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Transformation in the Islamic Identity of Middle East: Motives, Drivers and Impacts

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Abstract: *Ever since the advent of Islam in 7th Century AD, the Middle East maintained its Islamic identity. There have been numerous attempts to alter the Islamic identity of the region in the past. Nevertheless, people resisted the change and their belief system somehow remained unmoved. Owing to its geographical proximity, geopolitical and geo-economic interests, West is considered to be the key driver of making this change in the Islamic identity of the region. Nevertheless, there exists ambiguity and confusion about the transformation, its objectives, patterns and methodology in an environment of international power play in the Middle East. This research aims to investigate the transformation in the identity of the Middle East from three perspectives; a) whether there is an on-going transformation in the Islamic identity of the Middle East, b) what is the philosophy behind this transformation of regional identity, c) and how the transformation will impact the region at: short-term, medium-term and long-term basis.*

Middle Eastern Identity in Perspective

There are two basic identities of every individual and community; the involuntary identity of birth and the compulsory identity of the state. Apart from these two essential identities, there is a voluntary third identity which relates to the belief system. Identity later evolved as a distinct strand in the international relations literature due to its centrality to nationalism and prominent theorists like Ernest Gellner (Walicki, 1998) and Benedict Anderson (Anderson, 2016) argued the importance of identities even as abstract constructions. Since the 7th Century AD, the people of the Middle East adopted Islam as their religion and way of life. Islam brought fundamental changes in the regional identity of the Arab world. The contemporary recognition of the Middle East is intrinsically linked with Islam and Muslims. Since last fourteen hundred years, the identity of the Middle East is intrinsically linked with the Islam and the Last

Messenger of Allah; The Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). As per Islamic Archives, Al-Madinah, the first Islamic state was established in 622 A.D by Holy Prophet (PBUH) himself. Al-Madinah state had all local tribes and people from various faiths like; Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Islam is regarded as the return to the original faith of the Abrahamic prophets which include all prophets from Adam (AS) to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). All Prophets submitted to the Oneness of Allah and His Will and so did their followers.

With Islam as its predominant identity, the Muslim empire and Islamic rule extended in the entire Arab world within a few years after Muslim established their rule in Mecca. The Ottoman Empire (the largest Muslim state) was once considered as the "mightiest and longest-lasting dynasties in the history of the world."(*Ottoman Empire - WWI, Decline & Definition - HISTORY*, 2018.) As a huge military power, Ottoman Empire ruled the entire

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Middle East, parts of Europe, Africa and Asia for over 600 years until its disintegration during World War-I through internal dissection and external intrigues and aggressions by allies. Hejaz Railway connected Damascus to Medina and a track extending to Haifa boasted the prowess of the Ottoman Empire but later the empire weakened due to conspiracies and uprisings.(*Hejaz Railway / Railway, Middle East | Britannica*, [2017](#).) Apart from many other aspects of international power politics, the disintegration of Ottoman Empire can be directly ascribed to undo the united Islamic identity of the Muslims which include both Arabs and non-Arabs of the broader Middle East.

Scope and Organization of Research

The scope of this research has been delimited to debate the gradual transformation of the regional identity of Middle East from an Islamic value system to secular value system. While debating the transformation of the regional identity of the Middle East, special emphasis has been given to key factors like; the reality of the transformation, the motives of the transformation and its implications on the Middle East and beyond. Methodically, the research is based on content analysis and historical comparative analysis technique along with the available date on contemporary developments in the Middle East.

The context of this research deals with the contemporary phase of study which has intimate and intrinsic linkage with the past history of the region. Within the ambit of philosophical distinctions, this research demands two separate research designs to avoid complications involved in process of academic investigations. Both descriptive and analytical research designs were used to plead the prospective notion of Islamic identity based on ideological underpinnings and strategic objectives of the west in Middle East. An academic endeavour is made to answer all queries and questions arose during the course of research.

