



# IOS NEWSLETTER

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## Thought for the Month

And verily the Hour will come:  
There can be no doubt  
About it, or about (the fact)  
That Allah will raise up  
All who are in the graves.  
Yet there is among men  
Such a one as disputes  
About Allah, without knowledge,  
Without guidance and without  
A Book of Enlightenment,-  
(Disdainfully) bending his side,  
In order to lead (men) astray  
From the Path of Allah:  
For him there is disgrace  
In this life, and on the Day  
Of Judgment We shall  
Make him taste the chastisement  
Of burning (Fire)

Al-Quran- 22: 7-9

### EDITOR

*Prof. Sanghasen Singh*

### CIRCULATION MANAGER

*Syed Arshad Karim*

### CORRESPONDENCE

#### ADDRESS

162, Jogabai Extension  
Jamia Nagar, New Delhi  
PIN-110025  
India

Phone 26981187,  
26989253, 26987467  
Fax : 91-11-26981104

E-mail:  
[ios.newdelhi@gmail.com](mailto:ios.newdelhi@gmail.com)  
Website:  
[www.iosworld.org](http://www.iosworld.org)

## FOCUS

In an article titled “Turkish Terror Victim Espoused a Tolerant Islam”, Stephen Kinzer represents Islamists as violent against Muslim feminists who fight for women’s rights. The article suggests that male domination is not part of the essence of Islam, and is the result of a perversion. Kinzer writes,

The woman, Konca Kuris, was often described as a Muslim feminist. In books, articles, lecturers and television appearances, she had described Islam as a religion that guarantees women’s rights, and asserted that male commentators over the centuries had twisted its essence in ways that led to the oppression of women. The message in this article resonates with the arguments in Barlas’ monograph. The main point in this article is to historicize the orthodoxy of Islam as patriarchal. In other words: keep Islam, but deconstruct and dispel its orthodox structure. In this sense, the “discourse of ethics” has a reductionist agenda. Islam’s massive corpus, systematized over fourteen hundred years, is reduced to a certain modernist interpretation of the Quran. Much of the hadith corpus and Sharia are questioned, and selective texts from different periods in Islamic history are kept so long as they adjust to modernist sensibilities. In NYT articles like the one by Kinzer above there is a tendency not only to show that interpretive textual manipulation and “perversion” create the basis of patriarchal societies, but to insist that Islamist men are also obsessively violent and perverted in their responses to feminism. Interpretive openness is central for both Quranic hermeneutics and discourse of ethics. An article titled “In Jeans or Veils, Iraqi Women are Split on New Political Power” (2005) illustrates this method well. The author express concerns about the future of Iraqi women, cites a scholar who argues for pluralism within Islamic thought, and suggests that this internal diversity may allow for women’s rights and other forms of reform from within Islam’s discursive tradition. The article states:

Many secular women in the assembly agree that Western models cannot always apply in Iraq, and that Islam must play an important role. But, like Dr. Raja al-Khuzai, they argue that there are many schools of thought within Islam, and plenty of room for differing views, and they worry that Islamists will make inroads into Iraq’s secular family law, which was established in 1959 and remains among the most liberal in the region. Today, for example, men can take more than one wife only under strict conditions. While it is certainly true that Islam’s corpus of texts, reasoning structure, and scholars are full of contradictions and paradoxes, there is still a systematization of knowledge in which an orthodoxy is articulated. And to assume that the complex mechanism through which this articulation takes place over a period of fourteen hundred years is simply a determination of history is to commit tremendous violence upon Islamic epistemology and methodology. The multiple contradictions and the existence of plurality of thought within the epistemic unity of Islam does not necessarily negate, undermine, or delegitimize orthodoxy. To assume such a delegitimization is to essentialize difference.

From Tanzeem R. Doha, “*Specters of Islam*” in *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, Vol. 35 No. 2, pp. 55-56

**Activities of the IOS Headquarters**

**IOS organises Meet with Press**

The Institute of Objective Studies organised an informal meeting with Delhi-based journalists on January 16, 2019 at its conference hall of the IOS in which issues ranging from under-representation of views of the minorities and the NGOs working in the field to the current role of the media, were discussed.

