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Nation-States as obstacles to the total transformation of the Ummah

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Today we come face-to-face with perhaps the greatest evil that stalks the modern world. The monster that is nationalism needs detailed description and analysis. Muslims throughout the world recognize the evil of nationalism in general terms, but there is little literature on the subject. In our universities, nationalism is presented as a positive force that helped to accelerate the departure of the colonial powers. The fact of the matter is that nationalism as a political doctrine, or as a popular emotion, was unknown to Muslims until about a hundred years ago. For 1,300 years before that Muslims had established large States and empires and ruled over vast territories of the world without ever having to appeal to anything even vaguely resembling modern nationalism. Nationalism is a force for the disintegration of the human personality and society at all levels.¹ My views on the subject are well known; it is

1. See my paper *Integration and disintegration in the politics of Islam and kufr*, London: The

nearly 10 years since I wrote my paper *Beyond the Muslim nation-States*.²

Today I do not propose to undertake a detailed theoretical or philosophical examination of nationalism. The roots of nationalism in history and its impact on the *Ummah* are examined in detail in the papers written for this seminar. The learned *ulama* who have come here will examine nationalism in the light of the teachings of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace. My purpose is to take a pragmatic, empirical view of the state of the *Ummah* under the impact of nationalism. I am aware, of course, that nationalism is also the root of such other common evils as national socialism, national capitalism, national democracy and national culture.

Most of the world's major languages existed for hundreds of years before nationalism, and yet have come to be known as 'national' languages. The 'national' tag is now applied even to dress and food. We are, therefore, dealing with a disease that affects a wide variety of human behaviour. Nationalism has tried to capture the entire human personality at all levels—body, mind and soul. However, the poison of nationalism has been injected, and continues to be injected and spread, through one and only one source: the control and manipulation of political power.

The point that has to be clearly understood is that the State is the ultimate source of all good or evil in any society. For the followers of Muhammad, upon whom be peace, this point should not need to be stressed. It is almost impossible to be a Muslim without either living in an Islamic State or being engaged in a struggle to establish an Islamic State. If one or other of these conditions is not met, I fear that perhaps the bulk of the *Sunnah* of Muhammad, upon whom be peace, is ignored. The end product of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet was the Islamic State of Madinah. The message of Islam was completed not only in the Qur'an, but also in the State created through a relentless struggle against the established power of *kufir*. The Islamic State is an essential and integral

Muslim Institute, 1983.

2. This paper was written in 1977.

part of Islam. Indeed, Islam is incomplete without the Islamic State. Islam is not merely a set of rituals for personal piety, Islam is the Creator's own plan, prescription and prognosis for all mankind. A Muslim cannot live the 'good life' on his own or pursue 'personal *taqwa*' in isolation. The Islamic State is Allah's chosen framework in which the moral, political, social, economic and cultural goals of Islam are pursued by the Muslim *Ummah*.

All this is common ground among Muslims. There is, however, a great deal of confusion about how the Islamic State is established. On the face of it the answer to this question, too, should be simple and easily understood by all Muslims.

The method of Allah's messenger, upon whom be peace, ought to be as clear as the Divine Message. The confusion over the method of Islam for establishing the Islamic State is largely, though not entirely, due to the political dominance of the west over Muslim societies. Once under alien political tutelage, Muslim societies began to throw up intellectuals, philosophers and political leaders who also accepted the intellectual and cultural overlordship of the west. It must be noted that the west was not content with acquiring undisputed control of and dominance over the political, social and cultural structures that already existed in Muslim societies. The west's colonial ambitions included the outright abolition and destruction of all institutions in traditional Muslim societies. The colonial powers created 'colonial States' in the image of their European States. These colonial States then proceeded to establish European-style administrative, military, economic, social, cultural and educational institutions and structures. The people of the colonies were offered 'progress', opportunity and participation in the new order only if they learned European languages, acquired western education in European-style universities, and generally accepted the European outlook and way of life. After this if they also practised Islam strictly for personal piety, the Europeans did not mind.

The new Europeanized classes were also encouraged to look forward to a day when the European colonial States would be handed over to them as 'independent' States. But before the newly Europeanized colonials could be thought fit for political emancipation,

they had to become nationalists. As nationalists they were encouraged to mix a little Islam with their otherwise secular politics. This was in any case necessary for communication with their 'backward' Muslim masses. Thus we came to acquire Muslim 'fathers of the nations' who are buried in expensive mausoleums in our capital cities. Some of them were also called 'kings'. The 'independence' they bequeathed to us was, and remains, little more than a continuation of the European colonial States. This brings me back to something I have said and written repeatedly during the last 10 years. These colonial States, now called nation-States, are replete with national frontiers, national flags, national anthems, national days, national languages, national dresses, national cultures, national airlines, national histories and, above all, national interests. Every new 'nation' is defined in exclusivist terms. No two nation-States can have identical 'national interests'. The impact of this on the Muslim *Ummah* has been devastating. The political map of the *Ummah* today represents the globalization of the system of nation-States.

