

Daniel Pipes' Critique on Islam: A Case Study

Thesis for MPhil

Islamic Thought and Civilization



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Abstract

History of criticism on Islam is as old as the existence of Islam itself. Scholarly criticism has always been valuable to the researchers and intellectuals. Present-day criticism demands evidence and logic of one's thoughts. This case study investigates what evidence and logic Daniel Pipes has given in his decades-long critique on Islam. The study aims to examine the strength of Pipes' argument in the coinage of his terminology like Radical Islam, Militant Islam, Moderate Islam and Islamism etc in the light of sacred Islamic texts and renowned Islamic scholars of the contemporary world. Islam has been ruling in the world for a long time and it is considered as one of the main religions of the world in the present era. Being a widely acclaimed religion, Islam and its political history and futuristic approach has always been a topic of a great debate among the scholars. This study will have a practical utility for the scholars around the world as it will enhance understanding about the basis on which the Muslims are being grouped. The study will further attempt to make it clear how far Daniel Pipes has been unbiased in his critique on Islam.

I dedicate my MPhil Thesis to my beloved **Mother** who was passed away in 2003. She has always encouraged my academic achievements I feel her prayers always with me.....

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Study of human psychology is interesting because of its broad ranged limits. Achievements bring pleasure and naturally opposite bring bad feelings. With the great blessing of ALLAH almighty I finally, did the task. No doubt it was a huge obligation and resulted with an amount of reasonable research command to me Alhamdulillah.

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At the end I seek refuge of ALLAH from Satan the outcast for any kind of proud. May ALLAH accept our deeds and grant us success in this world and the world hereafter. (Ameen)

Hafiz Sajid Iqbal Sheikh

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Introduction:

Islam is considered the fastest growing religion of the world. People from all walks of life round the globe are studying Islam. Islam and its concepts are main issues of hot debates and scholarly researches of present age. World are getting enhancements in technology, knowledge, economics and politics. Islam is being considered against the West in general, but is being discussed in common both in the East and the West. Modern tools have made the world closer as compare to past. Is Islam against East or West? Overall culture of western people is more important because of their research based attitude. Many renowned scholars and commentators are commenting on Islam. Islam is being discussed both positively and negatively. Western countries are looking Islamic values and culture in different angles. So, it is very important to launch a study that may pave a path for the scholars and researchers to explore strategic approach about modern critique on Islam in the world.

The founder president of Middle East Forum Daniel Pipes is one of those commentators who comments on Islam and different activities of Muslims. He has written many books, articles, joined media discussions, taught courses in many prominent universities, like Harvard, Pepperdine, Chicago, Navy War College etc., as visiting faculty member on various issues of Islam. He is working to make guidelines for the foreign policies of US and other European and western countries.

He discusses Islam critically in his all writings. We are unable to find a single topic other than Islam in his writings. He deliberately diverts Islam into different parts, like Militant, Radical, Moderate Islam and finally Islamism. He perceives Islamism a threat to the modern world, especially to the Westerners. His pro-Israel and anti-Muslims approaches are enough to understand his style of writing. He often seems supporting all those who are challenging Islam and Muslims.

Daniel Pipes' major work is his doctoral dissertation on medieval Islamic history from Harvard University in 1978. His emphasis is on slave's military recruitment as an established and systematic institution from ninth to nineteenth century, apparently first time in the history of religions. Many renowned scholars of different universities have commented on his PhD Thesis and have raised some academic and scholarly questions on the quality of research and presence of empirical evidences in this specific work.

Pipes' twelve books deal with radical Islam and Middle East. Conspiracy theory is also found in his books and articles. He fluently appears through his articles on his personal website (www.danielpipes.org) and many pro-Israeli and western journals. He offers his readers to join his mailing list to receive his new articles.