After setting the theme of research and outlining the objectives and questions, it was considered pertinent to survey the existing literature on the subject. Review of the relevant literature helped in identification of the gaps that needed to be filled in the research. It was revealed during review of literature that, a lot has been written and debated about Middle East and its evolutionary history. Tracing the direction of this study the literature regarding the transformation in the Islamic identity of the Middle East is inadequate and rare. Nevertheless, there are indirect references in various books, journals and newspapers about trends of transformation in the Islamic identity of the Middle East.

In the theoretical perspective, Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Stets & Burke, [2000](#)) provides a psychological sense to explore what factors influence the identity and status of certain community in international relations. The undelaying theme of this theory is that "various groups are motivated to achieve a positively distinctive identity". Muslims of this region have traditionally been up-right in projection of their religious values and Muslim traditions with distinction. Besides, structural realism (Neo-Realism) is considered as a reinforcing theory to support SIT from the perspective of power politics. This combination of two theories (a theoretical framework) is considered from two perspectives; a) there is social change to transform the mind-set of the people of Middle East and their Islamic identity and b) the basic cause of this change is necessitated by factor of power politics since the international power politics has its origin in the structure of international system.

Division of Middle East: A Corollary to Change the Identity

Ottoman Empire was one of the five major powers prior to the onset of World War-I. It was the only empire having predominantly Islamic identity with the potentials to transmit the message of Islam to European Continent and even beyond. Located the junction of Asia, Europe and Africa, the empire was perceived to be a threat for Christian power centres in Europe. The immediate impacts of the disintegration of Ottoman Empire was on the identity of the region; the former areas of the Empire. As power centre of the Islamic (Muslim) Empire, Turkey was forced to assume the secular identity; an impact which no one thought of before the war. The other states of former Empires were given status of the nation states with different brand names like;

monarchies, autocracies, dictatorships and theocracies, indeed, a deviation from the basic concept of nation state(s) and alienation to the level of exploitation.

The contemporary Middle East although maintained its Islamic distinction and identity for centuries. After WW-I, the entire Middle Eastern region including North Africa was split into smaller states as per the wishes of than colonial powers (Britain and France). The regional division of the Middle East into more than 22 smaller Muslim states and establishment of State of Israel were aimed to divide the cohesive strength of Muslims. It also facilitated the extra-regional powers and the expansionist Zionist State of Israel to control the regional politics through imperialistic designs which are being implemented through a phased strategy.

External Control over Regional Geopolitics and Geo-economics

Sequel to reduced influence of Britain and France (former colonial powers), United States formally extended its control over the region after decisive Arab-Israel War-1973. Nevertheless, U.S has been instrumental to encourage and establish some of the key regional monarchies with whom it still maintains covert security and economic pacts. Through a monopoly over some regional states, the western powers have been controlling the regional geopolitics and geo-economics for their own strategic interests and to sustain and reinforce the State of Israel. Later on the regional states were made dependent for their securities and even for their economic management through various political and military influences in the region. Upon this external dependence in their foreign and domestic relationship, the states of Middle East were used for the geopolitical and geo-economics benefits of west, where US had the key role.

In the post-world war-II era, three major developments took place in the regional politics: a) discovery of hydrocarbon became the main identity of the region which changed the regional geo-economics and living standard of the people raised altogether; b) the ideological underpinning in the regional politics grew stronger and stronger with a clear

divide between two schools of thoughts of the Muslims; Sunni and Shia, c) through promotion of radical sentiments, Muslims from all over the world especially from Middle East were strategically used against former Soviet Union through covert American war in 1980s.

US achieved two distinctive objectives from this war; a) disintegration of Soviet Union to assume the status of the sole super power while making use of Muslims and b) art of using Muslim, based on their Islamic identity and religious ideology for its own strategic usage. In 1980s, these Muslim fighters were named as holy warriors, Jihadists and heroes by U.S and West. Later on the same outfit was dubbed as militants and terrorists after 9/11 and the so-called global war on terror was waged in Middle East, Pakistan and Afghanistan. This time these people were projected as the militants and terrorists, who pose threat for the entire humanity. Based on this negative projection, a change and transformation was demanded in their belief system; the Islamic identity which was projected as the real force behind.

