against terrorism can reach expected results unless the roots of anti-American terrorism are identified. In this respect, this section looks into the clash of civilizations between Middle Eastern societies and the US, the neo-liberal use of globalization as a tool of domination, the adverse misunderstanding of Islam, the conflict of stimuli between Islamic values and western liberal values, and the US foreign policy in the Middle East.

1.1. The Clash of Civilizations between Middle Eastern Societies and the US

The world is well diversified by different cultures and civilizations which act as stimuli determining the dynamics of every single society. Each society has its own way of viewing the world, defining its form of government, in accordance with its socio-cultural, economic, and historical stimuli. Nevertheless, we have been faced with the advent of globalization which advocates eliminating economic and socio-cultural barriers between countries. In other words, one talks about a global village. As a result, the US and Middle Eastern countries are to meet with conflicting political, social or historical stimuli. For instance, the Middle Eastern world has an Islamic tradition, while the US is rather used to liberal democracy and secularism. With regard to man's nature which seems to be made of power seeking and domination, the US seeks to impose its worldview on Middle Eastern societies. Then erupts what could be called a clash of civilizations. Although Dunn (2007) contend that the war on terror is not in fact a clash of civilizations, but a war between two powerful groups of elites for whom the clash of civilizations is an essential form of discourse, a deep look into the US relations with Middle Eastern countries would prove that they are beyond any mere conflict between groups or any form of discourse as he wants to make us believe.

When America dropped out isolationism and went out to meet Middle Eastern societies, it soon became aware of the divergences between its worldview and theirs. Americans would seek to impose their practices on them abroad. It is sometimes because these societies refuse to adopt a way of life which is completely different from their realities that violent conflicts break up between America and them. For example, Americans consider themselves as the defenders of a free world, mainly human rights, individual and collective liberties. Consequently, we can see the legalization of some practices such as prostitution, homosexuality, and gender equality

which Americans consider as part of individual inalienable rights. Conversely, many Middle Eastern societies with Islamic tradition are hostile to these practices like prostitution, homosexuality, women's freedom and gender equality which they view as negative stimuli from a religious or moral point of view. While one society seeks to apply what it considers as part of human rights everywhere, another one rejects it as morally and religiously wrong. There is no denial these clashes may be the remote factors of terrorism on America.

In terms of clashing civilizations leading to conflicting stimuli, the Afghan conflict is a case in point. When Americans intervened in this country to chase out the Taliban regime from power, one of the basic reasons put forward was that they violated human rights by applying sharia laws, referring to many Afghan women stoned to death following adultery allegations. When Samuel Huntington, the coiner of the term "clash of civilizations", predicted in 1993 that "the clashes of civilizations will become the greatest threat to world peace in the post-Cold War era [and that] the fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future" (Qtd. in Neumayer and Plumper, 2009, p.711), he appeared to be a prophet in that the current confrontation between the US and the Middle East reflects his predictions.

Political and religious analyst, Ahwar (2012) underlines this clash of civilizations between western countries and Afghanistan which may partly account for terrorist activities against the US. Referring to the Afghan conflict, he explains terror on the US by the fact that, in the American-Afghan relationship, "some incongruence clearly has not been dealt with. Islam versus democracy, [...] making sexuality sacred versus sexual liberty" (p.23). This contention clearly sums up the socio-cultural confrontations which lead to terrorist violence in Afghanistan, as well as in the Middle East on the whole. The immediate restoration of sharia laws by the Taliban regime very soon after they returned to power on August 15, 2021, shows that, indeed, civilizational and cultural clashes were lying behind their long-lasting conflict with the US. The sharia laws are cheerfully viewed by the Taliban regime as the socio-religious stimuli which best suit the Afghan society whereas the US perceive them as social and cultural backwardness.