He is a famous writer, historian, political analyst and commentator. He initiated many forums and projects like, Middle East forum (MEF), Campus Watch, Clarion project etc. His main focus is on Militant and Radical Islam. He clearly supports military actions of America and Israel against Muslims of Middle East to attain their ultimate pro-Israel goals. Latest aggression of America and Israel against Syria is an eminent desire of neo-conservative Zionists, from which Daniel Pipes ultimately belongs to. Neo-conservatives are working aggressively against Muslims

and their thinkers and writers are providing “academic assistance” to America, Israel and other European regimes regarding policy issues of Islam and Muslims. They got dominant position in the president ship of Ronald Reagan. They are present in both American political parties Democrats and Republican. Most of them are former leftists and liberals of US. They are prominent in favoring military based decisions as compare to peace and harmony. As compare to old-conservatives, neo-conservatives are mostly belongs to typical Jewish background and they are clearly on pro-Israel agenda.

After September 11 attack, Bernard Lewis in his book ‘What went wrong?’ using insubstantial arguments, hold responsibility on Islam and Islamic civilization for the failure of Middle Eastern societies to progress and modernize alike the West. Lewis’ book has since been followed by articles and publications, mostly by neo-conservative journalists and pundits, who reinforce Lewis’ thesis and even blame Islam for the rise of terrorism as well as the rising tension between the West and the Muslim world.¹

Campus watch project is a deliberate notion of such mindset to manipulate academic response to the policies of neo-conservatives. Along with Daniel Pipes’ MEF, other neo-conservatives like Sam Shamoun of Answering Islam website, Bill Warner of Political Islam website, Robert Spencer and Pamela Geller of Jihad Watch and others are active against Islam who are funded by Israeli donors and promoting Islam phobic threats to the world. Additionally, Daniel Pipes has sound relations to the “Christian Right-Zionist coalition” group who is involved in huge movement of Christian’s rights in the world and they perceive Islam a threat to the world peace.

¹Bernard Lewis, *What went wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response*.(New York: Oxford University Press 2002)

Many authors, researchers, commentators and analysts have their writings on Daniel Pipes. We find them in two different ways. Jeff Jacoby (Boston Globe columnist), Tashbih Sayyed (former editor of Muslim World Today website) with many others are in favor of Daniel Pipes. In their understanding, Dr. Pipes' views are considerable to think. In contrary Kristine McNeil (The Nation writer), Nicholas D. Kristof (New York Times), Professor John L. Esposito (Georgetown University), Robert Spencer (Jihad Watch Director) and many others think Daniel Pipes anti-Arab propagandist and distortions maker regarding Islam and Muslims. In this contrast of views we agree with Daniel C. Peterson, professor of Islamic Studies and Arabic at Brigham Young University "if he's wrong, that should be demonstrated with evidence and analysis, not by name-calling."²

Sussan Siavoshi Professor of Political Science at Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas has reviewed Pipes's book "Hidden Hand"³ and stated that Daniel Pipes work is unable to reach at scholarly level and does not fulfill requirement of the readers. He unfolds that Pipes' book is full of contradictions and invalid blames. He stated it strange that how on academic basis we can say the scholars like Noam Chomsky, Edward Said Patrick Seale, and, above all, Jacques Chirac representatives and examples of Western conspiracy.

Fred Halliday from London School of Economics states Daniel Pipes' book "In the Path of God: Islam and political power" a work without academic and scholarly base. He advised the readers

²<http://ldspatriot.wordpress.com/2006/02/10/daniel-c-peterson-on-daniel-pipes/> Accessed 27-08-2013

³The Hidden Hand: Middle East Fears of Conspiracy by Daniel Pipes Review by: Sussan Siavoshi International Journal of Middle East Studies, Vol. 30, No. 2 (May, 1998), pp. 272-274 Published by Cambridge University Press

to study the books of real scholars if they want to get efficient knowledge of Islam because Daniel Pipes is unable to do so.⁴

Ira M. Lapidus from University of California, Berkeley comments on his book “Slave soldier an Islam” and stated that pipes’ dissertation is misleading the readers. Pipes is blaming Islam and Muslims baselessly. There is no reason to impose regional traditions as religious ones.⁵

Stephanie White from The University of Birmingham UK discusses that Daniel Pipes’ work is illogical and contains less empirical evidences. He rejected theme of Daniel Pipes to generalize specific practices of some areas of Muslim population to the whole Islamic culture and civilization.⁶

Micheal W. Dols from California State University clearly says that Daniel Pipes doctoral dissertation was not properly revised before publication. He also states that organization the work is not suitable to the topic. According to him discussion of the book “Slave, Soldier and Islam” is ambiguous and confusing and pipes cites unpublished articles of his own.⁷

In contrary, Daniel pipes gains support of his work by neo-conservative thinkers and writers. Jeff Jacoby of Bostan Globe writes an article in the support of Daniel Pipes and states that he has adequate knowledge of Islam. He presents that Daniel pipes is most suitable person for United States Institute of peace (USIP).