It represents the defeat and dismemberment of the political power of Islam. More than that it represents the continued political, economic, social and cultural dominance of the west over the lands and peoples of Islam. The temporary loss of Palestine to zionism was also made possible by the prior dismemberment of the *Ummah* into nation-States. A greater tragedy of this period is that there also emerged a number of 'national' Islamic parties. Nowhere in the world have such parties succeeded in attaining even modest goals within their chosen 'national' political systems. Nowhere in the world has an 'Islamic' political party succeeded in setting up anything that could even remotely be described as an Islamic State. In my view the 'Islamic parties' were and remain a peculiar product of the colonial period. What we must all recognize is that the founders of these 'Islamic parties' were men of great learning, integrity and *taqwa*; some of the books written in this period have greatly enriched the literary heritage of Islam. But the learning, integrity and *taqwa* of these great figures of recent Muslim history cannot be used to defend the record and political role of the parties they founded.

The position that the Muslim Institute has taken for more than a decade is that no progress in rebuilding the house of Islam is possible in the framework of the post-colonial nation-States. The path of the *Ummah*, and of the Islamic movement within the *Ummah*, is blocked by the nation-States. The nation-States are like huge boulders blown across our path by the ill-wind of recent history.

All nation-States that today occupy, enslave and exploit the lands, peoples and resources of the *Ummah* have to be dismantled. It is the nation-States that give life and respectability to nationalism. Nationalism is not an idea that precedes its political manifestation. With some exceptions, the idea of nationalism has been artificially planted in order to support an externally imposed State. The idea of the State based on nationalism is so alien to the moral genius of our people that every single nation-State in the *Ummah* is unstable, weak and forever on the verge of collapse. All Muslim nation-States in the world today are maintained by a mixture of internal oppression and external support. It is only the regular injection of military and economic 'aid' from the leading imperialist powers that keeps these States going. None of these States has solved any of its own problems or those of its people. Since these States have no roots in the history of Islam or in the history of their people, they will not be difficult to dismantle.

While the dismantling of the existing nation-States is unlikely to present many problems, a great many conceptual and organizational problems have to be overcome. These relate to the nature and organization of the Islamic movement, to the political map of the *Ummah*, and to the political, economic and social transformation of the *Ummah* that we now seek to bring about. Let us realize that the extent, depth and nature of the change that we now seek is the most profound transformation of a world community that has ever been attempted. It is quite clear that one *Ummah* must mean one Islamic movement leading to one global Islamic State under one *imam/khalifah*. From where we stand today the prospect of a single global Islamic State under one leader seems so remote that most people would put such a goal beyond the bounds of realism. Those of us who assert the general proposition that the unity of the *Ummah* at all levels is a set of achievable goals must be more precise if we are not to be dismissed as naive, illogical

dreamers dealing in trite absurdities devoid of substance. Before we can expect to be taken seriously we must go further and insist that a rigorous system of thought based on observation and experimentation be put forward by the *ulama* and intellectuals of Islam. The Qur'an and the *Sunnah* will yield greater and greater knowledge and insight as our capacity to use and absorb knowledge expands. It seems to me that Muslims so far have barely begun to use the total potential of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* in the shaping of a programme for the total transformation of the *Ummah*. It is possible that the need for the total transformation of the *Ummah* has at no time been as obvious and as urgently felt as it is today. In the period of rapid expansion of the domains of Islam, and the political and cultural dominance of Muslims, the need for such a transformation was not felt at all. The rapid physical and political expansion was itself seen as transformation. In this period the leading scholars of Islam concentrated their attention on the writing of extensive commentaries on the Qur'an. Their assumption appears to have been that such maladies as were found in the *Ummah* would be corrected through the better and deeper understanding of the Qur'an. Clearly the Qur'an is a fathomless source of knowledge. Modern writers have pointed out that the laconic style of the Qur'an includes profound shades of meaning only now understood after man has developed the microscope, the telescope and other tools of observation and analysis in such fields as biology, astronomy, physics, chemistry and geology.³

These new insights into the meaning of the Qur'an will not be reflected in *tafseer* literature for some time to come. It will be some considerable time before our purely religious seminaries adjust to the scientific knowledge that is deepening our understanding of the Qur'an. The Qur'an is of course unchanging. It has remained unchanged since its Revelation and will remain unchanged until the end of time. But our understanding of the Qur'an can deepen with our own understanding of the processes of history, our experience and our ability to absorb and use new knowledge. The same is true of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. The

3. For example see Maurice Bucaille's interesting book *The Bible, Qur'an and Science*, Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1978.

Sunnah is also a record of the total transformation of the Hijaz and its people over 23 years. The Hijaz is a relatively small geographical area and the population of the area at the time of the Prophet was also very small. The entire *Ummah* at the time lived within the territorial control of the State of Madinah. Therefore, from the *Sunnah* that transformed only the Hijaz we have to derive a programme for the transformation of an *Ummah* that is now global. An added complication is that the *Ummah* we want to transform is now divided into about 50 nation-States, each claiming to be 'sovereign' and 'independent' although each is, in one way or another, subservient to *kufr*.