Some neo-conservative Americans bear the idea that the Middle East part of the world is backward as compared to the other nations in terms of democracy and religious freedom. They also support that Arab states are by nature against western values, and that force must be used, if necessary, to make them accept these values. Such a stance can be seen when we consider the Center for Security Policy (CSP) member, Richard Perle's convictions:

Islamic states are fundamentally incapable of governing themselves and building democracy [...] The only view accepted is that of the Koran [...] They are hostile to worldwide values such as religious freedom, gender equality, and democracy [...] The only possible policy for the West is that of a long-lasting and diversified confrontation with the Arab and Moslem world. (Qtd. in Charles-Philippe, 2003, p.319-323)

There is no gainsaying that Perle views the Koran and Islamic or Arab values as an impediment to western cultural expansion in the Middle East, and suggests that the only way for the US to promote its value system in the region is to impose long-lasting confrontation. This kind of ideological misunderstanding regarding Islamic societies is due to ignorance and lack of cross-cultural communication which even motivated American military actions in some countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan. Such circumstances bring about a feeling of humiliation in many Middle Eastern societies and provoke hopeless and fanatic hatred among people. The latter sometimes argue they find no means but violence or terrorism to protest against what they consider as American violation of their culture and civilization.

In 2010 in Egypt, Barack Obama declared during his speech “the US is not in war against Islam.” He adds that the US “seeks a new way forward based on mutual respect and mutual interest.” His declaration shows how much the socio-ideological gap between America and Middle Eastern societies may be in the roots of the spawning of terrorism on America. The clash of civilizations sometimes brings about a feeling of humiliation among Middle Eastern people who may feel dominated by western civilization and, as a result, fall into terrorism as a way to deny it. Such a feeling of domination becomes more intense when the US persists in using neoliberal globalization as a tool of domination over Middle Eastern countries.

1.2. The Neo-liberal Use of Globalization as a Tool of Domination

Neo-liberalism has developed since the end of the Cold War, and now seems to be endeavoring to submit all countries of the world through various strategies. This system is based on some values such as democracy, human rights, and free trade which the US and western countries consider today as international values. However, these so-called international values seem to be imposed by western countries which seem to take advantage of the situation to make profit and satisfy their own interests. In international institutions, the US and western countries impose their worldview on poor countries which are obliged to act according to their instructions if they intend to benefit from foreign aid.

The Breton Wood institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) are a clear example of western domination over developing countries. As a matter of fact, the IMF, which was created to fight against poverty, seems to have become a

tool for powerful countries to impose their rule on weaker ones through the famous Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). These programs forbid beneficiary countries to invest in the social sector, leaving the youth in misery. While some people protest against these programs by legal means through trade unions and associations, others seem to be fed up of them and are inclined to using extremist means as terrorism to show their discontent to the US and the whole West. Some young people, who are marginalized, unknown, jobless and have no prospect of getting any, do not resist the temptation of associating their unknown names with unforgettable events such as mass killing. In such conditions, they become easy prey to terrorist groups.

The IMF was created according to the rules of the American Central Bank (Le Monde, 1999), and it will be astonishing to see it taking decisions that would go against the US interests. With 17.5% of the voting rights, [the US] has a blocking veto on all important decisions which cannot be taken unless there is a majority of 85% votes in favor (Le Monde 1999). The use of this veto right was exacerbated after the September 11 Attacks against many Middle Eastern countries that the US suspected of sponsoring terrorism, making populations suffer from financial sanctions. As a result, many people nourish hatred toward the US and fell into terrorist activities against its interests.

By linking foreign aid to neo-liberal capitalism, western countries may intend to block any possible protest from hostile beneficiary countries against the capitalistic system. So, in imposing neo-liberal systems by means of financial aid, western countries cause poor ones to be faced with the lack of domestic cultural or civilizational projects in favor of a globalization of western values. In this respect, the Iranian Guide, Khomeini, contended in May 2017 that “Americans want to use money power and women to make every people think like them” (In i24 News, 2017). If Khomeini’s claim turns out valid, then it could be argued that democratic and liberal values, instead of being universal values, may have become a tool for the US to impose its culture and civilization on Middle Eastern countries. This kind of globalization may be seen by some people as a new form of colonization which aims at imposing western culture and marginalizing other traditional cultures. Globalization has even exacerbated the destruction of cultures but the US usually turns a blind eye to that reality. This situation brings about frustration and disorientation to some people. Yet, as Cohen (1955) suggests, frustration and disorientation may lead to violent revolts, including terrorism. The desire of some minority groups, frustrated and marginalized, to participate in the world dynamics can lead to extreme violence. In this respect, Apter (1988, p.24) argues that “violence is the result of contradictions between innovation and marginalization.” He goes further to assume that “violence may be the expression of those who have been dispossessed by modernity, intending to impose counter-

legitimacy on the state.” Apter’s observation finds its full meaning in the fact that terrorists are known to belong to fundamentalist groups who recruit among the dispossessed or marginalized in order to counter the legitimacy of modern states.