⁴Fred Halliday, review of *In The Path of God: Islam and Political Power* by Daniel Pipes, Political Science Quarterly vol.99, No.3(Automm, 1984), pp.583-584 The Academy of Political Science

⁵Ira M. Lapidus, review of *The Slave, Soldiers and Islam: Genesis of The Military System* by Daniel Pipes, Journal of Interdisciplinary History, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Spring, 1982), pp. 716-718 The MIT Press

⁶Stephanie White, review of *Slave Soldiers and Islam: The Genesis of a Military System* by Daniel Pipes, International Journal of Middle East Studies, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Aug., 1983), pp. 411-413 Cambridge University Press

⁷Michael W. Dols, review of *Slave Soldiers and Islam: The Genesis of a Military System* by Daniel Pipes, Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. 103, No. 3 (Jul. - Sep., 1983), pp. 633-634 American Oriental Society

In the first chapter of this study we are going to find out his profile and background, his academic career, teaching experience, media presentations along with his family background. We shall also explore his works including his books and articles. A profound detail of his founded Middle East Forum and its sister-concern projects (campus watch, Islamist watch, the legal project, the Washington Project, etc.). We are also optimistic to search out his affiliations in brief and Pipes' role in Islam Phobia network in detail. The chapter one will much concern with activities of Pipes as a facilitator of US, Israel, Western countries and foreign policy institutes and moderate Muslims.

In the second chapter of the thesis findings and outcomes of Pipes along with his recommendations to his addressees will be discussed in detail. His coined terms, like Islamism, Militant Islam, Radical Islam, Moderate and plain Islam would be the main headings of this chapter.

In the third and final chapter of the thesis a formal analysis of Pipes' findings will be conducted in qualitative paradigm of research. Differences between propaganda and scholarly approach or between activism and academic style will be examined in this portion of thesis. Pipes' doctoral research work will also be thrown in front of worldly fame scholars and researchers and their comments will be presented as evidence in the support of the thesis. Finally, criticism of the case always paves paths for further studies. Daniel pipes' criticism will also be analyzed without any biased approach.

Conclusion of the thesis would examine the truths derived from the research and will make recommendations for researchers, scholars and readers to explore ways of finding ultimate realities of the Universe.

Chapter 1

Daniel Pipes: Life and works

a) Daniel Pipes' Profile:

Daniel Pipes was born in US city Boston. He formed Middle East forum. He is famous for his views on militarist policies of the United States of America. He is also famous for his anti-Islamic views. He is an expert on Arabic language. His father Mr. Richard Pipes was famous anti-communist thinker. Daniel Pipes has openly discussed, criticized and frequently commented on the Middle East Affairs. He is also known for promoting Pro-Israel agenda.⁸

Both father and mother of Daniel Pipes were belonging from integrated Jewish families of Poland and migrated to the United States of America in 1939. Daniel Pipes was their first baby. Pipes started his education from Harvard Pre-school and got further school education from abroad. Daniel admitted in B.A. and opted to study with Mathematics as major discipline from Harvard University in 1968 but after two years he changed his mind and opted to study in History department. He visited Sahara Desert in 1968 and Sinai Desert in 1969 to get acquaintance with Arabic language. He studied Middle East affairs till 1971 and completed his graduation. The topic of his graduation was “A Medieval Islamic Debate: The World Created in Eternity, a study of Al-Ghazali”. He selected this topic to study and analyze thoughts of famous Islamic theologian, jurist and philosopher Imam Al-Ghazali. Daniel Pipes again joined Harvard in 1973 and received Doctorate degree with topic of “Medieval Islamic History” in 1978. On the basis of his Ph.D. thesis he wrote a book titled “Slave Soldiers and Islam” in 1981. He stayed for three years in Egypt and wrote a book titled “Colloquial Egyptian Arabic”. This book was published in 1983. He joined University of Chicago and taught world history from 1972 to 1982. He further taught in Harvard University during 1983 to 1984. He further taught policy strategy in

