Manufacturing of the Green Scare: The rise of Islamophobic US foreign policy after 9/11

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Abstract:

The coming of the new millennium brought several changes to US foreign policymaking. 9/11 attacks drove the US administration towards chasing terrorist organizations; such as, Al- Qaeda which was responsible for the damage and aftermath of 9/11. However, in view of the events following 9/11, it became clear that the US administration cast Islam, as US first enemy. In fact, portraying Islam as the Green Scare, after the fall of the ex- USSR (the Red Scare), gives a clear interpretation that the US administration has relied on a manufactured foreign policy of fear of the new rising enemy; namely, Islam. This; in fact, gives the right to the Americans to proceed with a dangerous US interventionism policy. Moreover, exposing the US manufacturing of an Islamic enemy is imperative to understand that the US foreign policy has shifted towards toward a more rigorous, Islamophobic trend by targeting Islam and Muslims in the US, and throughout the world.

The present paper attempts to highlight the facet of the US foreign policy after 9/11 attacks. It analyzes the different strategies used by the US administration in manufacturing of the Green Scare as an agenda to target Islam and Muslims inside the US, and throughout the world. In addition, it illustrates how the US foreign policy took an Islamophobic trend toward Islam and Muslims.

Key words: *Islam; Green Scare; 9/11; Islamophobia; US foreign policy.*

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Introduction:

9/11 led to a new era of confrontation and international terrorism, prompting the US administration to adopt a global war against it. George W. Bush declared the War on Terror, militarizing US foreign policy. The US had no comprehensive national counterterrorism strategy before 9/11, viewing it as a threat to policy directives and law enforcement. The Bush Doctrine established the US foreign policy against terrorism, leading to the war on Afghanistan and invasion of Iraq. President George W. Bush aimed to prevent terrorist attacks against the US, its people, interests, friends, and allies, and make the

world unfriendly to terrorists.[1]

Accordingly, The US administration prioritized retaliation for terrorism, shifting from a limited-response approach to a more aggressive strategy in 2003. President George W. Bush declared terrorist attacks targeted US citizens, way of life, and freedom, stating that they would never destroy America's foundations and principles.[2]

Obviously, the US President George W. Bush announced the rise of terrorism as a new threat to the US, a concept that has historically impacted the nation, galvanizing it, and shaping its perception of itself and its place in the world. The rise of foreign danger/ or threat is what; in fact, constitutes the US identity.[3]

By fundamentally linking US to danger, Wheeler (2003) emphasized that the US President affirmed the US identity by the portrayal of danger. What shapes the US identity is presence of danger, and US capabilities of retaliating to this foreign threat.[4]

After WWII, Islam became a threat to the US due to its association with terrorism. The 9/11 terrorist attacks, executed by Al-Qaeda, were linked to Islam, replacing the Communist *Red Scare*. The *Green Scare* of Islam has become a target in US foreign policymaking, securing US identity.[5]

The present paper attempts to demonstrate the manufacturing of fear of the *Green Scare*, Islam, and its implications in US foreign policymaking. Three main research questions will be explored: The first seeks to uncover why the US administration has portrayed Islam as a threat following 9/ 11 attacks. The second how the US foreign policy changed radically toward an Islamophobic trend after 9/11 to target Islam and Muslims. The final inquiry analyzes the strategies used by the US administration which demonstrated the Islamophobic facet of US foreign policy.

Chapter I: The manufacturing of danger and threat in US foreign policymaking: Theoretical backgrounds:

A state's existence relies on its national identity, while collective identity, shaped by social, cultural, religious, historical, and linguistic factors, is the shared sense of belonging and common values among members. As a social construct, a state's identity is constituted in relation to other identities.[6] Coles (2002) believed that when a state's identity is expressed in a threatening context; such as securitization, it strongly reinforces the *we* feeling of both the people and state's

identity.[7] Thus, a state's identity is strengthened by addressing perceived dangers in foreign policy, introducing the 'we' of fear which shapes a state's identity, solidifying its foreign policy choices and influencing its internal characteristics.

