

## “Clashes of Civilizations or Failure of Politics?”

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### ABSTRACT

9-11 shook the whole of the world. But it was not new to the human history to witness the massive death at one stroke. It was peculiar because the attack was done by those who are originated from “the South” against “the North”, especially in their targeting the very symbol of “the North’s” prosperity. “The North” had dominated and controlled “the South” throughout the history, with its unchallenged political, economic and military power, but never been threatened by “the South” as we have been witnessing after 9-11. Attackers employed “terrorism”, because these “have-nots” do not possess enough weapons other than their mere bodies, and because they tend to utilize the limited weapons with the maximum effect to plant fears among the “haves”.

There had been many examples in the history showing that the “terrorists” attacked the “haves” within their society; against the politicians, emperors, kings, as well as innocent civilians. What is noteworthy here is that the terrorists after 9-11 often target the “enemy” outside of their society; from Afghanistan to USA, and from Arab countries to Southeast Asia. Why they dare to go beyond the territory of their daily life? First because they have come to obtain enough military and financial resources to conduct such attacks (maybe as a result of economic globalization), and secondly they are now aware of the tragic situation of their fellows, Muslim fellows for Muslim, Arab fellows for Arab, in Palestine, Chechen and others, through internets and satellite TV (globalization in media). There had been discrimination against “the South” by “the North”, but the people of “the South”, except for some intellectuals, had had little information about it; now they know.

Another question is whether it is the clash between “the North” and “the South”, or clash within the civilizations, that is, within the West or within the Muslim societies. Muhammad Ata, one of the terrorists who attacked WTC, used to be a secular modern student in Germany, and terrorists who attacked buses in London were from migrant families who were born and brought up in UK.

Most of the terrorist acts were caused by those who happened to be Muslim, and it is sometimes understood as “clashes between Islam and the West”. This should be

understood to the contrary. Most of the “Muslim” terrorists were educated in the modern Western type of educational and cultural system, either in their home country or in the migrated society. They were first marginalized in the Western society, and then adopted Islam as core idea of their new identity, alternative to their identity as marginalized and ill-adopted migrants in Western society. They find Islam as a source of solution to injustice, discrimination and frustration in their living sphere. So the failure of the politics, either in their home country or in the migrated society, to save them from being isolated and peripheralized, causes the terrorism; not the clashes of civilizations.