Raisin Detente for Transforming Islamic Identity of Middle East

As reasoned from the research, Middle East is being regarded by West as its immediate neighbourhood in the East which must be kept under influence to remain dominant in the world power politics. Besides, to maintain their long-term domination, it was considered essential to change the current Islamic values of the region in line with liberal values of the West. This all is being implemented gradually to avoid a radical backlash. The West has the experience of disintegration of Ottoman Empire during World War-I and fragmentation of Arab world into smaller states with the imposition of atypical and un-natural borders. This all was done with larger motives where colonial powers had long-terms agenda of regional domination. Keeping the region unstable by creating various cloaked fault lines was the modus operandi in this entire strategy.

Ever since this fragmentation, Middle East has undergone various phases of instability and chaos. This aspect of instability has geared-up after the unfortunate happenings of 9/11. There have been wars, conflicts and

clashes at multiple levels. Then there have been intra-state and interstate clashes which further destabilized the region. The element of militancy mainly driven by Al Qaeda and Daesh (Islamic State) has pushed the region to a new and wilful radical transformation (Schmoll, 2015). The Arab uprisings commonly known in the west as Arab Spring have strapped the region towards internal dissension and rebellion against ruling elites.

Indeed, the militant organizations were raised to push the region into militancy and terrorism. All these militant organizations were given Islamic identity and flavoured into various Islamic names with the sole motive to defame Islam as a belief system while simultaneously targeting the innocent Muslims of Middle East by making use of these organizations. These strategies were executed as planned by creating a scare among the ruling elites and targeting the innocent masses by the militant organizations. Al-Qaida, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) also known as Daesh was created as cause to make the effect; indeed the instruments for attainment of objectives. Being the hub of Islam and Muslims, Middle East was severely affected with an undesirable dissemination of Islam and Muslims as the radicals and terrorists. The realities were otherwise, as Islam preaches and teaches peace, love and respect for entire humanity.

Some western analysts believe that, through extremism and terrorism in the Muslim world particularly Middle East, a scare was created in the Europe and America against the peaceful and rapid spread of Islam. Islam as belief system was rapidly being adopted by literate societies of the Europe and U.S. The covert campaign against Islam and Muslims was going on for centuries, however, the event of 9/11 encouraged and provided an overt motivation for the west and rest to brand Muslims as militants and Islam as the ideology behind. Ensuing to this subjective and catastrophic international event, the vested powers targeted Middle East as centre of militancy. In the garb of liberal interventionist approach, the scholars also provided a cause to this form of war where US and its European allies militarily attacked some of the regional states like; Iraq, Libya and Syria.

Similarly, the hidden agenda behind Arab uprisings was selected regime change by creating scare among ruling elites who dared to defy the western dictates. Besides, it was neither meant nor brought democracy in the region. In reality, the Arab uprisings further pushed the region into chaos, civil war, militancy and uncertainty with an unwelcoming future while broadening the existing gulf at intra-state and inter-state level and also between ruling elites and the masses.

With the name of Blood Borders, the policy institutions in U.S prepared new maps for the further division of the regional states based on their ancestral and blood based origins. The Retired Marine Colonel Ralph Peters, the author of this article believes that, "If the borders of the greater Middle East cannot be amended to reflect the natural ties of blood and faith, we may take it as an article of faith that a portion of the bloodshed in the region will continue to be our own" (*Blood Borders*, 2006). In 2006, this policy paper of the Armed Forces Journal, published by Pentagon clearly hinted a new Middle East with revised borders and a transformed identity.

Patterns of Changing Regional Identity

In order to change the religious identity of the region, the planners of this malicious game had to come out with a solid reason, since ideology is the most challenging aspect of human beings to be transformed. After years of deliberations and forethoughts, they came out with an idea of defamation of the Islamic belief system. The idea came with the tools of implementation: the sentiments of extremism, progressing through radicalization and accomplishments through terrorism. All these extreme mind-sets were linked with Muslims and Islamic ideology. The pre-trails of this strategy were carried out during the decade of 1980s in Afghanistan against Soviet Union.