Jackson (2008) argued that a society's identity stabilizes through identifying its enemy, which is relevant to American identity.[8] Huntington (2004) suggested that the US national identity was strongest during the Cold War, but with the end, a new enemy was needed to reinforce it.[9]

In the light of the literature of international relations and securitization theory, securitization is defined as the process by which policymakers consider certain actors or issues as subjects of security.[10] Eroukhmanoff (2018) posited that securitization involves addressing urgent political issues, such as immigration, as dangerous, menacing, and alarming by the government, requiring action for national security.[11]

Michael Williams (2003) argued that the social construction of security issues involves 'securitizing speech acts', which transform existing situations into security scenarios. This process, viewed as a social process, gives issues special attention and importance.[12]

After 9/11, the US administration used polarized discourse to portray the conflict as a battle between good and evil, labeling those who disagreed as sympathetic to terrorists. Fear-inducing language like 'weapons of mass destruction' and 'terrorist threats' was used to justify policies and gain public support, causing Islam and Muslims to pose a threat to America.[8]

Following 9/11 attacks, images of the attacks were projected intensively, successively, and constantly that it was impossible to ignore them. They were 'one of the most thoroughly familiar and long-lingering after-images of contemporary history.'[13] The attacks and their repercussions were visibly magnified.[14] The American media and popular culture repeatedly narrated stories of victims' families, survivors, and traumatized individuals, projecting a 'discourse of fear', anticipating future terrorist attacks and promoting moral and social superiority.[15]

To measure the extent of fear and distress caused by such an event seems an inconceivable task. Terrorism, an abstract threat, is defined as a collective sense of fear, causing psychological, political, and

economic damage. It can occur at any time and place, with few chances to prevent it. Philip Wilcox, Department of State Coordinator for Counterterrorism, argued that its random nature makes it particularly evil. Thus, increasing the collective sense of fear and vulnerability.[16]

Morley (2009) argued that the US administration's rhetoric and constant surveillance contributed to the spread of fear, with American authors making the public more engaged in the catastrophe.[17] Post-9/11, fear, good versus evil rhetoric, and War on Terror discourse were incorporated into 9/11 narratives.[18]

After 9/11, 90% of participants in a study reported experiencing stress symptoms, highlighting the widespread fear and anxiety experienced by those affected.[19] After 9/11, 53% of the US public was "very worried" about being a victim of terrorism. Although these concerns diminished, 30-40% still fear terrorist attacks, with 30-40% believing they or their loved ones could be harmed.[20]

The 9/11 terrorist attacks caused 39% of Americans to feel afraid or very afraid of becoming a victim of terrorism. Although the attacks were distant, attitudes about terrorism remained constant. Today, almost a quarter of the population is "very concerned" about terrorism, likely due to the inevitability of another large-scale attack.[21]

Threat can predict prejudice, as seen in the 9/11 attacks on Islam and Muslims. The Integrated Threat Theory identifies four types of threat: realistic threats, symbolic threats, negative stereotypes, and intergroup anxiety, which increase the likelihood of prejudice against certain social groups.[22]

Bhabha (1994) argued that the other is framed and illuminated through a serial enlightenment strategy, creating a closed interpretation circle. This passive object interprets acts performed in relation to the other, reducing and dehumanizing them for control and administration.[23]

The manufacturing of fear involves creating fear in Muslim Other individuals, transforming them into anguishful entities without human characteristics. This fear serves as an indicator of enmity, leading to rational and intuitive actions against the fearful other. This fear is nurtured and sustained to make the enemy's threat visible, and consequently, the enemy becomes more vulnerable to attacks as well as colonization.[24]

Allan Pred (2007) suggested that terror policies can be implemented by creating a collective enemy, displacing threat to distant Others, scare stories, and *fearmongering*. This strategy can be used to gain public support for violence against terrorists and innocent civilians. Furthermore, he argued that fear is manufactured by presenting Muslims as terrorists, uncivilized, and subhuman; presenting them as a psychological and political threat to Western civilization, and using repeated portrayals to make them characterized by security-related boundaries.[25]

The current media propaganda, rooted in the discourse of fear, exploits audiences' fear and creates a pretext for increased control, using symbols of fear and threat to present a danger for western people. Within this context, the media and policymakers use fear discourse to justify increased control measures against the 'other', instilling fear in the audience to promote restrictive policies.