In this world of globalization where the domination of multinational companies seems unflinching, provoking the downfall of many countries’ economies, wars, conflicts, and terror have become one of the favorite means to make profit regardless of morality. In other words, globalization seems to have helped the multinational companies make of poor countries dairy cows to feed the powerful countries. In Middle Eastern countries, where violence, misery, and death have become commonplace in daily life, human life finds itself disrespected. It can be noticed that the blatant promotion of money and power contributes to the degradation of unity and peace policies. As a result, social exclusion and corruption occur, bringing about delinquency, violence, and repression. Some values of civilizations and cultures are drowned into social plagues such as drug addiction, sects, or diverse fundamentalisms which are fertile grounds for terrorism. As Hejailane, a Gulf Cooperation Council Secretary-General puts it, “behind the religious arsenal which legitimates jihadist martyrdom, there are firstly uprooted individuals, for whom impossibility to build a life plan leads to the fascination of death” (Qtd in Kadyr, 2005, p.32). In other words, Hejailane implies that terrorism may be the result of social or economic frustration of people who have no longer any alternative in their life, a situation that may encourage violent response to the US foreign policy in the region that could be viewed as controversial and partly responsible for their frustrations.

1.3. The Controversial US Foreign Policy in the Middle East

The US foreign policy in the Middle East is partly responsible for the spawning of terrorism from the region. In Afghanistan, US-led NATO intervention to overthrow the Taliban’s regime and lead to democratic elections led to make the Taliban more radical, carrying out deadly terrorist attacks all around the country. This made Afghan people vulnerable to dreadful attacks. According to a UN report, the number of security incidents in the country raised up to 40% during the first eight months of the year 2012. In fact, some terrorist groups succeeded in recruiting and brainwashing young people by making them believe that killing an American is a noble action. Some of these young terrorists have even been convinced that the devils that the Holy Book talks about are Americans. In such circumstances, these young people and their offspring, for sure, would indiscriminately nourish hatred towards Americans. Generally speaking, Americans were viewed in many Middle Eastern countries as hardworking and generous people, but since the beginning of the war in Afghanistan, this view turned into a

negative way. Americans were sometimes associated with the enemies of Islam due to the destructions of many mosques during the bombings.

During Saddam Hussein's presidency, he succeeded in bringing religious peace between Shiites and Sunnites thanks to his laic regime. When his regime was put down by the US, the old religious conflicts between Shiites and Sunnites resumed, each ethnic group willing to take over. The laic regime was replaced by a religious one. As a result, many Shiite Christian leaders who were protected under Hussein were terrorized, obliging thousands of Christians to move abroad in order to escape death. One could even say that the advent of the Islamic state was indirectly linked to the US intervention in Iraq. In fact, the American intervention in the country contributed to weakening the efficient defense system that Hussein set up to contain terrorist activists. Though US forces stayed there to ensure security, their withdrawal by the Obama Administration left a vulnerable state, making it an easy prey to terrorist groups. That may be the reason why the Islamic State started its project in Iraq, viewed as a fallen state, and gained ground in Syria.

Another important aspect to consider is the fact that the US commitment in Iraq contributed to raising resentment to American foreign policy, leading to significant terror on American interests. The circumstances of Hussein's death raised a lot of hostility against American foreign policy mainly in the Muslim world, encouraging many young people to join terrorist organizations to fight against America, without forgetting that many of these young people already had an old grudge against America due to its infallible and unconditional support to Israel in the long-lasting Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As Crenshaw and Lafree (2016, p.54) claim, "the Palestinian-Israeli conflict remains the prism of pain through which Arabs negatively see the US." To change this negative view of Americans which makes it difficult for the US to curb terrorism in the Middle East, it is high time the country removed such adversities in the region.

