

ABSTRACT

Title: CONTESTATION FOR THE CARIBBEAN SPACE: ISLAMIC RESURGENCE VERSUS AMERICAN HEGEMONIC DESIGN

Ever since the publication of Samuel Huntington's '**The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order**' as well as John Esposito's, '**The Islamic Threat**' various critics have argued there is indeed a persistent Islamic threat to the Western world and by extension the non-Islamic world. Islamic activists themselves contend that Islam possesses its own theories of governance which include prescriptive notions for political and social activism.

This paper argues that in one sense the charter or manifesto of Islamic groups and parties is virtually predetermined for them. What differentiates them, one from the other is their degree of commitment to its goals, the time frame within which they seek to install an Islamic government or one which is sympathetic to their causes and whether they intend to come to power by the rules of the existing political system. The paper will focus on these groups' rejection of the established system of succession.

To understand the threats to regional security by these groups, the authors set up the enquiry by first giving a concise historical account of the clash of civilization thesis followed by an explanation of the role of the Muslim *umma* (commonwealth) both worldwide and in the Caribbean. The reader is taken a journey back to the beginnings of Islam in the Caribbean via slavery and indentureship and its gradual strengthening and strong backing from the Black Muslims of the USA as well as its recent financial,

military, spiritual, logistical and other forms of support from Islamic countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

Then an account of the actualization of the Islamic mission, via Jihad is discussed with specific reference to the Jamat al Muslimeen in Trinidad and Tobago which failed in an attempted coup d'etat in 1990. The paper continues its investigation of this Islamic institution focusing on its teachings and principles on one hand, and the numerous allegations of murders, kidnappings, arms dealings and other random acts of violence associated with it on the other.

A great deal of attention is placed on these issues because they force one to consider certain questions such as:

- 1) Was the 1990 attempted coup simply a political or social event or more a religious and historic one?
- 2) Was the coup a manifestation of jihad against the established order?
- 3) Why has there not been any commission of enquiry into the coup in spite of various calls being made for this.
- 4) Are the continuing random acts of violence a continuation of the 'jihadists' struggles against their 'enemies'?
- 5) Is it possible that the Caribbean is beginning to face new security threats, including an Islamic one?
- 6) How possible and realistic is it for there to be a 'clash' in the Caribbean as described by Samuel Huntington in his book 'Clash of Civilization, The Remaking of World Order'?

Finally a way forward is contemplated with other relevant questions being asked as to whether perceived threats like these would be quietly dealt with or would they be allowed to continue. If the latter takes place, the paper argues that, though it is difficult to anticipate every circumstance in which US action, direct or indirect is warranted or may take place, a situation like this may provide an opportunity for the USA to strengthen its alliance and or establish new partnerships with Caribbean governments and in the process further its hegemony in the area.