

Civilization and Violence: Islam, the West, and the Rest

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Abstract : One of the most discussed topics of the last century happens to be if Islamic civilization is violent. Many Western intellectuals have promoted the notion that Islamic civilization is violent. Citing 9/11, in which 3000 civilians were killed, they argue that Muslims are prone to violence because Islam promotes violence. However, Muslims reject this notion as nonsense. This topic has not been properly addressed. First, violence of civilizations cannot be proven by citing religious texts, which have been used in discussions over civilizational violence. Secondly, the question of whether Muslims are violent is inappropriate, as there is implicit bias suggesting that Islamic civilization is violent. A proper question should be which civilization is more violent. Third, whether Islamic civilization is indeed violent can only be established if more war-related casualties can be documented within the borders of Islamic civilization than that of their cohorts. This has never been done. Finally, the violent behavior of Muslim countries can be examined by comparing acts of violence committed by Muslim countries with acts of violence of groups of nations belonging to other civilizations by appropriate parameters of violence. Therefore, parameters reflecting group violence have been defined; violent conflicts of various civilizations of the last two centuries were documented, quantified by number of conflicts and number of victims, and compared with each other by following the established principles of statistics. The results show that whereas 80% of genocides and massacres were conducted by Western nations, less than 5% of acts of violence were committed by Muslim countries. Furthermore, the West has the highest incidence (new) and prevalence (new and old) of violent conflicts among all groups of nations. The result is unambiguous and statistically significant. Becoming informed can only be done by a methodical collection of relevant data, objective analysis of data, and unbiased information, a process which this paper follows.

Keywords : Islam and violence, demonization of Muslims, violence and the West, comparison of civilizational violence

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