We must not underestimate the power of the nation-States and their ruling elites to exploit the nationalist emotions of our people. Only a year ago when I said that 'national' frontiers between Muslim countries make no sense, and that they should become 'open' or 'soft' frontiers as successive nation-States are converted into Islamic States, the controlled media of the Pakistani regime immediately accused me of advocating the disappearance of Pakistan; and the media of the Jama'at-e Islami in Pakistan accused me of 'anti-national' activities and of serving 'foreign interests'. So the boulders of nationalism and the nation-States are not lifeless, inanimate objects accidentally blown into the path of Islam; they represent the mobilized power of *nifaaq* and also some well-meaning but misguided 'Islamic parties'. These obstacles in the path of Islam are all armed and supported by the power of global *kufr*. They have also made it clear that they are going to fight Islam at every step, all the way. It so happens that Islam, too, orders us to fight these forces until victory with the Help of Allah.⁴ For us there is no such thing as internal conflict and external conflict. The forces inimical to Islam are so deeply rooted in the fabric of the *Ummah* that all conflicts will be simultaneously internal and external. There are no clearly defined geographical frontiers between Islam and its enemies. Those within Muslim societies who insist on accepting the political, social, cultural and economic supremacy of the west are not only our rulers, countrymen and neighbours, but often members of our own families. Thus the era of conflict we have now entered into is one of

4. Al-Qur'an 2:208; 3:142; 8:74, 16; etc.

grave consequences for all Muslims. No Muslim can opt out of the consequences of these conflicts. These conflicts will not leave anyone unaffected. It is not a matter of choice whether or not we want to engage in these conflicts; those opposed to Islam have already declared war on Islam. And the greatest manifestation of this declaration of war against Islam is the era of nationalism and of the nation-States. There can be no compromise, there can be no accommodation and there can be no peace in the world of Islam so long as any trace of nationalism remains in our societies. No programme for the transformation of the *Ummah* is realistic or even based on the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, if it does not set out to exorcise the ghost of nationalism and all its various political, social, cultural and economic manifestations.

As far as I know the total transformation of the *Ummah* from its present condition to the ultimate condition that Islam desires has never been stated as a set of achievable goals. Muslim political thought in the last 200 years has been entirely a reaction to the decline of Muslim political power and the emergence of the west as a global political power and civilization. The west's scientific, technological and economic achievements so dazzled Muslim thinkers that they accepted 'progress' as defined by the west as essential for the future of Muslim societies. Much energy was spent in trying to reconcile the essentials of this 'progress' with Islam. It was this search for reconciliation between Islam and western-style 'progress' that led to attempts to admit nationalism, capitalism, democracy and lately socialism into Islam. Such attempts are still going on with programmes of 'Islamization' that essentially do not alter the chosen course of 'progress' through westernization. How deeply ingrained this idea of the compatibility of Islam with the west is, is demonstrated by the support 'Islamic parties' are giving to programmes of 'Islamization' in Muslim nation-States where rulers are both secular and subservient to the west. There are also some 'Islamicists' who hold the view that the United States is a friend of Islam and a natural ally against 'godless communism'.⁵

5. Ismail Faruqi in *Arabia*, London, June 1982, p. 36.

Let us first of all realize that we cannot even begin to think about the total transformation of the *Ummah* without first taking up the position that there is no compatibility whatsoever between Islam and the west. It is only when we have taken this step that we have created the necessary spiritual, material and historical situation in which the total transformation of the *Ummah* becomes a logical necessity. In today's historical situation the declaration of the incompatibility of the civilization of Islam with the civilization of the west is the only step that can free us from the psychological stranglehold in which the west has held us for so long. This declaration of incompatibility forces us to prove the point that we are in fact incompatible; it forces us to define our civilizational goals in terms of Islam and Islam alone; it demands that we find alternatives to such global sacred cows as capitalism, socialism and democracy; it makes it necessary for us to find our own solutions to the problems of underdevelopment, poverty and wealth. The power of Islam in the world can be developed and mobilized only if the sources of our power are within the house of Islam. For instance, military power that depends on arms purchased from or supplied by the west cannot be used for the glory of Islam. Standing armies of mercenary soldiers and officers will not and cannot fight for Islam. Lightly-armed *muttaqi* soldiers who go out to fight and die for Islam are more powerful than heavily-armed professional soldiers who fear death. The mobilized will of the Muslim masses under a *muttaqi* leadership makes the Islamic State an invincible force. Compare this with the modern nation-States, in which the people are divided by competing political parties led by sectional interests, and professional soldiers provide some of the most oppressive regimes of all history. In the nation-States that are the creation of the west, where ruling classes and 'Islamic parties' regard Islam as compatible with the west, the political systems are subservient to the west. The economies of these States are also integrated into the world capitalist system. The path of the *Ummah* is blocked not only by the boulders of nationalism but by the entire logjam of western civilization. Nationalism is the very foundation of the west as we know it. It is therefore not possible to deal with nationalism in isolation. The road to the total transformation of the *Ummah* is a long one. We have not become so deviated from our

original course in a short time and we are not going to get back to where we should be overnight. When we talk about the total transformation of the *Ummah* we are talking about a process of history-making that will occupy us for a very long time to come. However, the immediate change of direction that is required must, at the very minimum, include the emergence of a global Islamic movement that rejects nationalism and the nation-States in their entirety and regards the west as totally incompatible with Islam.

The declaration of the incompatibility of the west with Islam brings us to another question to which I have often referred in the past: it is the question of leadership. Once we have taken up the position of incompatibility between Islam and the west, we have also taken the position that those educated in the western tradition have no part to play in the leadership of the Islamic movement.

When I have said this in the past, and this has been a constant theme of mine over many years, many brothers have regarded it as too harsh and unrealistic. Where, they have asked, are the *ulama* who can lead the Islamic movement? This is a question that needs careful consideration.