2. REMOVING ADVERSITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST: A SOLUTION FOR THE US TO ESCAPE FROM TERROR

As it has been made clear that conflicting interactions between the US and Middle Eastern societies lie strong behind anti-American terrorism, any viable solution should seriously consider pacifying these interactions in various ways. That said, this section suggests firstly reviewing American foreign policy in international cooperation, then readapting democracy to local realities by solving the democracy dilemma, and eventually teaching foreign civilizations at American schools, as viable solutions.

2.1. Reviewing American Foreign Policy in International Cooperation

The first action the US should undertake is to review its foreign policy in the Middle East in order to foster international cooperation. The US should review its approach toward the Middle East; otherwise terrorism will always be present in this part of the world. One should understand other people with their differences and use dialogue rather than force as a first step to tackle conflicts driven by these differences. A few days after the September 11 Attacks, President Bush promised:

We will direct every resource at our command - every means of diplomacy, every tool of intelligence, every instrument of law enforcement, every financial influence, and every necessary weapon of war -to the destruction and to the defeat of the global terror network [...]. [We] will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism [...]. Every nation in every region now has a decision to make: Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists. (Qtd. in Gibbs, 2004, p.26)

Regarding such an open and steadfast declaration of war, everything led to believe that the issue of terrorism against the US would be settled in very few years, regarding the first American large-scale bombings which left no stone unturned on Afghan hills in order to eliminate Bin and his followers. The hard truth today is that America has not been entirely safe from terrorist attacks so far in spite of its preemptive wars.

The principle of the preemptive war theory which led the Bush Administration to violate Iraqi, Pakistani and Afghan sovereignties to hunt Al Qaeda activists has not put an end to terrorism in the region. In fact, while the US fights terrorism with bullets, it should not fail to figure out that the fight against terrorism would not be won unless it tries to learn more about the history, culture, religion, and economies of Middle Eastern countries. The US historical and current religious, military, political, and economic relationship with the Middle East and Islam have contributed to desperation, hatred, and religious extremism. So, the US should consider refraining from its tendency to impose its own culture, values, and expectations on other societies, whether in a direct way or in a lead-from-behind strategy, and try to understand their dynamics. If the US could understand that, at the end of the day, it cannot impose its will on every problem in the world, and that “power in this global political system is no longer the monopoly of states, but is highly diffused” (Baylis *et al.*, 2008, p.33), it would take a big leap forward in its war on terror.

If globalization advocates for cultural, economic, and societal fusion, this merge should be mutually negotiated through dialogue and mutual interests. The basic purpose of the US war

on terror is among others making peace, democracy, and freedom, universal values shared by every country. However noble this purpose may be, these values should be selectively and freely experienced. The American culture and civilization should find and develop common interests with the Islamic world, as deemed mandatory by President Obama during his address to Muslims in Egypt. Just as with any minority, the more the US works with and understands people of Islamic faith, the less they will view each other as strange, threatening, and the more they will recognize each other as having different cultures but being one people. Thinking that peace can be brought through war is a self-deluding tendency which would rather increase tensions between people and lead to bloodier terrorist attacks than those occurring nowadays. In the same vein, during his 2008 inaugural address, President Obama insisted:

We [the US] should understand that our power alone cannot protect us, nor does it entitle us to do as we please. Instead, we should know that our power grows through its prudent use; our security emanates from the justness of our cause, the force of our example, the tempering qualities of humility and restraint.

If successive US governments could take Obama's remarks into account in its relationship with the Middle East, they would make a significant step forward in the war on terror. In other words, if the US reviewed its foreign policy in the region, regional cooperation against terrorism would become easier to achieve.