Chapter II: 9/11 Attacks: Impacts on US foreign policy:

The 9/11 attacks significantly influenced US foreign policy, leading to the War on Terror, invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, and shaping the country's approach to counterterrorism, security, and international engagement.

A. Forging US national identity:

On 9/11, President Bush delivered a grave speech defending American principles and claiming the attack was carried out to go after American standards. He claimed America was chosen as the target due to its freedom and democracy. In a speech to Congress, Bush explained the manipulations' motivations, stating that they scorn the government, their self-assigned bosses, and their chances of religion, open dialogue, and voting.[26]

President Bush provided a clarification to the Americans, saying that although terrorist attacks harmed the US by damaging US facilities and buildings, they cannot harm or destroy the spirit of the US. These terrorist acts cannot weaken the resolve of Americans. America is the world's shining example of freedom and opportunity. That is why the US had been targeted by these attacks. Nobody is going to stop that light from shining. The President acknowledged the threat and its impact on the nation, urging Congress to uphold its values and remember the many who have come to America. Fear is at war with freedom, and America now holds responsibility for

progress.[27]

Huntington (2004) suggested that America's shared national identity diminished post-Cold War, but President Bush asserts that America has regained its mission following 9/11's increased threat.[28] The President's October 17th speech in California emphasized the importance of unity, determination, and courage in the face of trial, highlighting the uniqueness of the current period in American history and the revival of principles.[29]

The nation's core qualities of heroism, sacrifice, duty, and patriotism were rediscovered during peril, as seen in the 9/11 aftermath, where a flood of patriotism was demonstrated, with individuals from a divided Congress uniting and wearing American banners.[30]

B. The Threat of Islam (*Green Scare*) substitutes the Threat of Communism (*Red Scare*):

During the Cold War, US policymakers viewed Islam as a strategic tool to counter atheistic communism in the Middle East, ensuring geostrategic dominance and oil access, and a safe-belt against the USSR.[31] Thus, in 1953, the US Information Agency invited Muslim scholars to promote anti-communist agendas, and in 1957, the National Security Council established a joint committee of Islamic organizations for propaganda targeting.[32]

However, the US faced threats in the Middle East due to Egypt's President when Gamal Abdel Nasser leaned on the USSR, leading to the creation of Saudi Arabia as an Islamic pole of attraction. In contrast, communism gained strength in Afghanistan in the 1970s. Accordingly, the US made strategic collaboration with *Islamists*, namely the Afghan Mujahedeen who were instrumental in repelling the USSR invasion. The Mujahedeen contributed to the communist superpower's downfall a few years later.

During the Cold War, Communism was the US enemy, defining American identity and government authority. After the war, fear arose, prompting the *Los Angeles Times* headline 'Enemy Gap Brings.' The article questioned the US's mission after the Red Menace's guiding principle was removed. In the article, Ritcher (1991) set into motion the issue of enemy gap. According to him, 'For decades, opposition to the *Red Menace* has bound a fractious nation in common purpose.' In the article, the author asked 'With that guiding principle gone, how

will the US define its mission?'[33] Then, Islam would emerge as the new enemy, the US's new mission with Islam, a historically established enemy, could lead to a clash of civilizations, as Iran's labeling as the *Great Satan* by Iranian Islamist revolutionaries fueled hate among Muslims.

Bernard Lewis' article, 'The Roots of Muslim Rage,' highlighted the current Muslim uprising as a clash of civilizations, arguing that Islam is an 'irrational' and 'ancient' competitor against our secular present, Judeo-Christian heritage, and globalization. The concept of the clash of civilizations, as argued by Bernard Lewis, has become a prominent aspect of US policy since the fall of communism. He argued that Islam, despite being seen as an 'irrational' competitor, offers an alternative to global politics through governance, justice, and peace promotion. However, the roots of Muslim hatred lay basically in Islam because Islam does represent an alternative for global politics in certain ways through Islamic governance, justice and equality, global unity, non-interference, and Nonviolence and peace promotion [34]

Based on Bernard Lewis's arguments, Samuel Huntington (1993) posited that cultural differences will be the primary cause of conflict and human divide, with nation-states playing a significant role in world politics, and civilizational fractures as front lines. The future's front lines of conflict will be the fractures dividing civilizations. He argued that the main source of conflict is the direct lines between Western civilization and Islamic civilization, with Islam being prone to violence.[35] In critique to Huntington, there is a clear- cut distinction between Islam and violence. Islam does not call for violence. However, the use of violence, namely *Jihad* is only permissible and legitimate in case of a danger approaching Muslims and their territories.