Those who react in this way seem to think that I want to exclude the western-educated Muslims from the Islamic movement altogether. This is not so. I am convinced that all Muslims, whatever their background, whether educated or not, have to be part of the Islamic movement. This clearly includes those educated in western-style schools, colleges and universities. But those educated in the western style must realize that their education has equipped them to serve the political, social, economic, cultural, administrative and military systems that we must destroy. Western education teaches a man to be arrogant and selfish. In all Muslim societies today we have ruling classes who have been educated and trained to dominate and exploit our countries in the style of the western colonialists. The western-educated ruling classes of today are the children, grandchildren or great-grandchildren of those who welcomed the western colonialists and cooperated with them. It is through them that our societies have been severely damaged by western colonialists. In every part of the

world today there are governments and regimes controlled by this class of people. All such governments and regimes are doing everything possible to prevent the emergence of Islam in a political role. Throughout history there is not a single instance of a western-educated Muslim elite that has served Islam in any meaningful way. There are of course hordes of western-educated scholars of Islam who have taken degrees in Islam as others have taken degrees in medicine, law, economics, history and so on. Their major role, however, has been apologetic. These are the 'scholars' of Islam who have been trying to write books on 'Islamic economics', 'Islamic politics', 'Islamic liberalism', and so on. These are the compromisers who have been trying to prove that Islam is compatible with their secular ambitions and western preferences. The leadership ranks of the 'Islamic parties' are full of such 'Islamizers'. In Iran these westernized individuals and groups were given a chance to serve in the highest offices of the Islamic State. And what did they do? They tried to capture supreme power. They in fact tried to re-establish Iran as a liberal and democratic nation-State with a few cosmetic 'Islamic' features. But now that the nationalists, liberals, communists and *munafiqeen* have been unmasked and defeated, the vast majority of the westernized elite's youth performs glorious deeds in the service of the Islamic Revolution and the new Islamic State.

A particular feature of the western-educated elite is that its members cannot see any role for themselves except that of leadership. The fact is that they were created to lead our people during the era of our subservience to an alien power and civilization. Their leadership role was itself subject to the overall control and dominance of the west. We cannot find a single instance of a Muslim country or society having escaped the dominance of the west under the leadership of those whom the west itself had prepared and chosen to lead us. What we do find is that in the post-colonial period all parts of the *Ummah* have become even more subservient to the west than they were in the heyday of direct colonialism. The so-called leaders of our 'independence' and 'fathers' of our 'nations' have been some of the most slavish people the *Ummah* has ever produced. They and their successors have done the bidding of the west more than the bidding of Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala*. In the

struggle against *kufir* that lies ahead, these men and their supporters are likely to play the political role of *kufir* and *shirk* against Islam. They will be the chief instrument of the west's war against Islam and the Islamic movement. It is not an accident that all the nation-States dividing the *Ummah* today are lined up behind Saddam Hussain. Nor it is an accident that both superpowers are also on the same side.

The incompatibility between Islam and the west that we have established, and the total transformation of the *Ummah* that we seek to bring about, force us to seek a leadership which is also compatible with our goals. Such a leadership can only emerge from the roots of Islam itself, and not from those sections of the *Ummah* that are contaminated by alien influences. If such people, let us call them *ulama*, do not already exist, then we will have to wait until they do. However, I do not accept that such *ulama* do not exist. What is true is that most of the known figures among the *ulama* are in one way or another tied to the coat-tails of the secular regimes. They and their institutions are dependent on official patronage, and are therefore in no position to participate in a struggle that sets out to defy and destroy the prevailing order. There are other eminent figures who simply do not understand the contemporary political situation of the *Ummah* in the world at large. They have become eminent through a lifetime of service dedicated to keeping the basic beliefs and rituals of Islam generally understood in the *Ummah*. This they have achieved by choosing not to challenge the political power of *kufir*. They worked within the narrow confines of the 'religious freedom' offered by *kafir* systems. In the post-colonial era, especially in the last 30 years, some of these *ulama* and their poverty stricken institutions have received enormous financial patronage from the oil-rich Arab regimes. This has made such *ulama* and their followers even more docile and subservient than they were in the days of direct European colonialism. Some such *ulama*, especially in British India, opposed the leadership of the secularized, westernized Muslims, but failed to offer an alternative to the dominance of *kufir*. The Muslim masses largely ignored them. The Muslim masses also ignored the 'Islamic' alternative offered by the 'Islamic parties'.

Today the historical situation has been transformed. On the one hand the Muslim masses in one country, led by their *ulama*, have swept

aside the power of *kufr* and established an Islamic State; on the other the post-colonial regimes in the nation-States have been unmasked and exposed as instruments of the political dominance of *kufr*. It is true that the subservient *ulama* and the 'Islamic parties' are still trying to defend the *status quo*, but it is also true that large numbers of both ordinary and very influential people in the *Ummah*, including many *ulama*, have become convinced that the only way forward is through a succession of Islamic Revolutions in all Muslim areas of the world. This newly invigorated opinion in the *Ummah* has yet to assert itself to challenge and defy the established political order. The irrelevance of the established 'religious' order of the subservient *ulama* and of the 'Islamic parties' has also become obvious to many people. Thus the new global Islamic movement represents a new confidence in the *Ummah* that the west can be defeated, and a heightened sense of expectation and optimism for the future. The evidence of this spiritual and intellectual ferment in the *Ummah* is everywhere in Muslim homes, families, communities, cities and countries throughout the world. This new mood in the *Ummah* cuts across all other known barriers of nationalism, ethnicity, territoriality and sectarianism. This is especially so between Muslims following the Shi'i and Sunni schools of thought. Despite the efforts now being made by the enemies of Islam to drive a wedge between Shi'i and Sunni Muslims, the fact is that in the last six years, under the influence of the Islamic Revolution, more Shi'i and Sunni brothers have come closer together than at any time before.