After this, US think tanks concluded that, Muslims can be motivated and used in the name of Islam for accomplishment of any objective by West and US. The planners designed that, by introducing secularism in the Middle Eastern, the entire Muslim world can be transformed into western life style. After being driven away from the golden principles of Islam, they will just need re-education; the secular values and secular identity. Such a strategy will change the Islamic identity of Middle East.

Islamophobia; Yet another Strategy

The term Islamophobia was initially used in Europe in the last decade of 20th century with the primary motive to create hatred against Islam and Muslims.(Bleich, 2012) It is conceived as "fear of, hatred of, or prejudice against the religion of Islam or Muslims in general, especially when seen as a geopolitical force or a basis of radicalism"(Bleich, 2012). In the post 9/11 scenarios, this is especially related and linked with Muslims as a community and Islam as an ideological force which motivate the people for such an act of violence.

Indeed, in the tarns-Atlantic region, this was a well-considered and well coined term conceived and propagated against Muslims with multiple goals and targets. There is a political use of this term initially started in the west and later transmitted in rest of the world; an effort to create structural and cultural racism targeting Muslim and their faith (Islam)"(Bleich, 2012) The entire philosophy of this western origin propaganda was aimed to malign the Muslims so that a rapid spread of Islam could be stopped. But, on its part, Islam is a universal religion, whose teachings are for everyone; Muslims as well as non-Muslims. Not limited to Muslims, in fact, Islam is a religion for entire humanity. The broader teaching of Islam is peace, respect and care for each other among humanity; "The best among you is the one who benefits people".(كنزالعمال، ج:8، ص54، جزء:16، حديث:44147)

Recognition of Israeli Hegemony

Brokering multiple deals between some of the GCC states of Middle East and Zionist state of Israel in 2020 and 2021 was a major shift in the regional politics of Middle East. In this regards, a major deal was signed between United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrin with the state of Israel on September 15, 2020.(*Israel Inking Historic Accords with UAE, Bahrain at White House Ceremony | The Times of Israel*, 2020.) It was a major breakthrough in the regional politics and regional identity of Middle East brokered by former US President, Donald Trump. The deal was a major shift in regional politics of Middle East and a great achievement for US and Israel. Indeed, after peace treaties with Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994 these two normalization accords were major events in the regional politics of the Middle East. Named

as "Abraham Accords" three documents were signed; a) individual documents between three states, b) bilateral agreements between Israel and UAE and between Israel and Bahrain and c) all three states signed a trilateral document.

Later Morocco and Sudan also recognized Israel (Wemer, 2020). Earlier Sudan was kept under sanctions for years by US and West. Sudan also remained in the list of states, US considered as sponsors of terrorism. Immediately after this agreement with Israel, Sudan was removed from this list and sanctions were lowered besides giving Khartoum $335 million(Wemer, 2020) financial assistance. The former US President Mr Trump was very excited about this collaboration and said, "This is truly a historic day".(Khan, 2020) He further said that, US expect other regional states of Middle East and especially GCC to follow the suit. That is why President Trump had to say, "It's unthinkable that this could happen and so fast."(Khan, 2020) Indirectly the American foreign policy for the Middle East under Trump mainly focussed on one particular aspect; how to create a riven between the regional Muslim states of Arab world at multiple levels: a) provoking the existing differences between Sunni monarchs of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) state and Islamic Republic of Iran by exploiting their ideological fault-lines, b) creating a divide within the GCC states over the petty issues of less importance, and c) creating a split in GCC states for supporting the Palestinian cause or otherwise.