Initiating the discussion, the Secretary General, IOS, Prof. ZM Khan, held that the media were well aware of how the system worked. Since the independence movement in the country, India had been consistently playing its role in a positive manner. This continued till the freedom struggle ended with the attainment of Independence. This period saw the emergence of several ideologies like Leftism, secularism, etc. Then came the moment when the Constitution of India was drafted, which represented the aspirations of the people. The framers of the Constitution made it sure to accommodate human values and liberal thought.

He said that equality, liberty, justice and fraternity formed part of the Preamble to the Constitution, which made India a Democratic Socialist Republic. But then, the question arose if we had a formal instrumentality to correct the system.

It was up to the people to correct the system. The uniqueness, of the country of about 1.3 billion people lay in unity in diversity, which was first propounded by Jawaharlal Nehru.

Referring to scientific temper, he said that it was about taking cognizance of the relationship between cause and effect. Expressing concern over the attempts being made by the RSS and other revivalist outfits to undermine the Constitution, he said that they had been opposing its philosophy ever since it was adopted and given effect to.

He emphatically said that the basic structure of the Constitution could not be changed. This had been ruled by the highest judiciary of the land more than once. These organisations were busy polluting the atmosphere by foisting their ideology, which went against the spirit of the Constitution. If this was allowed to sustain, the atmosphere in

would also be held accountable for the failures.

“Against the backdrop of the consolidation of reactionary and obscurantist forces, we must resolve to work together for the preservation of the Constitution”, he said. He expressed the grudge against the media by saying that the Institute did not receive the press coverage due to it. The Institute looked to the media for co-operation because the purpose of both of them was similar in several respects. He regretted that there had been a total blackout of the coverage of the functions and the activities of the IOS in the Hindi and English press. He said that the Institute shared their concern and wanted the media persons to speak their mind. He assured them

that the communication gap between the two that existed so far would be bridged.

The Chairman, IOS, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, referred to the challenges being faced by the media and said that a half-day workshop on the challenges before the media would be organised by the Institute in the near future. He held that the suggestions made

by media persons would be discussed at the General Assembly meeting and a decision taken. He complained against the indifference of the media, by and large, to the work being done by the Institute in the field of research and publications. In this connection, he mentioned the seminar organised in Kolkata in April 2017, which saw the presence of two senior judges of the Supreme Court and a High Court, among others. The success of the seminar could be gauged from the fact the hall of Alia University, Kolkata was packed to capacity, but the newspapers did not bother to carry the news next morning.



L-R: Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, Prof. Z.M. Khan, Prof. S. Jamaluddin and Mr. Mohd Alam

the country would be changed for the worse. This called for a positive role of the media, the universities, research organisations and the NGOs as they were also under constant threat.

This could be corroborated by the fact that the funding to NGOs was being stalled, autonomy of the institutions being affected by direct interference in their functioning. Meaning thereby, the current phase was affecting all those who mattered. He maintained that the media faced a bigger threat, and if it failed to discharge its duty to inform the people of the happenings, media persons

This attitude of the media to the genuine work being done by an institutions like the IOS would have to be changed. This was not confined to the IOS alone. Citing such an example, he said that Prof. A.M. Khusro, the ex-vice chancellor of AMU and a noted economist of the country, once wrote an article under his name, but that was not published by any newspaper. It was, however, published when it was sent under a pseudonym.

He gave several other examples to drive home his point. He said that last year *Vision-2025* document published by the Institute was released by Prof. Amitabh Kundu of Kundu Committee fame at an impressive function at Jamia Millia Islamia, but the newspapers, including Urdu ones, skipped the news the following morning. It may be noted here that though this was the lone publication of its kind, it failed to register with the newspapers. Another important publication of the IOS, *Exclusion of Muslims in India* found no space in a newspaper, though it was the only book of its kind in the world.