Wolfowitz (2001) asserted that Lewis's and Huntington's arguments resonated with US policymakers. They portrayed Islam as a threat. Doing so, they laid down the foundations for filling the enemy gap that the US administration wanted to fill. Moreover, Islam could fill the enemy role, as it was not an ideology which was tied to a state, but to a whole religion.[36]

C. The Securitization of Islam:

The 9/11 aftermath led to increased suspicion and fear towards Muslims and Middle Eastern people, a phenomenon traced back to the

Puritans' 1630s settlement in the New World, who viewed Palestine and the Middle East differently, shaping their perception of themselves and their role in the New World.[37] Within this context, the Puritans believed in a covenant relationship with God, similar to Israelites in the Bible. They aimed to create a holy society in America, viewing the Holy Land as significant in biblical history. They learned valuable lessons from biblical events and characters.[38]

Puritan writings explore biblical prophecies, particularly Israel's restoration and Christ's kingdom's emergence, with global implications. Puritans view the Holy Land as sacred and significant in God's plans.[39]

Diouf (2019) highlighted the American experience with Islam through the transatlantic slave trade and American missionaries' experiences in the Holy Land and the Middle East. Slave owners sought to strip enslaved Muslims of their religious identity, leading to resistance movements. Missionaries' experiences, including visiting biblical sites and encountering native populations, influenced their perceptions of Islam, often causing apprehension and disgust towards Muslim natives.[40]

The American experience with Islam involved the efforts to erase the Muslim identity of enslaved individuals during the transatlantic slave trade, leading to resistance and struggle. American missionaries to the Holy Land and the Middle East had encounters with Islam, but their perceptions of the native populations often led to negative stereotypes and biases.[41]

Converted and translated into magazines, books, and craftsmanship, these impressions turned into the prevailing symbolism through which US diplomats and policymakers would view the Muslim world as essentially backward, and the Muslim world constituted the very antithesis of John Winthrop's 'city upon a hill.' Therefore, according to President Theodore Roosevelt, 'It is impossible to expect moral, intellectual, and material well- being where Mohammedanism is supreme.'[42]

Thus, the US distinguished itself apart from Islam and the Muslim identity, although Muslims had noticeable impacts on the progress of Western civilization, and Muslims contributed heavily to the European Renaissance and Enlightenment.[43] Yet, these achievements were deliberately ignored, and were considered as largely irrelevant.

Despite no direct contact with the Arab World, Arab Muslims were often treated as a threat. Matthews (1926) argued that Islam is fundamentally military, with its motto being a call to arms. Tribal Arabs are enthralled by battle and dominance, looking forward to a paradise of maidens as a reward. The Quran serves as an army's manual, uniting men through discipline and fire to form a formidable sword.[44]

The US has a distinct identity as a Judeo-Christian nation, deeply rooted in American history and cultural heritage. Early settlers, mostly from Western Europe, practiced Christianity, establishing a Christian influence on the nation. Enlightenment ideals, rooted in Christian theology, influenced the American Revolution and its principles. The founders of the US emphasized religious freedom while incorporating biblical principles, resulting in a deeply rooted national identity.[45]

Despite its theological fact as a kin faith, Islam and Judaism have different concepts of God and prophets. For example, whereas Jesus is considered as a God-sent prophet in Islam, he is rejected in Judaism. Historically, although European Christians persecuted Jews in Europe for centuries, the Judeo- Christian alliance occurred in the US.[46]

America's Judeo-Christian identity had significant political implications, leading to the establishment of Israel in 1948. The US-Zionist alliance created a lobbying organization, which was welcomed by Israeli policymakers. Since the Arab-Israel War of 1967, Israel relied on US support for violations of international law and illegal expansion. The ongoing conflict perpetuated anti-Muslim sentiment in America and the narratives of the clash of civilizations.[47]