It is within my knowledge that throughout the world new relationships have been forged between Shi'i and Sunni Muslims. I know of many *ulama* of both schools of thought who are meeting and working together in many parts of the world. Throughout the world there have emerged *ulama*, intellectuals, students and others whose names are not yet household names. We have to remember that the world's press and media are entirely controlled by the enemies of Islam. The Islamic movement's own media is as yet in its infancy. Indeed, everything about the new Islamic movement is in its infancy. An entirely new phase in the history of Islam has been inaugurated. The greatest assets of the new Islamic movement are the Islamic Revolution

in Iran, the Islamic State that has been established in Iran, the leadership of the *ulama* of Iran and, above all, the leadership of Imam Khomeini. To follow in the footsteps of the Islamic Revolution in Iran the *Ummah* outside Iran also needs to develop a leadership that is primarily, though perhaps not exclusively, of the *ulama*. The emergence of leadership is itself a complex process which we should examine in detail on some other occasion. All that we need to note here is that if the new Islamic movement sets out to achieve the total transformation of the *Ummah* then the quality of the leadership will be determined by the nature of the struggle that is undertaken.

There is no doubt whatsoever in my mind that the total transformation of the *Ummah* will require a total struggle at all levels and in all fields of human activity. Our struggle will be spiritual, philosophical, political, social, cultural, economic, scientific and military. Because we seek the total transformation of the global *Ummah*, the struggle will be conducted at all levels and at different levels in different parts of the world simultaneously. Such versatility in a global movement presents many problems. In some parts of the *Ummah*, as in Iran today, the struggle may have reached a relatively advanced stage. Indeed in Iran there is already an Islamic State in existence led by an *imam*. In other parts of the *Ummah* the struggle has barely begun.

I have long held the view that once an Islamic State has been established it becomes by definition the leader of the *Ummah* and of the global Islamic movement. Every Muslim must give his allegiance to that State. In my view this is not just a functional necessity, it is also a Divine Ordinance. I have said before that Islam is incomplete without the Islamic State. Equally, the life of a Muslim is incomplete without allegiance to an *imam/khalifah*. I realize that Imam Khomeini has not offered himself for the general *bai'ah* of the *Ummah*. His reasons for not doing so are not difficult to understand. But this should not prevent us from regarding both the Islamic State of Iran and the Imam as leaders of the global Islamic movement. It is important to realize however that Iran, too, is still in the process of transformation. Perhaps Iran is still in the early stages of transformation. At a seminar in London more than five years ago I argued that the first Islamic State to emerge after a lapse

of more than 1,300 years would be a 'primitive model' of the ideal.⁶ Clearly there are stages of transformation towards the total transformation of the *Ummah*. The early stages of transformation in an Islamic State established as a result of a successful Islamic Revolution are different from the early stages in other parts of the *Ummah* that are still some years away from an Islamic Revolution.

The instrument for the total transformation of the *Ummah* can be none other than the global Islamic movement. The method of the Islamic movement is the *Seerah* of the Prophet, upon whom be peace. After prolonged struggle the speed of transformation is accelerated to a point at which it is referred to as an 'Islamic Revolution'. The Islamic Revolution is the stage at which the Islamic movement converts an area or country into an Islamic State. The Islamic State is then invaded by the external enemies of Islam and the internal enemies try to subvert it. After a prolonged struggle the Islamic State defeats its internal and external enemies and acquires control over its immediate environment. There then follows a prolonged period of transformation of the society at all levels until a truly *muttaqi* and just society comes into being. It is now possible to state these as distinct stages in the making of history and relate them to the *Seerah* of Muhammad, upon whom be peace.

The first stage is clearly the stage of prolonged struggle against very heavy odds. In the *Seerah* it is known as the 'Makkan period'. In this stage, which lasted for 13 of the 23-year Prophethood of Muhammad, upon whom be peace, there were a number of distinct phases. For most of this period the Islamic movement is small and weak and there is no reason to believe that such a fledgling band of believers can overcome the established and dominant order and civilization. The power and arrogance of the established order and the relative weakness of the Islamic movement do not persuade the Islamic movement to tone down its beliefs, ideas, methods or goals. Indeed, during this period the Islamic movement boldly declares that the established order and its belief systems are evil and must be destroyed. During this period the

6. See Kalim Siddiqui, 'The Islamic Revolution: achievements, obstacles and goals', in Kalim Siddiqui *et al*, *The Islamic Revolution: Achievements, Obstacles and Goals*, London: The Open Press, 1980.

Islamic movement is only a scattered body of individual Muslims who are exposed to the worst kind of oppression and torture.