Similarly, there were several other publications of the Institute that had not been published anywhere in the world, but they had been ignored by the press. He noted that the *Role of Muslims in the Freedom Struggle* and *Media in our Globalising World* were other leading publications of the Institute that could not attract the attention of the press. He observed that the IOS focused on the issues of national concern.

These included study of the issues concerning the minorities, deprived and depressed sections. It was surprising that while the real issues were given a short shrift by the media, the rumour of Ganesh sucking milk

became hot news and travelled through the width and breadth of the country. He stressed that there was a greater need to communicate the message of Islam today more than ever before. Commenting on the mainstream media, he said that instead of focusing on positive news, it was interested more in negative reporting.

He remarked that the big media houses were acting on the policy of denying news coverage to the issues that highlighted the plight of Muslims. Giving the details of an IOS project underway, he said that a series of 122 booklets in regional languages were being readied for distribution among non-Muslim youth in the 12-22 age-group so as to acquaint them with the basic tenets of Islam.



A view of Get Together Journalists

This was aimed at countering the false propaganda against Islam and Muslims. In order to present the true picture of Hinduism before Muslims, another series of books on Hinduism were being prepared. These books would include the teachings of the Gita, the Vedas and the Upanishads, goal of the Hindu religion and the mode of its worship. He informed that *Hindutva Aur Rashtravad* written by Maulana Abdul Hameed Noumani and published by the IOS, would be released on February 2, 2019.

Senior journalist and editor, Urdu weekly, *the Chauthi Duniya* A. U. Asif, praised the IOS for being the

only think-tank of Muslims in India that was engaged in research on socio-economic, educational and political status of the minorities, particularly Muslims and other weaker and deprived sections. He said that the Institute had been associated with the media since its inception through its media arm – the FANA (Feature and News Alliance). He used the occasion to suggest the institution of an award in the name of the first martyred journalist, Baqar Husain, by the IOS. He also suggested that a separate meeting of journalists with the Chairman be held.

Senior journalist and the representative of the Voice of America, Urdu Service, Suhail Anjum, held that the media worshipped the rising sun. Media always raised negative issues and never turned to the positive work.

Senior journalist Qasim Syed opined that the mainstream media had its own policy and the news relating to Muslims and the Milli organisations normally did not find favour with it. Resident editor of the Urdu daily, *the Inqilab*, Dr. Yamin Ansari, described the current situation as very volatile and said that the IOS should think over a strategy to face it.

Khursheed Rabbani, an anchor in Zee Salaam, held that the IOS was known to him for the last 14 years. He was aware of the news of the activities of the IOS being blacked out by the English press. Dr. Abdul Qadir Shams, senior sub-editor of the Urdu daily, *Rashtriya Sahara*, noted that the IOS was a well-known think tank of Indian Muslims. It had rendered valuable services during the last 32 years of its existence, he said. Aamin Saleem Khan, news editor, Urdu

daily, *Hamara Samaj*, observed that Urdu journalists always turned to the IOS for seeking information on Muslim issues. The joint editor, *Akhbar-i-Mashriq*, Tanveer Ul Haq, editor, *News Max*, Shakil Ahmad, correspondent, Hindi daily, *Shah Times and Hindustan Samachar*, Mohammad Owais, bureau chief, Urdu daily *Hindustan Express*, Abdul Noor Shibli, bureau chief, Urdu daily *Mera Watan*, Mazhar Husain, correspondent, DD News, Wasiqul Haq, Hina Tanveer, general secretary, All India Majlis-e-Mushawarat, Maulana Abdul Hameed Noumani, asstt. secretary general, IOS, Prof. Hasina Hashia, and ex-professor of History and Culture, Prof. Syed Jamaluddin Ahmad also expressed their views.