Chapter III: 9/11 Aftermath: Towards US Islamophobic foreign policy (2001- 2020):

Following the 9/11 attacks, Americans united and patriotism grew. The Bush Administration securitized Islam through speeches, interviews, and press releases. President Bush did not harbor hostility towards Muslims and Islam, focusing on the terrorists and the Muslim population. In his September 20th speech, he addressed Muslims worldwide, stating that Islam is respected and practiced freely, with moral and peaceful precepts. Bush emphasized that the enemy is not Islam, but terrorists and rogue regimes, who sponsor and sustain them, providing them with necessary shelter.[48]

Abrahamian (2003) argued that the US administration's

securitization of Islam was influenced by media coverage, such as The New York Times headlines, and historical negative attitudes towards Islam. The administration used strategies such as labeling, depoliticization, and conflation to portray Islam as the rising enemy.[49]

A. <u>The use of Labelling</u>:

Labelling is a social process where individuals or groups classify social behavior as friendly or hostile, identifying the target group's characteristics and values. Burke (2005) suggested labels delineate in-groups from out-groups, securitize out-groups, and affirm in-group identity.[50]

President Bush's distinction between terrorists and Muslims fueled a discourse that viewed Islam as an enemy. He labeled Islamic extremists, radicalism, and fascists, a term popular among neo-conservatives. This label, though nonsensical, influenced the American public's perception of Al-Qaeda's pursuit of a totalitarian Islamic empire.[51]

The Bush Administration's use of the label 'Islamic' to describe terrorist groups unintentionally extended hostility to the entire religion of Islam, according to Juan Cole (2011). Cole argued that associating a word with 'Islamic' implies it is inherent or representative of the Islamic religion, suggesting using 'Jewish extremists' instead.[52]

Similarly, the terms *Islamists* or *Islamism* have now become ubiquitous. They explain that *Islamists* are motivated for Islam to construct a public policy.[53] This ambition is seen as legitimate for Christians in the US; however, for Muslims, it is often related to extremism and even terrorism. The 9/11 Commission stated in its final report, 'Islamist terrorism is an immediate derivative of Islamism.'[54]

Accordingly, the terms Islamists, Islamism, fundamentalism, radicalism, and jihadism are widely perceived as equal to Islam, as Edward Said (1997) argued, akin to fighting against Communism during the Cold War.[55] Thus, politicians intentionally used labels to incite a sense of threat and danger, identifying terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda and their motivation, which were projected onto Islam.[56]

B. <u>The use of Depoliticization</u>:

Depoliticization, a strategy based on labelling, aims to criminalize racial struggle and crime by denying political connections or historical contexts. It focuses on the target group's identity, culture, and

ideology, rather than Western imperialism or support for repressive regimes.[57]

The Bush administration's use of *depoliticization* is best illustrated by the president's famous question after 9/11, 'Why do they hate us?' It can be understood by investigating the historical and political motivations of Al-Qaeda. For Bush, the answer was as follows: Al-Qaeda attacked America because of the latter's virtues, because of the American way of life, and because America epitomized freedom and liberty. As he explained, terrorists hold a common ideology: They hate freedom and freedom-loving people. They hate America because they know it is a free and a better place.[58]

On many occasions, the Bush administration linked the terrorists' ideology with the evil ideologies of the 20th century. 'We have seen their kind before,' the President said. 'They are the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century… [T]hey follow the path of fascism, and Nazism, and totalitarianism….[59]The Bush Administration's depoliticization campaign misled the American people, focusing on Al-Qaeda's actions rather than the US's foreign policy. Critical scholars like Bergen questioned why they hated the US.[60]

Osama Bin Laden condemned the US for its foreign policies, including military deployment in Saudi Arabia, support for repressive regimes, unconditional support for Israel, and continued bombing of Iraq. These were political grievances, not ideological or religious. The US was not targeted in 9/11.[61]

It is worth mentioning that the 9/11 Commission was to engage totally in forensic investigation of the attacks' causes. However, Ernest May, a member of the 9/11 Commission, acknowledged that 9/11 Commission's report avoided the issue of whether US policies and actions fed the anger that was manifested on September 9/11. The commissioners believed that US foreign policy should not be a matter of discussion in the report.[62]