In December 2017, US recognized Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel. It was highly provocative act which clearly violate the UN resolutions that delineate the areas between Palestine and Israel and international status of Jerusalem. President Trump declared that, "Today we finally acknowledge the obvious: that Jerusalem is Israel's capital." (Landler, 2017) He called this illegal act as reality which Arab world and Palestinians must accept. US decision to recognize Jerusalem was rejected by UN General Assembly with a majority vote of 128 countries. Earlier a similar resolution was vetoed by US in UN Security Council. The UN General Assembly demanded US to withdraw from its illegal decision.(Higgins, 2017.)

Indo-Israel Nexus

While Israeli influence is rapidly increasing in the region, India has already made inroads into the key areas of Middle East. There is a huge Indian diaspora in Middle East, which plays significant role in almost all fields. (Alterman & Mohan, 2022) India has long-term strategy for the Middle East which include political, economic and strategic gains. Besides, there is a growing partnership between India and Israel for making ingress into the Middle Eastern region. While establishing the Indian influence in region, the Indian policy makers adopted multi-layered strategy.(Alterman & Mohan, 2022) One; it chose to enter the region through its Muslim population, allowing Hindu population after making sufficient recognition and space. Two; India introduced mutually beneficial policies which include; influx of a huge Indian diaspora in the Middle East and enticing wealthy states of Middle East for substantial financial investment in India. Three; while being in the Middle East the huge Indian diaspora engaged into the economic activities (trade and commerce) of the Middle East.

Indian expatriates are running most of the hoteling industry, control the tourism, and operate the oil companies. As of the latest data, Indians constitutes over 30% of the total population of United Arab Emirates (UAE) while influencing its economy.(*Indian Diaspora Immensely Contributed towards UAE's Growth*, n.d.) There is similar situation of deep-rooted Indian involvement in rest of the Middle Eastern region. In a phased programme, Indian expatriates are making ingress into the functioning of the Middle Eastern states and their educational system. Analysing the nexus between India and Israel, the famous author Richard Silverstein, highlights that there is increasing Indo-Israel partnership underway in the Middle East. Under the title of Hindutva-Zionist triumphalism, Silverstein identified the long-term nexus of these two states in the Middle Eastern region. Indeed, there are commonalities in both movements; an over-arching Hindu-Zionist historical myth.(*Israel, India and the Islamophobic Alliance*, n.d.) The commonality is that; both India and Israel view the Muslims as their common enemy, thus this nexus is natural and common to cooperate against Muslims by all means.

In May 2001, then Indian Home Minister L.K Advani made a clandestine visit of Israel and signed multiple deals and agreements for wider collaboration. The theme of all these agreements was creating a consensus against Muslims especially in Middle East as well as South Asia. It was primarily a first formal deal for larger Indo-Israel partnership against Muslims, since both view Muslims and Islam as a common threat. Both were accompanied by the representatives of Indian spying network; Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and Israeli intelligence agency MOSSAD. The most dangerous deal agreed during this visit was "joint Indo-Israel espionage operations" AZIZ, Q. (2001) in various parts of the key Muslim states. The more hazardous and futuristic was establishment of desks and facilitation centres for Israeli spying network in Indian embassies in almost all Muslim states where Israel was not allowed to enter even, being a hostile rival state. These desks and facilitation centres of MOSSAD in Indian embassies acted as eyes and ears for the Israel in Muslim countries.

Both India and Israel consider Muslims as a threat to their global ascendancy, thus collaborating and cooperating in all spheres.(*Israel, India and the Islamophobic Alliance*, n.d.) Through the use of western-style democracies, both are in the process of ridiculing the Muslims and their theocratic forms of governments which they perceive as the threats for their dominance. The rise of Hindutva and Judeo-supremacy is altering both countries from democracies into ethnocracies, privileging a religious majority (Hindus, Jews) over the minority (Palestinian Muslims and Indian Muslims).(*Israel, India and the Islamophobic Alliance*, n.d.) This indeed is a very "dangerous delusion which inexorably may lead to massacres not just between individual religious communities as in Gujarat, but between major religious groups at national scale. It could also lead to war between nations themselves."(*Israel, India and the Islamophobic Alliance*, n.d.)