⁸http://www.rightweb.irc-online.org/profile/pipes_daniel Accessed on 10-03-2013

Naval War College during 1983-1984. Pipes was awarded as Distinguished Visiting Professor at Pepperdine University in 2007 for his teachings on international relations, Islam and Politics.⁹

Daniel Pipes also served for the government of United States including US Congress. He also received honorary doctoral degrees from various universities of US and Switzerland. He also got expertise on different languages including French, German, Arabic and English. He had three descendants. In 2003, then the US President Bush appointed Daniel Pipes member of board of the US Institute of Peace (USIP). The president Bush ignored the reservation from the Senators of the Democratic Party representing in congress committees on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

Senator Edward Kennedy strongly criticized Pipes' track record and experience.¹⁰ The neo-conservative community launched campaign to support Daniel Pipes. Charles Krauthammer a Washington Post columnist criticized attack on Pipes and argued that criticism is nothing but "another symptom of the absurd political correctness surrounding Islamic radicalism."¹¹ President Bush did not extend second term to Daniel Pipes in congress in 2005 on alleged pressure from some Arab states. On his advice the US opted to shift democracy into dictatorship. Daniel Pipes has its personal website with the name www.danielpipes.org. This website is generally filled with criticism and attack on Islamic leading personalities and organizations. The New York Sun and Front Magazine has advertised publications of Pipes mostly on their rightist outlets. Daniel Pipes has also maintained his personal weblog. He has initiated discussions on potential war between Syria and Israel with its consequences.¹²

⁹<http://www.goodreads.com/review/show/171787> Accessed 30-07-2013

¹⁰<http://www.antiwar.com/lobe/?articleid=4963> Accessed 14-09-2013

¹¹http://rightweb.irc-online.org/profile/Pipes_Daniel Accessed 14-09-2013

¹²http://www.rightweb.irc-online.org/profile/pipes_daniel accessed on 25-04-2013

b) Middle East Forum:

Daniel Pipes established “The Middle East Forum (MEF)” in 1990. The purpose of the MEF was to define and foster US interests in the Middle East. The MEF described that the US has strategic interests in the Middle East region with keeping in view of the interests of Israel and Turkey and other democratic states neighboring the region. The forum is also keen to observe human rights. The forum was also focusing on the issues of supply of oil at low prices and peaceful settlement of regional and international issues.

The MEF launched a program under the name of Campus which has focused its eyes on university teachers having anti-Israel, anti-Semitic, Pro-Palestinian and Pro-Islamic thoughts and background. The forum also tries to receive information of inside classroom discussions by such type of university teachers through students. Mr. Joel Benin professor of Middle East Studies at Stanford University criticized Campus Watch program and claimed that program has developed databases of university teachers not meeting the standard uncritical support of the policies of the United States and Israel.¹³ The MEF is also trying to stop debates to criticize US policies for the Middle East and Israel. The forum also supported the policies of Ariel Sharon to kill Palestinians. The forum aggressively supported the US strikes on Iraq.¹⁴

The Center for American Progress in its report in 2011 described Daniel Pipes and MEF as one of the leading think tanks as primary responsible for orchestrating the majority of anti-Islamic thoughts polluting the US national discourse.¹⁵ The report also mentioned that Daniel Pipes put his academic credentials for the sake of promoting anti-Islamic thoughts and is out of touch with

¹³<http://hnn.us/article/1001> Accessed 13-09-2013

¹⁴http://www.stanford.edu/~beinin/New_McCarthyism.html Accessed 27-08-2013

¹⁵<http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/08/pdf/islamophobia.pdf> Accessed on 13-09-20-2013

the ground realities of the Muslim world and has developed extremist views against Islam in the United States.