In the new 'Makkan period' in which the bulk of the *Ummah* lives today the Islamic movement has to define its position clearly, crisply and unambiguously. Our basic declaration of faith 'there is no *ilah* except Allah' must be related to the contemporary objects of worship that we have acquired in recent history. In the Prophet's time the declaration that 'there is no *ilah*' was understood by the Quraish of Makkah as referring to the hundreds of idols they kept in the *Ka'bah* and worshipped. The Makkans also understood clearly that the declarations of Muhammad, upon whom be peace, were a direct challenge to the established system of authority and hierarchy in Makkah at the time. The new global Islamic movement of today has to make equally forthright and unambiguous declarations. For instance we have to state categorically that the only two collective identities we recognise are those of the House of Islam and the house of *kufir*. The Muslims are one *Ummah* and the *kuffar* are one *millat*. There is no third *millat* in the world. And the Muslim *Ummah* recognizes no nationality as a basis of Law, Statehood or Sovereignty. There is no compatibility between the civilizations of Islam and *kufir*.

Once such a declaration has been made by the global Islamic movement, it also means that all the pillars of the western civilization, such as social democracy, capitalism, liberalism, marxism, anarchism, populism, multi-racialism, unionism, and so forth, are all part and parcel of the *millat* of *kufir*. All these ideas, beliefs and philosophies, often dressed up as 'science' and 'progress', have been institutionalized. The highest of these institutions is the nation-State. All nation-States of today, including those with predominantly Muslim populations, are, therefore, *ipso facto*, integral parts of the global domination that *kufir* has acquired.

No exception is possible. It must not be argued, indeed it cannot be argued, that because there is *shura* in Islam, modern democracy is 'Islamic'; that because private property is allowed by Islam, modern capitalism is 'Islamic'; that because Islam, believes in equality, there is 'socialism in Islam', and so on. We have to wipe the slate clean before

we can write on it; we have to demolish what exists before we can build on the site. This is the meaning of the declaration that ‘there is no *ilah* except Allah’.

It was this clarity of mind and singleness of purpose that the Prophet, upon whom be peace, first created among a handful of his followers in Makkah. Once this step had been taken, all else in the *Seerah*, the first full-scale Islamic movement, followed as day follows night. It was this single, bold, definitive, uncompromising step taken in Makkah that ultimately led to the total transformation of the Hijaz. It is this single step, when it is taken by the global Islamic movement today, that will inexorably lead to the total transformation of the *Ummah*, indeed to the total transformation of the world.

There is one more condition to be met: the global Islamic movement cannot take the first step without a leader. This is a condition that was never met and could not be met, in the days of the local, regional and national ‘Islamic parties’ or partial Islamic movements. In our day there has emerged a leader who has successfully achieved the transition in one part of the *Ummah* from the ‘Makkan period’ to the establishment of an Islamic State. This transition has been achieved under the *muttaqi* leadership of the *ulama* of Iran, one of whom is their *imam*. There is no other holder of political office in the world of Islam today, no other living soul, who can possibly qualify for the leadership of the global Islamic movement. It so happens that the declaration of incompatibility between Islam and *kufir* has been the cornerstone of the Islamic movement in Iran. The ruthless and uncompromising eradication of the influence, power, control and culture of *kufir* is the most outstanding feature of the Islamic Revolution in Iran.⁷

There is a difference between the ‘Makkan period’ in Makkah and the ‘Makkan period’ of today. In Makkah under the leadership of the Prophet, when the *Ummah* was only a handful of Muslims, the meaning and commitment of the declaration that ‘there is no *ilah* except Allah’ was clear to the established order. Today, when the *Ummah* represents a global community of Muslims, our faith and its declaration do not

7. See my paper *Primary goals and achievements of the Islamic Revolution in Iran*, London: The Muslim Institute, 1984.

carry purpose, conviction, programme and precise meaning. It is only in Iran that the Islamic movement has defined and achieved the goals of the 'Makkan period'. Today the figure of Imam Khomeini is identified with the modern 'Makkan period'. By adopting him as the leader of the global Islamic movement we give notice that the entire *Ummah* is now prepared to wage a relentless struggle against the Muslim nation-States and against the control and dominance of *kufir* over the House of Islam. In any case, the global Islamic movement cannot be led by anyone other than the leader and religious and political head of the first Islamic State to emerge in modern times.

Another point of vital importance is that in the original 'Makkan period' the Muslim *Ummah* was not only small but also united. There were no 'schools of thought' in Islam. Such differences that exist among Muslims today are a peculiar product of the course the history of Islam has taken. My view is that because our history has been divisive we are divided. Once the course of our history turns towards the pursuit and achievement of the goals of Islam that are common to Muslims of all schools of thought, history itself will make these divisions a distant memory. The same sentiment was echoed by Imam Khomeini in a message to the *hujjaj* in September 1980. He said:

To love one's fatherland and its people, and to protect its frontiers, are both quite unobjectionable, but nationalism, involving hostility to other Muslim nations, is something quite different. It is contrary to the Noble Qur'an and the orders of the Most Noble Messenger. Nationalism that results in the creation of enmity between Muslims and splits the ranks of the believers is against Islam and the interests of the Muslims. It is a stratagem concocted by the foreigners who are disturbed by the spread of Islam. More saddening and dangerous than nationalism is the creation of dissension between Sunnis and Shi'is and diffusion of mischievous propaganda among brother Muslims. Praise and thanks be to Allah that no difference exists in our Revolution between these two groups. All are living side by side in friendship and brotherhood. The Sunnis, who are numerous in Iran and live all over the country, have

their own *ulama* and *shaikhs*; they are our brothers and equal with us, and are opposed to the attempts to create dissension that certain criminals, agents of America and zionism, are currently engaged in. Our Sunni brothers in the Muslim world must know that the agents of the satanic superpowers do not desire the welfare of Islam and the Muslims. The Muslims must dissociate themselves from them, and pay no heed to their divisive propaganda. I extend the hand of brotherhood to all committed Muslims in the world and ask them to regard the Shi'is as cherished brothers and thereby frustrate the sinister plans of foreigners.