Journalists like Mohammad Shoeb, Jawwad Husain, Dr. Md. Tauhid Alam and Javed Akhtar, PTI Urdu service, were also present on the occasion. Maulana Abdul Hameed Noumani led the congregation to offer *dua* for the *maghfirat* of the rector, Jamia Arabia Ashraful Uloom, Kanhawan, Bihar, Maulana Zubair Ahmad Qasmi and Maulana Wazeh Rashid Hasani Nadwi, Nadwatul Ulema, Lucknow, who passed away recently.

Earlier, the meeting began with the recitation of a Quranic verse by Shams Tabrez Qasmi, media coordinator, IOS, who also conducted the proceedings.

**Activities of the IOS Chapters**

**KOLKATA CHAPTER**

**IOS Kolkata Chapter organises discussion on “Contribution of**

**Muslims in the Development of Bengla Language, Literature and Culture”**

The Institute of Objective Studies, Kolkata Chapter, organised a discussion on “Contribution of Muslims in the Development of Bengla Language, Literature and Culture with Mr Abdur Rauf, eminent Bengali journalist and writer and participated by many eminent scholars of the city on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2019 at Kolkata.

Bengal is one of the latest lands to come into political contact with Islam. It is also one of the earliest to fall a victim to European colonial expansion in the mid-eighteenth century. Between these two events there



A view of the discussion on “Contribution of Muslims in the Development of Bengali Language. Literature and Culture”

elapsed a period of more than five hundred years, during which the land turned out to be the habitat of one of the largest Muslim populations in the world. And ever since the coming of the Muslims the course of the socio-political and cultural development of the land has been deeply influenced by Islam.

Bengal is one of those Islamic lands of which history still continues to be in need of thorough investigation and intensive research. It is a land in which the sun of Islam once shone resplendently, guiding its people to the

true path, providing good governance and spreading through it the benefits of justice and stability.

*Bengali Muslims are the second largest Muslim ethnic group in the world (after Arab Muslims).* Bengla was an official court language of the Sultanate of Bengal. Muslim rulers promoted the literary development of the language, which became the most-spoken vernacular language in the Sultanate. This period saw borrowing of Perso-Arabic terms into Bengla vocabulary.

It is seriously felt that the Bengali Muslims must be reminded of their contribution to the development of the language, literature and culture so that 1) they earn their lost self-confidence and capacity, 2) actively and confidently participate in the development of the language and region along with the mainstream, 3) contributions of Bengali Muslims can be brought to light and 4) the tradition of Hindu-Muslim brotherhood can be highlighted as practised during Muslim rule in Bengal.

The discussion began with a recitation from holy Quran by Noor Muhammad Nadvi, member Rabta Adab e Islami Alami, followed by a formal welcome by Mr Afnan Akhzar.

Mr Abdur Rauf presented the details of the contributions of Muslim rulers and literary figures in the development of Bengla language and literature. He said that the real development and formation of Bengali language took place under the patronage of Muslim rulers, especially under Sultan Hussain Shah. He also spoke about the unfortunate divide among Muslims of West Bengal on the

basis of Bengla and Urdu language. He lamented that in present time the contribution of Muslims has shrunk when it comes to mainstream Bengla literature. He also felt that the contributions of Muslim litterateurs should be researched and brought to light.

After the speech of Mr Abdur Rauf, other participants, including Dr Sayeedur Rahman, Naushin Baba Khan, Sk Hafizur Rahman and Manzar Jamil presented their queries related to the subject, which were answered by the speaker.

The discussion session was presided over by Dr. Amzed Hussein, head, deptt. of English, Aliah University. Mr Hussein in his presidential address beautifully spoke on the topic with all relevant details and references.

The session was moderated by A Basit Ismail, acting coordinator, IOS Kolakta Chapter. He thanked the participants and informed that the Kolkata Chapter was soon going to translate and publish a good number of books in Bengla for the benefit of the Bengali-speaking people.

Mr Ismail also said that the IOS Kolkata Chapter had published several books on Hindu-Muslim understanding. With this discussion it hoped to begin to work with a broader group of people to spread the message of understanding and togetherness in society at a larger scale by organising seminars and symposiums.