Anchored well in UAE, India is pushing for an accord with Abrahamic states; Indo-Abrahamic states accord. The accord is being brokered initially between three states; Israel, United Arab Emirates and India. Later on it can be expanded to other Arab states with larger membership as per requirements of the

planners. It is said that, this accord will transform the entire regional geopolitics and geo-economics.(*An Indo-Abrahamic Alliance on the Rise*, 2021.)

Security Implications; a Catalyst for Changing Islamic Identity

With the deployment of over 60,000 troops in various states of Middle East, US has a crucial role in the security of the region. US troops are deployed in 20 countries as part of U.S Central Military command, commonly known as the CENTCOM.(*US Troop Level Reduction in Middle East Likely as Focus Shifts Elsewhere | Stars and Stripes*, 2022.) All key positions and strategically significant areas in the Middle East have the military presence of United States. Since the beginning of 21st century, in the garb of global war against terrorism, there have taken place two simultaneous developments in the regional politics: a) an increase in the regional conflicts among and within the states and b) threat of militant organizations which nurtured in the region as a mushroom growth. Both developments necessitated the effective counter actions for which the regional states did not possess sufficient potentials, military expertise, military equipment and military strategy to tackle with new form of warfare. At this critical juncture US offered these states with a security umbrella which most of the states happily accepted. While providing military assistance to counter the home-grown military, US created compulsions for its long-term engagement with respect to provision of security to this region while deploying its military assets at key points.

With this strategic deployment of its forces, US was able to attain the regional military control since there is no other foreign military deployed in Middle East except a Russian naval base in Tartus, Syria on Mediterranean which overlook the region strategic location. The military control of the region by US forces have two implications; a) United Sates has constricted the space for the other major actors namely; China and Russia and b) regional states are constrained to develop overt military alliance with other major powers while U.S. security wise dominates the region.

As a strategy, the military power of the regional states of the Middle East was weakened through promotion of inter-state conflicts and making alliances against the comparatively militarily stronger state(s). This strategy was accomplished slowly and gradually; Iran-Iraq war-1980-1988 by elevating Iraq as military power of Arab world. Later, Iraq was converted into ruin through Operation Desert Storm (1990/1991) and by direct US invasion in 2003. Libya, Yemen and Syria were devastated similarly to undo their military capabilities. Practically, there is no military power in Middle East which can defend itself independently against any foreign aggression.

The salient of this security architecture includes; a) creating an ideologically based leading state (the Jewish state of Israel) in the heart of Arab world which will control all the regional states and their external relationship in a future scenario, b) creating un-natural Muslim states with inherent predicaments for initiating conflicts at intra-state and inter-state level among these Muslims which cause in inherent weakness on one hand and create an element of discord at large, c) keeping all these crafted states security wise weaker and depended on external powers, d) external powers may use these states for their strategic usages as per their conveniences as being done since decades.

Socio-political Impacts on Identity

In order to change their identity, the people of Middle East were terrified through a number of threating means. Threats emanating from the militant organization like Daesh (ISIS), Al-Qaeda and similar other groups are the most recent phenomenon. These militant organizations were in fact created under blanket of so-called Islam, to create an impression that, Islam is the motivation factor behind militancy and threat for the people of Middle East. These well trained anti-Islam militants (dubbed as Muslims) were so brutal that, people started believing differently about Islam and Muslims. Besides, through Islamophobia, a parallel campaign was run to defame the Islam and Muslims, based on act of terrorism by these terrorist originations.

In yet another parallel move, secularism was projected as the most acceptable and

liveable way of life with an all-inclusive approach. In way, the militancy hit people of the Middle East found a saviour in the form of secularism and western life style. This movement of social change was also promoted with two parallel approaches; projecting a soft image of the western secular values through electronic and print media besides social media and educational syllabus while creating a simultaneous negative propagation of the Muslim societies of the Middle East. The introduction of a well-orchestrated militancy in the region was the first phase to create a fear and chaos in the Middle Eastern societies.