The *depoliticization* of *Islamist* terrorists is not limited to 9/11 attacks and Al-Qaeda. Indeed, 9/11 paved the way for continuing the ideologization of other militant-Islamist groups, including the Palestinian Hamas and the Lebanese Hezbollah. As stated by President Bush, Hamas and Hezbollah hate both the US and Israel because they are 'ardent defenders of liberty.'[63] Ayoob (2011) argued

that Hamas and Hezbollah's terrorist attacks are not rooted in anti-freedom ideology, but rather a response to Israeli expansionism and aggression in the region.

The US administration and media misled Americans about Islamist hate, blaming it on Islam's ideology. The aggression was not due to US policies, but a dislike for democracy and freedom. The author argues US foreign policy may exacerbate extremism.[64]

Podhoretz (2001) acknowledged that the US support of Israel is a significant crime in Arab eyes, but argued that even without Israel, the US would still embody evil in the eyes of many Arabs. The threat of terrorism remains undiminished despite Israel's disappearance, with the US remaining the embodiment of evil to Arab terrorists. Bin Laden sought punishment for Israel association, leading to US ally abandonment.[65]

C. The use of Conflation:

The strategy of conflation is a process combining labelling and depoliticization to identify and target groups with unwarranted hatred, focusing on similarities rather than political contexts. It links individuals with the object of concern, presenting them as a monolithic threat regardless of political motivations.[66]

After 9/11 attacks, the US declared a global war on terror, not only on Al-Qaeda. This is best illustrated in President Bush's speech to the US Congress and the American people on September 20, 2001, in which he emphasized that the enemy which the US is fighting is a radical network of terrorists which are sponsored and supported by governments surrounding them. Moreover, they exist in more than sixty countries in North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.[67]

Al-Qaeda poses a threat to Muslim countries, conflating terrorists with governments and groups. President Bush argues the US faces shadowy terrorist networks and dictators with weapons of mass destruction. Proactive measures and military interventions are crucial to protect American security.[68]

The US administration linked Al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein's Iraqi Baathist regime, but most Americans didn't see any association. By 2003, 69% reported Hussein was likely involved in the 9/11 attacks, despite Al-Qaeda's religious ideology.[69] Although the Bush Administration knew that no connection was established between Al-Qaeda and the Iraqi Baathist regime, it worked continuously to

establish this association in the perception of the American people.[70] This is best illustrated when President Bush, in September 2002, asserted that 'you can't distinguish between Al-Qaeda and Saddam when you talk about the war on terror.'[71]

The Bush administration conflated Al-Qaeda, Hamas, and Hezbollah, claiming they would be defeated when Muslims recognize their injustice and emptiness in their vision. Also, President Bush linked Shiite and Sunni extremists as a totalitarian threat, with the same wicked purposes: to kill Americans, democracy in the Middle East, and gain weapons for horrific attacks.[72]

Al-Qaeda, Hamas, and Hezbollah differ in their objectives and political outlook. Al-Qaeda has a global strategy, while Hamas and Hezbollah have limited geographic scope and were created due to Israel's territorial expansion. The US administration conflates all forms of armed resistance with terrorism, while the Bush Administration created a monolithic enemy of Islam and its proxies. Hamas calls for the 'elimination' of Israel, while Hezbollah chants 'Death to Israel, Death to America!'.

Conclusion:

The present paper analyzed the facet of the US foreign policy after 9/11 attacks, and how the *Green Scare* was manufactured by the US policy-makers as a basic agenda to target Islam and Muslims both inside the US – there are no mentions of this in the text, and throughout the world. The US foreign policy turned totally.

Being explicitly manifested by the US administration with succeeding Presidents, Islamophobia has been deeply associated with the image of Islam as an enemy within the US public. Politically, US policy-makers will carry on treating Islam as a potential threat to the US identity. Thus, the strategies of labelling, depoliticization, and conflation will likely continue to be manifested in US foreign policymaking. This, of course, will be in favor of the US administration and its foreign policymaking in their approach to treat Islam and Muslims as a threat to the us.

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