The participants in the discussion included Prof G Sarwar, ex. professor, Calcutta University, Dr Sayeedur Rahman, professor, deptt. of Arabic, Aliah University, Naushin Baba Khan, research scholar, Rabindra Bharti University, Kazi Md Habib,

educational consultant, Mr Ekramul Haque Shaikh of Al Ameen Mission and others.

The discussants made the following suggestions to IOS Kolkata Chapter:

1. To organise discussions on a regular basis
2. IOS Kolkata Chapter needs to engage with Bengla-speaking community, both Muslims and non-Muslims
3. To carry forward this important discussion, an international seminar needs to be organised
4. To translate IOS publications in Bengla language
5. To publish a research project on the said topic of discussion
6. To organise a symposium on



A view of the Symposium on Scientific Approach of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan

- an eminent Bengali Islamic scholar
7. To do a research project on "Important Muslim Organisations in Bengal"

**ALIGARH CHAPTER**

**Symposium on Scientific Approach of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan**

To pay tribute to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the Institute of Objective Studies, Aligarh Chapter, organised a symposium on "Scientific Approach of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan" on October 18, 2018 at Aligarh. The symposium was presided over by Prof. Shan Mohammad, former chairman,

department of political science, AMU, Aligarh.

Among others, who dwelt upon Scientific Approach of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the following teachers and a number of students presented their views on the subject: Prof. Mohd Muqim, Prof. Towqeer Alam, Dr. Shariq Aqeel, Prof. Abu Sufyan Islahi, Prof. A. K. Qasmi, Prof. S. M. Waseem, Prof. Shaan Mohammad.

Prof. Mohammad Muqim, coordinator of the Chapter, while welcoming the speakers and the audience highlighted Sir Syed's scientific approach to help solve problems and to arrive at right conclusions. "It is valuable for researchers and also for those who believe in the Cartesian cause and effect theory", he explained.

Prof. Towqeer Alam, dean, faculty of theology, AMU, said referring to Sir Syed's exegesis of the holy Quran, that it reflects his scientific approach. He worked to awaken the Muslim youth to meet the challenges of the contemporary

world and equip themselves with knowledge and skills to meet the challenges coming from the West. For this one may refer to his *Asba' bey Bhaghawat-e-Hind*.

Dr. Shariq Aqeel said that Sir Syed saw illiteracy among Muslims as the main cause of their backwardness and opined that problems faced by Muslims could be solved by educating them. For this, scientific approach was needed to analyse the causes of their backwardness. He said that education would help equip them to solve their problems.

Prof. Abu Sufyan Islahi of the department of Arabic, said that Sir

Syed's approach was scientific. It is due to this that he arrived at correct conclusions to help solve problems.

Prof. Abul Kalam Qasmi said that Sir Syed awakened Muslims, particularly the educated ones, to rise and come forward to bring change and help meet the upcoming challenges. For this, he assigned the key role to education, for it helps change the mode of thinking and equips one to act with determination and courage.

Prof. Shah M. Waseem, former Dean, faculty of commerce, said that looking to the written work on Sir Syed, his thought and work, one finds how each one writes on each aspect of Sir Syed's work and thought. He referred to Sir Syed's saying which refers to both Hindus and Muslims as his eyes and added that speaking at Amritsar in 1871, he declared, "I have said that Hindus and Muslims are like my two eyes, but you will say that to one I refer as my right eye and the other as my left eye. Alas, if I could have one eye and refer both Hindus and Muslims as my one eye". Sir Syed was a great man and a profound thinker. Hence, it would be worthwhile to present Sir Syed's works and thought to the contemporary readers and scholars in a comprehensive form.

Mr. M. Serajuddin Khan noted the proceedings and salient points of each paper presented by the participants.

The concluding remarks were given by Prof. Shan Mohammad. He referred to the scientific approach of Sir Syed and to his founding of MAO College, which grew into the Aligarh Muslim University.

Prof. Mohammad Muqim proposed a vote of thanks for the speakers and the audience for their active participation and for gracing the occasion.