Owing to militancy and western media campaigns, there is an emerging clash between various clusters of Middle Eastern societies; the youth and aging segments about social and ideological. The youth of Middle East is gradually attracting towards secularism whereas the elders is more inclined towards Islamic traditions and value system. However, this recurrent happening in the region caused a division in Arab society at multiple levels: two broad categories emerged in the form of Muslim elites, the ruling class and Muslim streets, the subjugated masses, having no say in the affairs of state and functioning of the governments.

A Suggested Way Forward

The regional projection of Middle East as the centre of radicalization and militancy by Europe and America called for its neutralization from two aspects; a) use of hard power as employed in Iraq, Syria and Libya as a threat and b) use of soft power for undoing the Islamic identity of the region by introducing secular identity and western values having global recognition and wider acceptability. This research concludes that, after creating a scare of using hard military power against some regional states, U.S and Europe are rapidly heading towards transformation of Islamic identity of the Middle Eastern through various direct and indirect strategies. Israel and India are collaborating alongside the U.S and West for neutralizing the Muslim states of Middle in two-pronged strategy.

In the campaign of changing the Muslim identity of Middle East, there have developed many other fault lines in the region at social and state level; intra-state, inter-state and a struggle

for regional dominance. All these divisions are impacting the region at two broad levels; a) weakening the Muslim countries internally through intra-state splits and b) exposing the region and states for external forces which have been instrumental in causing these fault lines and divides. In the garb of militancy and terrorism these external forces have devised regional security architecture for the entire Middle East. Primarily the US based security architecture have been mandated two aspects; a) security against militancy and terrorism and b) security of the Sunni dominated monarchs from the potential military threat of Iran. Both aspects of the security are crafted externally through vested interest whose usage may be as per convenience of U.S and West.

With a greater involvement of vested external factors in the geopolitics and geo-economic of the Middle East, the region is bound to destabilize with evolving threats of further divided and chaos. The external powers will continue exploiting the region to their conveniences and strategic and economic usages. They will never suggest a solution for the broader unity, consensus and stabilization of the region. Rather, by making changes in the Islamic identity of the region, the entire regional structure will be changed. Such a change in the identity of the region will create further clashes and conflicts at societal level of the Middle East; a repeat of pre-World War-I situation where Muslims fought against Muslims on the provocation of people like Lawrence of Arabia.

In the light of abovementioned findings of the research, the suggested way forward includes:-

a. A broader reconciliation among the leadership of Middle Eastern states by reducing inter-state friction and abhorrence against each other. By shrinking inter-state differences, the intra-state and tribal based clashes and conflicts would automatically reduce with the passage of time. Indeed, the sources of intra-state clashes lay somewhere in inter-state dissension where adversaries try to threaten each other by exploiting their domestic vulnerabilities.

b. The internally unfounded ideological divide between two broad ideologies of

Muslims must come to an end, since it is provoking the followers of Islam against each other and causing huge damage to Muslims. Besides, this dividing line provides an opportunity to rival forces of Islam to exploit either side at will by widening the existing gulf. Sectarian clashes and infighting is equally projected as militancy and terrorism which demands a change of identity. This can be achieved by respecting the sovereignty and integrity of each other on mutual basis.

c. The Muslim states of Middle East must evaluate and realistically scrutinise the larger designs of West from the perspective of geopolitics and geo-economics. Neither the regional security architecture nor the natural resources of the regional should be leased and out-sourced for the usage by external powers.

d. The growing Indo-Israel nexus have long-term and extremely dangerous designs for the Middle East, hence must be countered timely and by all means. This Hindutva-Zionist alliance is aimed to make wider and deeper ingress in the Muslims Middle East for promoting their fascist ideologies through neutralization and pacification of Islamic identity of the Middle East.

In summary, the Muslim world especially the Middle Eastern states need to re-orient themselves and get back to the teachings of Islam for restoring unity and dignity in the light of Holy Quran; "Hold firmly to the way, rope of Allah all together and do not become divided". (103 الآیة-آل عمران سورة تفسیر - کثیر ابن تفسیر -الکریم القرآن, n.d.)

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