A little later in the message, Imam Khomeini sends out this rousing call to the *Ummah*:

Muslims the world over who believe in the truth of Islam, arise and gather beneath the banner of *tawheed* and the teachings of Islam. Repel the treacherous superpowers from your countries and your abundant resources. Restore the glory of Islam, and abandon your selfish disputes and differences, for you possess everything. Rely on the culture of Islam, resist imitation of the west, and stand on your own feet. Attack those intellectuals who are infatuated with the west and the east, and recover your true identity. Realize that intellectuals in the pay of foreigners have inflicted disaster upon their people and countries. As long as you remain disunited and fail to place your reliance in true Islam, you will continue to suffer what you have suffered already. We are now in an age when the masses act as the guides to the intellectuals and are rescuing them from abasement and humiliation.

For today is the day that the masses of the people are on the move; they are guides to those who previously sought to be the guides themselves. Know that your moral power will overcome all other powers. With a population of almost one billion and with infinite sources of wealth, you

can defeat all the powers. Aid Allah's cause so that He may aid you. Great ocean of Muslims, arise and defeat the enemies of humanity. If you turn to Allah and follow the heavenly teachings, Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* and His vast hosts will be with you.

The Imam is not afraid of identifying the enemies of Islam:

The most important and painful problem confronting the subjugated nations of the world, both Muslim and non-Muslim, is the problem of America. In order to swallow up the material resources of the countries it has succeeded in dominating, America, the most powerful country in the world, will spare no effort. America is the number-one enemy of the deprived and oppressed people of the world. There is no crime America will not commit in order to maintain its political, economic, cultural and military domination of those parts of the world where it predominates. It exploits the oppressed people of the world by means of the large-scale propaganda campaigns that are coordinated for it by international zionism. By means of its hidden and treacherous agents, it sucks the blood of the defenceless people as if it alone, together with its satellites, has the right to live in this world.

Iran has tried to sever all its relations with this great Satan and it is for this reason that it now finds wars imposed upon it. America has urged Iraq to spill the blood of our young men, and it has compelled the countries that are subject to its influence to boycott us economically in the hope of defeating us. Unfortunately, most Asian countries are also hostile to us. Let the Muslim nations be aware that Iran is a country effectively at war with America, and that our martyrs—the brave young men of our army and the Revolutionary Guards—are defending Iran and Islam we hold dear against America. Thus, it is necessary to point out, the clashes now occurring in the west of our beloved country are caused by America; every day we are forced to

confront various godless and treacherous groups there. This is a result of the Islamic content of our Revolution, which has been established on the basis of true independence. Were we to compromise with America and the other superpowers, we would not suffer these misfortunes. But our nation is no longer ready to submit to humiliation and abjection; it prefers a bloody death to a life of shame. We are ready to be killed and we have made a covenant with Allah to follow the path of our leader the Lord of the Martyrs.

O Muslims who are now sitting next to the House of Allah, engaged in prayer: pray for those who are resisting America and the other superpowers, and understand that we are not fighting against Iraq. The people of Iraq support our Islamic Revolution; our quarrel is with America, and it is America whose hand can be seen emerging from the sleeves of the Iraqi government. *Insha'Allah*, our struggle will continue until we have achieved real independence, for, as I have said repeatedly, we are warriors, and for Muslims surrender has no meaning.⁸

When that message was issued on September 13, 1980, the Iraqi regime had not yet launched its full-scale invasion of Khuzistan; Imam Khomeini's references were to skirmishes on the border that had been going on for some weeks. Now the imposed war is nearly five years old. The most significant point about this war is that, for the first time since the defeat of Germany and Japan in 1945, both the United States of America and the Soviet Union are on the same side. The two superpowers, both belonging to the house of *kufri*, want to make the world believe that their goals are so diametrically opposed that they must continue to arm themselves with the deadliest weapons to deter or defeat each other. However, their common hatred of Islam is such that

8. Extracts from Imam Khomeini's message taken from Ruhullah Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, translated and annotated by Hamid Algar, Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1981, pp. 302-306.

they have openly united in the war against Islam. They know that the house of *kufir* must unite in order to confront and defeat the challenge of Islam to the western civilization. At the same time these superpowers and their allies and friends—Israel, India, Japan, South Africa and the regimes in the Muslim nation-States—have also realized that they must prevent the Muslim *Ummah* from becoming united against them. They know that once the *Ummah* is even partially mobilized in a global Islamic movement it will become invincible. They have already experienced the power of Islam in Iran. For Muslims the unity of the *Ummah* is an article of faith and a functional necessity for the ‘Makkan period’ of the Islamic movement. The difference among the various schools of thought in Islam are insignificant compared with the issues that divide capitalism and communism. If the house of *kufir* can ignore its differences in order to confront Islam, can the House of Islam not sink its differences to defeat the house of *kufir*? For Muslims the unity of the *Ummah* does not require anyone to abandon his particular position.