### Book Review

**The Great War and the Middle East** by Rob Johnson, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. 354 pages. This

book attempts to provide a new reading of the historical events that served to shape the Middle East, during and immediately after the first Great War (1914-1918). While it does not go so far as to make revisionist claims, it does make a claim to an alternative perspective on other narratives. The author questions how this grand conflict has been portrayed, not only in its immediate aftermath but also in its long-term effects observed in current regional instabilities.

The book includes twelve chapters arranged chronologically and by region, focusing on the military conflicts of WWI not as a study of "military history of maneuvers" as such, but as a "study of war" in a fashion that reflects the interactions of decision-makers involved in this great conflict (x). The first chapter introduces the reader to the "making of imperial strategy" focusing on "ends and ways" (1). By the only twentieth century, Britain appeared to face numerous threats from other great powers such as Germany, France, and Russia, and a relative decline in its naval power, the mainstay of empire (2, 21-22). Thus, Britain sought to set its strategy and to protect its interests through four means: diplomacy, spheres of interest, buffer states, and military and naval interventions (2-3). British decision-makers designed these policies to serve the strategic purposes of preserving national interests, upholding values, and preserving the security, wealth, prestige, stability, influence, and political culture of the empire (19). They also sought to economize on having large standing armies or land forces (14) and to cultivate loyal native elements and social classes (13). Propping up the faltering Ottoman Empire as a buffer against Russian expansionism and as a means of stalling possible cooperation with Germany (should war erupt) was also an example of a policy aspect in practice (26, 28, 269).

Chapter 2 extends the analysis of the previous chapter beyond ends and ways, to "ways and means". On the eve of the war in 1914, the Ottoman Empire had sought to reorganize and modernize its army as a way of preserving its own integrity. The British army, in contrast,

constituted of a small volunteer force, was a means well suited for expeditionary warfare against small states but inadequate for large-scale continental wars against great powers such as Germany (35, 39). When the war broke out, British War Minister Lord Horatio Kitchener perceived that on the western front Germany was too powerful to be defeated. He adopted the view that it would be more practical to give priority to knocking out its weaker ally on the eastern front (48). Commander of British forces in the west, Sir John French, and despite all the difficulties on that front, made the point to Kitchener that "the Eastern theater of war is one in which a success on the part of the Allies would have the most decisive results. On the other hand a great German success in the West would be fatal" (90). The overall strategic view was that defeating the Ottoman empire would set in motion a dynamic that would bring other Central Powers to the negotiating table with or without Germany, which could then be isolated and defeated (59).

In order to achieve this "masterstroke", the British high command pursued two interlinked sub-strategies. The first was to provide for adequate defense against any possible Ottoman counter-attacks aimed at the Suez Canal or the invasion of Egypt, and against the German strategy of fomenting revolutions among Muslims (chap. 3; 74ff). The second was to strike at the Ottoman heartland in the Dardanelles at Gallipoli (1915; chap.4). The first strategy seemed to work and the Suez Canal remained secure; however, the second proved a debacle, even if ultimately it did not alter the outcome of the war.

The following four chapters of the book chronologically cover the other battles in Sinai and Palestine (1915-16; chap. 5), the Mesopotamia Campaign (1914-1916; chap. 6), the battles of the Caucasus and Sarikamush (1915-16; chap. 7), and the Arab Revolt in the Hejaz and Palestine (1916-17; chap. 8). Finally, the last four chapters cover how strategy was methodically implemented in Mesopotamia (1917-18) (chap. 9), the way the Ottoman Empire was defeated 91918, chap. 10), strategies of

negotiation after the war and peacemaking (1919-23; chap. 11), and finally the making of strategy in war and peace (chap. 12).