Conflicting interests between powerful countries in the Middle East keep them from trustfully cooperating through intelligence information sharing to unmask terrorist cells. Though close cooperation appears to be impossible nowadays, it remains mandatory for the US and other contending powers in the Middle East to go beyond their selfish interests and combine efforts to fight against what appears to be a common enemy. For instance, US-Russian cooperation seems to have focused on military issues. Yet very little has been achieved as a result of cooperation between the two powers in terms of fighting against terrorism. Since the US and Russia are the influencing powers in the Middle East, lack of cooperation contributes to dividing Middle Eastern countries according to as they are pro-Russian or pro-American. In such conditions, regional cooperation against terrorism hardly disappears, opening the door to all kinds of violent clandestine movements which sometimes gain support from some states in order to destabilize other rival states.

Regional cooperation would permit to suppress borders between countries in terms of hunting terrorists. Otherwise, terrorists will always be able to strike in one country and escape into another without being persecuted due to border barriers. In reality, when the US is not able to silence its own ideological or political divergences and cooperate with Middle Eastern

governments to fight a common enemy, the latter comes out as the great winner. Strong cooperation brings about mutual trust and help between Middle Eastern countries and between influential powers, which permits local governments to achieve democracy which is another important criterion for winning the war on terror. However, such a democracy in the Middle East should not be a ready-to-wear political system coming from the US, but rather a democracy adjusted in accordance with local realities.

2.2. The Need for Adjusting Democracy to Local Realities

In the framework of the US war on terror, promoting democracy in the Middle East has been considered as one of the top priorities. It is believed that if there is democracy in the Middle East, political stability will be achieved, paving the way for the implementation of development programs and the settlement of peaceful regimes. However, if introducing democracy in the Middle East tends to be viewed as a panacea to eradicate terrorism, it should be noted that such a democracy could not be achieved if it does not consider a number of local realities. The US willingness to introduce democracy in the Middle East without considering some societal factors in the region has furthered local hostility to it. As a matter of fact, it is well known that the Middle East is a region where Islamic values predominate. Logically, people are reluctant to some liberal democratic values such as gender equality, freedom of speech, religion, sexual orientation, to quote but a few. So, if the US wants Middle Eastern societies to welcome democracy, it would be cleverer to think twice before promoting the above-mentioned values in the region.

It would also be wise for the US to accept an Arab democracy embodying Islamic and Arab values in the Middle East, while working to establish mutual trade-off and acceptance between this democracy and the western liberal democracy. As long as the US and its western counterparts continue to try and impose western liberal democracy on Middle Eastern societies, regardless of their cultural particularity, local extremist groups will keep on emerging and fighting against America, being wary of democracy as a tool for western countries to conquer them politically, economically, or culturally. If such a situation occurs, it becomes difficult for the US to restore its image which is already seriously damaged in the region.

As Doyle (2011) suggests in his democratic peace theory, inspired from Immanuel Kant, democratic countries do not wage war on each other. Reagan espoused this theory, contending that “governments which rest upon the consent of the governed do not wage war on their neighbors” (Qtd In Kissinger, 1994, p.517). It is believed that true democracy, to some

extent, is tantamount to peace and stability. In a true democracy, people are governed by the rule of law and democratically educated people would always seize the law to settle their problems instead of using violence to reach personal justice. By the way, President Bush, in one of his counter-terrorism speeches, was clear about the reason why he thinks promoting democracy in the Arab world is central to the US war on terror. “Our strategy to keep the peace in the longer term”, he said in a speech in March 2005, “is to help change the conditions that give rise to extremism and terror, especially in the broader Middle East” (Qtd in Gauze, 2005). But what are the conditions which give rise to terrorism?

One of the conditions which gives rise to terrorism in the Middle East is the lack of democracy, leading some extremist groups like Al-Qaida to scapegoat the US. To paraphrase Gauze (2005), when dictatorship controls the political life of a country, to draw attention away from their social and economic failures, dictators place blame on other countries and other races, and stir the hatred that leads to terrorism. What is interesting about Gauze’s analysis is the suggestion that Middle East dictators often contribute to igniting terrorism against western countries by scapegoating them as being responsible for their countries’ domestic problems. Therefore, implementing true democracy in the Middle East would help reduce significantly violent extremism and hatred towards the U.S. Unfortunately, the so-called true democracy is based on western liberal values which are sometimes in contradiction with Middle Eastern values.