However, we should acknowledge that there are major obstructions to the expression of this unity in the *Ummah*. The political economic, social and cultural obstructions to the expression of the unity of the *Ummah* are enormous. The greatest of these obstructions is nationalism and the nation-States. There are also other powerful forces at work to keep the *Ummah* divided, weak and subservient. The major objective of the Islamic movement is to mobilize the masses under *muttaqi* leaders in all parts of the world. This goal will be achieved at different times in different parts of the *Ummah*. As this goal is achieved in successive areas those areas will be liberated from nationalism and the dominance of the west. New Islamic States will be established in the newly liberated parts of the *Ummah* until, one day, the entire *Ummah* will consist of Islamic States that are united in a hierarchy of institutions under a single *imam/khalifah*. This is perhaps looking too far ahead. At the same time perhaps it is important that we should look as far ahead as possible. Clearly the new leadership of the *Ummah*, as it takes shape, will have to engage in a prolonged process of *ijtihad* to resolve the many new issues that will undoubtedly arise.

In the new global Islamic movement that we now have there is one part that has successfully completed the transition to an Islamic State

and there are those parts that are at the earliest stages of what we have called the 'Makkan period'. Thus the entire spectrum of the *Seerah* of the Prophet, upon whom be peace, is simultaneously relevant to the entire modern Islamic movement. The *Seerah* is clearly the blueprint for the Islamic movement at all stages. The *Seerah* literature that is found today is almost entirely devoted to the recording of events that took place 1,400 years ago in more or less the same order. There is as yet little or no attempt to derive from the *Seerah* a programme for the total transformation of the *Ummah* in today's conditions. This is because the *ulama* of today and their institutions have not been part of an Islamic movement committed to the transformation of the *Ummah*. The only commitment of the *ulama* has been to study the original texts, to lead the Muslim community in prayer and to help them perform the religious ritual. The new global Islamic movement will motivate a new generation of *ulama*. Only those *ulama* who are actively engaged in the struggle will be able to derive from the *Seerah* a programme for the total transformation of the *Ummah*. *Ijtihad* will henceforth be a continuous dynamic process prompted and guided by issues that will emerge in the course of the struggle. In the meantime it is possible to create functional and operational unity in the global Islamic movement by reference to the original 'Makkan period'. The emergence of such a functional and operational unity of the *Ummah* in a global Islamic movement raises issues that we cannot deal with here.⁹

It has been said before, and needs to be said again, that the goal of the total transformation of the *Ummah* requires a total struggle. In the space of this paper and this seminar it has not been possible for me to proceed to the detailed description of the total struggle and its various stages that lie ahead. I have dealt with only the outline of the first stage of the total struggle. There is, however, one aspect of it that needs a brief treatment.

9. At the Muslim Institute, we have pursued the goal of a functional and operational unity of the Islamic movement for the last 14 years. See, for instance, *The Draft Prospectus of the Muslim Institute* (Slough: The Muslim Institute, 1974) and my two short books, *Towards a New Destiny* (Slough: The Open Press, 1974) and *The Islamic Movement: A Systems Approach* (Slough: The Open Press, 1976).

It is this: that an important part of the method of Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, was to acquire control over the environment around him. It is well known, for instance, that the Prophet always sought out the visitors to Makkah who went there as traders or pilgrims. He invited these outsiders to Islam hoping to create followers of Islam outside Makkah. The Quraish of Makkah took this threat so seriously that they tried to prevent visitors to Makkah from coming into contact with the Prophet. The Prophet also used the larger environment to seek protection for the early Muslims. This is the significance of the migration of Muslims to Abyssinia. They were given refuge by the Christian King there. The Makkan Quraish sent a delegation to the King asking for the Muslims to be turned over to them. The King of Abyssinia, after hearing the Muslims' case, presented to him by Ja'far ibn Abi Talib, rejected the embassy of the Quraish. Many Muslims lived in Abyssinia until the migration of the Prophet to Madinah. Thus, in the earliest days of Islam, the Prophet had secured a sanctuary for the Muslims outside Makkah. The Prophet also travelled among the tribes around Makkah. The best known of these travels is the Prophet's trip to Taif. It was this ceaseless struggle to acquire a foothold outside Makkah that led to the two pacts of al-Aqabah, which ultimately led to the Prophet's migration to Madinah and the setting up of the Islamic State there. Having brought the greater part of the environment of Makkah under his control, the Prophet embarked upon the conquest of Makkah.

For the 'Makkan period' of the new Islamic movement today the lessons are clear. The Islamic movement recognizes no frontiers in the *Ummah*. The struggle for the liberation of any one part of the *Ummah* can be carried out from any other part of the *Ummah*. Every part of the *Ummah* is a potential asset for all other parts. This means that every obstacle in the path of the Islamic movement in one part of the *Ummah* is also an obstacle for the entire Islamic movement. Every Muslim engaged in the struggle in any part of the world, however remote or isolated, is engaged in a global struggle. Every group that is engaged in the struggle, however small or remote, is also part of the global struggle between Islam and *kufir*.

We have to eradicate all traces of nationalism from the Islamic movement before we can challenge and defeat the power of nationalism

established in territorial nation-States and a worldwide international system dominated by the mobilized power and resources of the enemies of Islam. Ultimately the shape of the *Ummah* will be determined by the shape taken by the Islamic movement today.