The thematic aspect of the entire study –where it comes from and attempts to head – does reflect a measure of bias. Johnson attempts to deflect Western responsibility, particularly that of Britain, away from being the cause of much of the conflict that have “plagued” the Arab World and the region ever since (vii) in a favor of a “strategic” approach that restores this mission dimension of the Great War in the Middle East (ix). To serve the former purpose, the author challenges the view that the decision-makers of 1914-19 were acting according to a predetermined master plan. To serve the latter purpose, he suggests that those leaders were in fact simply trying to win a war and to make sense of what may come after it, without necessarily anticipating subsequent unintended consequences (vii). In other words, how things developed were not the outcome a *visionary* strategy, but of an emergent one in which victorious powers did not have a predrawn design, but were simply driven by the force of circumstances, for much of which local actors were to blame. As Johnson put it rather ironically “[e]ven the champion of Arab nationalism. T.E. Lawrence, was disillusioned by the lack of any prospect of Arab unity” (viii), striking at the same time an equivalent ironic note regarding Kaiser Wilhelm II being the champion of Islamic jihad (74-75). Even the Sykes-Picot agreement (viii) and the Balfour Declaration (229-230) are presented as disconnected events simply expressing “vague” ideas and understandings related to post-war “areas of territorial responsibility” (i.e. mandates) (viii). Nothing that is, was really being planned nor envisioned.

Attempting to recover the strategic dimension of the Great War in the Middle East and concentrating on the higher level of war, rather than on tactics and operations, as Johnson states the purpose of his study to be, should have yielded less perplexity in this regard, even if at this higher level of abstraction. Within the strategic framework of “ends, ways, and means” that he points to early

in his book (vii), emergent strategies simply reflect the ways through which a visionary masterplan or ends are pursued, putting the existing extensive means at the service of such ends, with the purpose of maximizing goals to be achieved (ends) while minimizing costs of achievement (means). The devised mandate system for example, could very well be seen as a way (emergent strategy) of reconciling means (instrumental resource) and ends (visionary strategy), toward ‘intended consequences’ (redrawing the map of the region). Accordingly, visionary and emergent strategies stand in a complementary relationship along a continuum, rather than as alternatives.

This framework provided for the dynamic structure within which subsequent developments took place. The study’s premise that Great Britain was simply reacting to local “agency” (or perhaps more accurately, manipulating local agents), trying to adapt decisions it made and to respond accordingly, together with the “central idea” that it was all about “prevailing concepts, context, and changing conditions” (emergent strategies, ways) tends to reflect part of the whole story. For that matter, the part obfuscates the whole (visionary strategy, ends) (viii). As Johnson put it, “[t]he assumption that Westerners are the cause of the region’s troubles is a refrain, frequently articulated, but rarely substantiated” (x). He does point out nevertheless that the “notion of ‘self-determination’ and the rights of small nations produced a direct contradiction of Britain’s plans for federations across the Middle East” (xi). This sounds like Britain did have a plan after all, had it not been for the League of Nations’ (i.e. American president Woodrow Wilson’s) ill-advised interventions that spoiled everything.

Mystification involves shifting the blame back and forth among several actors. Such attempts at mystification are not totally new and have been part of a historical policy discourse that aims at justifying or exonerating Britain from the tragic events that followed, particularly as related to the usurpation of Palestine but also as related to colonial takeovers. The study

nevertheless is interesting in a number of respects. It illustrates a continuation of a narrative that seeks to navigate British responsibility away from much of what is currently occurring in the Middle East, despite a continuous British policy since then, for example, in support of the Zionist construct of Israel. The study also underscores the important strategic insight that, despite claims about the events taking place in the east being a sideshow, entente victory on the western front was achieved there after all.

*Reviewed by Amr G.E. Sabet*

### Calendar 2019

Agents, Shop-keepers and others may place their order of the IOS calendar 2019 which has following features:

Page-1 Country-wise Ranking Press Freedom Index - 2017 and 2018.

Page-2 Crime against Children – 2006-2016.

Page-3 Country-wise Crime Index – 2017.

Page-4 Mosque through the Age (Started 2011) Five Oldest Mosques in India.

The calendar may be obtained from

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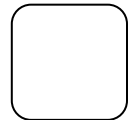
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