c) Islam Phobia Network:

In the United States the roots of Islamic phobia are based on the efforts of a small, well-funded and well-connected network which are generally called “experts of Islam”. This network used Islamic phobia to promote its hidden plan to support Israeli and US agenda. The Center for American Progress has described five key purveyors which have manipulated Islam phobia to increase the US support to Israel. These five purveyors are Frank Gaffney of the Center for Security Policy, David Yerushalmi of the Society of Americans for National Existence, Daniel Pipes of the Middle East Forum, Robert Spencer of both Jihad Watch and Stop Islamization of America and Steven Emerson of the Investigative Project on Terrorism. American billionaire Sheldon Gary Adelson, terrorism “expert” Evan Kohlmann, journalist Jennifer Rubin, and Emergency Committee for Israel’s founding member, Rachel Abrams additionally contributed to this network.

Daniel Pipes is considered as a leading agent of Islam Phobia. As a founder of the Middle East Forum Daniel Pipes is of the mediator of Islam phobia having researched based background on Islamic and Arab World.¹⁶ The Center for American Progress termed Daniel Pipes as scholar, turned anti-Muslim propagandist and also questioned BA and Doctoral degrees of Pipes.¹⁷ In 1983 Washington Post book in its books review of book authored by Daniel Pipes titled “In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power” revealed that Pipes only admires and respect Medieval Islamic History. The review also commented that Daniel Pipes considers that radical Islam is

¹⁶http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Daniel_Pipes Accessed 14-09-2013

¹⁷<http://www.councilforthenationalinterest.org/promoting-islamophobia/the-main-purveyors-of-islamophobia/item/1336-islamophobia%E2%80%99s-main-purveyors-daniel-pipes> Accessed 14-09-2013

desired to subvert the US government. One of his former colleagues in Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies has said that Daniels Pipes and other pro-Zionist American Jews are much more anti-American as compare to radical American Muslims are considered. Daniel Pipes after establishing the Middle East Forum in 1990 started propagating Islam phobia as bigger threat for the United States. The Center for American Progress stated that Daniel Pipes gradually get out of touch with the ground realities of the Islamic world and domestic and international level. The Center also described that Pipes is more extremist has rigid observations against Islam in the social life of the United States of America.¹⁸ After the 9/11 the Pipes presented three molded groups in Middle East Forum including Campus Watch, Islamist Watch and the Legal Project in 2002. Campus Watch was the leading forum of these three subgroups. In its mission statement the Campus Watch declared its objective to strive for evaluation and criticize "Middle East studies in North America with taming purposes. The Campus Watch opted to find out imperfections among university teachers and academic life in Middle Eastern studies in different US colleges and universities. The Campus Watch has also set its goals to get reports on suspected activities against the US and Israeli policies in Middle Eastern study scholarships, classroom discussions, presentations and in other academic activities.¹⁹ The Campus Watch quoted an example that a student of George Town University should have report the words of Professor John Esposito in the class that the Islamic movements are not believed to anti-Western, anti-American or anti-Democratic and their activities are only for portraying militant Islamic as a benign movement. The Campus Watch also vows to fight intolerance of alternate view by considering it as a direct threat. Daniel Pipes has claimed that Islamic movements have two

¹⁸<http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/08/pdf/islamophobia.pdf> Accessed 16-09-2013

¹⁹<http://www.campus-watch.org/about.php> Accessed 16-09-2013

divisions one is violent and other is lawful and both are exist to help and assist each other. Daniel has more worries and threats from lawful Islamic movements.

The second subgroup Islamist Watch has claimed to expose far-reaching agenda and targets of Islamists in the United States. The website of the subgroup has links including Investigative Project of Steven Emerson with assistance and support from David Horowitz Editor in Chief and Gaffney. The subgroup has tried to highlight and outline the Islam phoebes networks in the United States. The Islamic Watch has also claimed that the Islamists in the West are law abiding, quiet and peaceful, willing to inflict aspects of Islamic laws into government and are striving to gain special privileges in the Europe and US. The Islamist Watch also claimed that Muslim groups want to gain imaginary privileges including indemnity from treatment programs for Muslim sex-offenders and the laws putting responsibility of criminal acts on female rape victims especially in Norway.