Most countries in the Middle East are full of Islamist parties which are reluctant to liberal democratic values but rather in favor of an Islamic regime which appears to be somehow contradictory to modern democratic principles such as individual and collective liberties, unrestricted political participation, separation of the three powers (Executive, Judicial, and Legislative), and good governance. Yet, the second democratic value, that is unrestricted political participation, seems to be a dilemma. Since democracy is against any political exclusion, it would be undemocratic to restrict Islamist parties’ political participation. However, if they are wide-openly welcomed in political participation, there is a real risk that they, through powerful propaganda, could come to power democratically before confiscating the democratic values and restoring theocratic regimes. The Egyptian case, where the Muslim Brotherhood started drawing the country back to Islamic rule before being overthrown, appears to be an example of such a risk.

With regard to the risks posed by open political participation in the Middle East, the US is sometimes compelled to support some authoritarian regimes which use the war on terror and violent extremism as a plea for political exclusion. Yet, those excluded Islamist parties will

remain active against these governments and their American friends as long as they cannot participate in the political game. In Iraq, Afghanistan and Yemen, for example, political exclusion contributed to making extremist groups, such as the Taliban and the Shiite rebellion, more radical against their governments and their US counterpart. In such circumstances, the US should rather seek to promote democracy in the region while respecting countries' cultural particularities, and to establish dialogue between incumbent regimes and fundamentalist or radical groups.

Any keen eye would sense that there seems to be a paradox in the US democratic campaign in the Middle East as a remedy to terrorism. As a matter of fact, while advocating and working for the democratization of the Middle East, the US continues to back long-standing undemocratic regimes on behalf of American interests linked to them. Saudi Arabia is far from the democratic ideals preached by the US in the region; nonetheless it continues to be its second trustful partner, surely because of American huge oil and military interests. Also, while preaching democratic change in the Middle East, the US remains the unconditional support for Israel which sometimes impinges on the Palestinian right to exist as a state, compromising then the peace process. Yet, failure to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict prevents the US from gaining credibility as an advocate of democracy in the Middle East. As a result of this decaying credibility, many Arab governments do not take US pressure to democratize their region seriously, believing that the need for oil and fear of upsetting ally regimes will override Washington's desire for democratic change. In such circumstances, the US credibility in the Middle East will not be restored, and the unprecedented level of anti-American resentment will not abate, until the US makes a serious, balanced effort to tackle the conflict. Without such credibility, Washington's effort to stimulate democratization in the region will not be seriously followed, let alone its war on terror.

2.3. Teaching Foreign Civilizations at American Schools

Huntington (1996), in his best-selling book, titled *The Clash of Civilization*, classifies world civilizations into eight groups: Western, Japanese, Sinic, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin-American, and African, before suggesting that the clash between Islamic and western civilizations will be the post-Cold War security issue. A deep look into the US relations with Middle Eastern countries such as Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, to quote but a few, one can argue that Huntington's prediction has come true. Since Huntington's prediction has turned out valid,

it becomes then important to address the issue of civilizational clash between the Middle East and the US, of which terrorism appears to be an extension.

To improve cultural and civilizational communication, it would be better to teach western civilization in the Middle East and Islamic civilization in America. Such teachings at school should permit people from both civilizational entities to know right from an early age about each other's cultures and their differences. If Americans and Middle Easterners know about each other's civilizations, they will learn to grow mutual understanding and respect for each other. They will also avoid nourishing prejudices such as Richard Perle's considerations that Middle East people are fundamentally incapable of governing themselves and that the only solution for the West is a long-standing confrontation with them, and as some extremist groups' considerations that western people are enemies of Islam. It seems contradictory to limitlessly promote globalization while ignoring each other's cultures and civilizations. When we have to meet other people from various cultures in the world, we need some basic information on these people to avoid viewing them as strange and threatening.