The Legal Project is the third subgroup of the think tank of the MEF is entrusted to highlight legitimate protection of so called victims of the Islamist law fare.²⁰ In its website the Leal Project has posted quotations from Steven Emerson demanding legal actions against radical Islamist organizations involved in silencing their critics. The website has also claimed reduction of victimization of Islamist law fare. Generally the victims are people who have insulted and made baseless statements against Islamic religion. The Legal project has supported some high profile tarnished Islam phoebes including Geert Wilders who was one of the critiques of anti-Islamic comments. Wilders has said that he is not against Muslims but is against Islam and has strived to ban Quran in Netherlands and supported the efforts of the Legal Project. Wilders has praised the Legal Project for helping him to acquit from a court case in Amsterdam.

²⁰<http://www.legal-project.org/about.php> Accessed 16-09-2013

Steven Emerson has contributed on control of the Investigative Project on Terrorism. Evan Kohlmann has authored a book titled “Al-Qaida’s Jihad in Europe: The Afghan-Bosnian Network and has stimulated that the Muslims have opted to support radical Islam at international level. Evan Kohlmann has also written with David Yerushalmi for the Middle East Forum and Islam phobic contemporary Brigitte Gabriel’s Act for the United States.

Daniel Pipes has openly supported and praised Gaffney’s book “Muslim Mafia: Inside the Secret Underworld in such type of words That’s Devising to Islamize America. Daniel Pipes has also worked with Geller and Gaffney in the fight against the “Ground Zero Mosque” in which they termed this project as Islamist triumphalism which would propagate Islamist ideology. Daniel Pipes also strongly supported the initiative for closure of a New York City Public school for offering courses on Arabic language and Arabic culture. He declared the school as “Madrasa” and stated that all Arabic instructions are based on Pan-Arabist and Islamist language. The Middle East Forum received funds from some large donors which were also involved in funding for other promoters of Islam phobia. The some of the donors were The Donors of “Capital Fund” funded 2.3 million US dollars from 2001 to 2009. The same organization funded almost half million dollars to Steven Emerson’s Investigative Project on Terrorism in same period of time. In the year of 2008 the Donors Capital Fund provided 17 million dollars to Clarion fund group to foster projects of Frank Gaffney, Jr. Daniel Pipes was member of the advisory board of the Donors Capital Fund. The Clarion fund produced and released a DVD documentary with the title of “Obsession: Radical Islam’s war against the West,” This DVD was provided to 28 million voters of swing-states during the presidential elections of 2008.²¹ The Clarion Fund also financially supported Aish Hatorah, an Israeli based organization. The Clarion Fund was

²¹<http://www.loonwatch.com/tag/daniel-pipes/> Accessed 16-09-2013

declared as suspected organization from International Relations Center as a fiction opting to create a climate for fear for the United States. The International Relations Center also described that the financial assistance was also provided to elements working on Islam Phobia including Daniel Pipes, his organization the Middle East Forum and its other subgroups the Campus Watch, Islamist Watch and the Legal Project.

d) Affiliations:

- 1- Middle East Forum: Co-founder and Director
- 2- Jerusalem Summit: Member, Presidium
- 3- Washington Institute for Near East Policy: Former Adjunct Scholar
- 4- U.S. Committee for a Free Lebanon: Golden Circle Supporter
- 5- New York Post: Columnist
- 6- Jerusalem Post: Columnist
- 7- Project for the New American Century: Signatory
- 8- US Naval War College: Former visiting Lecturer
- 9- Harvard University: Former Lecturer
- 10- University of Chicago: Former Lecturer
- 11- University of Pennsylvania: Former Lecturer
- 12- Foreign Policy Research Institute: Director (1986-1993)
- 13- Department of Defense, Special Task Force on Terrorism and Technology.
- 14- Anti-Islamic Institute (AII)²²

²²http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Daniel_Pipes Accessed 16-09-2013