While American civilization is taught almost everywhere, Americans know very little about foreign societies due to a relative lack of subject matters dealing with foreign civilizations at school. Although some schools in the US teach Middle Eastern civilizations, it is usually integrated into a broader world history, which makes specific knowledge on Middle Eastern societies impossible. Such a lack of knowledge about foreign people can lead to misunderstanding or prejudice which finally provoke civilizational conflicts. So, as the US is the world leader, it seems mandatory for it to teach its children the variety of foreign civilizations, such as Middle Eastern ones, so that their future interactions would be made peaceful and trustworthy. Once mutual understanding and respect of each other's civilization becomes real, international inter-religious talks could be organized every year in order to avoid religious extremism.

CONCLUSION

A few conclusions can be drawn at the end of this study. The study reveals that with globalization, the US went out to meet Middle East societies which appear to have conflicting interests with America, favoring mutual misunderstandings, mistrust, or contempt. The shock of cultures led to a clash of civilizations which brought about terrorism as a form of resistance to American cultural and civilizational domination.

The study also reveals that after the September 11, 2001 Attacks, many Americans naively associate terrorists' violence with Islam, because terrorists always swear that they act in the name of Prophet Mohamad and Allah. As a result, many people, especially non-Muslims, think that Islam and violence are inseparable bedfellows. Such thoughts led to discrimination and hatred against Muslims. Unfortunately, misunderstanding of Islam or its sectarian interpretation led to consider Americans as enemies of Islam and advocate for terror against them.

The study has finally found out that the defense of its interests compelled the US to bring unconditional support to undemocratic regimes and Israel in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict because of Israel's strategic position as the only regional liberal democracy sharing the same values and interests with Americans. As a result, extremist groups nourish hatred against the US that they view as a hypocritical state. As religion and politics are inseparable bedfellows in the Middle East, extremist groups use religious rhetoric for political goals to encourage attacks against the US as the only viable solution to compel it to change its foreign policy in the region.

With regard to the analysis of the US war on terror, my two assumptions, respectively suggesting that the US still fails to eradicate terrorism on Americans because of conflicting interactions between Middle Eastern societies and America, and that terrorism on Americans can be stopped only when the US undertakes to work with and understand the dynamics of Middle Eastern societies, can be said valid. Nowadays, though many American political leaders deny that terrorism is the result of their long-standing decaying relationship with the Middle East, this study has challenged this denial and proposes enhancing this relationship as a viable perspective.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- AHWAR, Amad Javeed, 2012, *Path Dependency and the International Conference on Afghanistan*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.
- APTER, David, 1988, *Pour l'Etat, Contre l'Etat*, Paris : Economica.
- CHARLES-PHILIPPE, David, 2003, *La Politique Etrangère des Etats- Unis, Fondements, Acteurs, Formulation*, Paris : Presse de Science P.O.
- COHEN, Albert K., 1955, *Delinquent Boys: The Culture of the Gang*. New York, Free Press.
- CRENSHAW, Marta, 1987, "Theories of Terrorism: Instrumental and Organizational Approaches," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Volume 10, Issue 4, p.13-31.

- CRENSHAW, Martha and LAFREE Gary, 2016, *Countering Terrorism: No Simple Solutions*, Washington DC, Center for Middle East Policy.
- DOYLE, Michael, 2011, *Liberal Peace: Selected Essays*, New York: Routledge.
- DUNN, Michael, 2007, *The Clash of Civilizations and the War on Terror*, Birmingham: The 49th Parallel.
- BAYLIS, John, Steve SMITH, Patricia OWENS, 2008, *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- GAUZE, F. Gregory, 2017, "Can Democracy Stop Terrorism?" Washington, *The Magazine of Foreign Affairs*.
- GIBBS, David N, 2004, "Pretexts and US Foreign Policy: The War on Terrorism in Historical Perspective," *New Political Science*, Volume 26, Issue, p.22-43.
- HUNTINGTON, Samuel, 1993, "A Clash of Civilizations?", *The Journal of Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3, p. 22-49.
- KISSINGER, Henry, 1994, *Diplomacy*, New York: Simon and Schuster Ed.
- NEUMAYER, Eric, Thomas Plumper, 2009, *International Terrorism and the Clash of Civilizations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.