

Издавачи:

Канцеларија одбора за Косово и Метохију СПЦ
Универзитет у Београду – Факултет безбедности

За издавача:

Епископ Липљански Јован Ђулибрк
Проф. др Радомир Милашиновић

Уредници:

Проф. др Владимир Н. Цветковић
Мр Ивана Бартуловић

Техничко уређење и њрелом:

Бранислав Л. Валковић

Штампа:

Чигоја, Београд

Тираж:

500

ISBN: 978-86-84069-79-7

Београд, 2013.

**THE BALKANS AND THE MIDDLE EAST:
ARE THEY MIRRORING EACH OTHER?**

THE PATRIARCHATE OF PEĆ
OCTOBER 14-15, 2012

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	7
<hr/>	
MARTIN VAN CREVELD	
A TALE OF TWO DISASTER AREAS	11
<hr/>	
SHAUL SHAY	
THE MIDDLE EAST BETWEEN DEMOCRATIZATION AND ISLAMIZATION	21
<hr/>	
DARKO TANASKOVIĆ	
THE BALKANS AND THE ISLAMIZATION: TURKEY'S REGIONAL PRIORITIES	35
<hr/>	
GORDON N. BARDOS	
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND DOMESTIC STATE STRUCTURES: THE CASE OF BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA	45
<hr/>	
VLADIMIR N. CVETKOVIĆ, SLADANA ĐURIĆ	
GLOBAL POWER AND PARTICULAR RESPONSES (THE BALKAN WARS AND THE „ALBANIAN ISSUE” IN LIGHT OF NEOREALISM)	59
<hr/>	
SRDJA TRIFKOVIC	
TURKEY IS BACK	83
<hr/>	
BORIS HAVEL	
THEOLOGY SHAPED BY POLITICS: FACT IN THE MIDDLE EAST, POTENTIAL IN THE BALKANS	89
<hr/>	

VLADIMIR AJZENHAMER

THE WESTERN BALKANS AND THE ISLAMIC SCHISMS

THE CASE OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

107

APPENDIX

123

SUMMARIES AND BIOGRAPHIES

131

THE WESTERN BALKANS AND THE ISLAMIC SCHISMS THE CASE OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

VLADIMIR AJZENHAMER

Introduction

Religious divisions are an important part of the historical heritage of the Islamic world, which is still, to a large extent, heavy burden of mutual relations between “countries of Prophet Muhammad”. These divisions determine not only the nature of relations between Islamic countries, and the rules of the foreign affairs “game” in the Islamic world but they also determine their internal political turmoil. The “Earthquake” of the Arab Spring which has been shaking the Middle East for two years now is the latest example of how divisions among Muslims create not only reality but also future of this region. Without understanding the Islamic schism it is impossible to understand the uprising against Assad in Syria or answer as to why Arab countries such as Qatar, UAE and Saudi Arabia support the rebels in that country and yet at the same time violently suppress the revolution in Bahrain. Without understanding these issues it would be impossible to understand the complex relationship between Saudi Arabia and Iran, two Middle Eastern states which both claim the right to be considered as the guardians of the “true” Islam. Through the lens of Middle Eastern version of the “Cold War”, an expression which can most suitably describe the relationship between these two countries in the past few decades, best reflects the depth and significance of the religious divisions in Islamic

world,¹ and above all, the importance of Sunni-Shia divisions. However, it is important to emphasize that the Sunni-Shia division and the diverse consequences which this rift carries is something which is primarily related to the Middle East. This region represents both the cradle of the Islamic faith and the root of its division. On the other hand, the Balkan Muslims as authentic and “autochthonous” European Muslim populations have, until recently, never faced this kind of division. After the Ottoman conquest of this part of Europe a significant number of Christians converted to Islam. One part of the local Slavic population embraced the new Islamic religion and life in this region was getting, slowly but surely, a completely new and different physiognomy, marked by the spirit of the Sunni Islam. Due to centuries of stability in the Ottoman Empire and to the lack of religious reform movements in this part of the “Islamic” world, the Balkan Muslims remain primarily aware of the Sunni Islamic teaching and practice. The other interpretation of Islam remained remote and exotic to them.

But before we deal with the problem of Balkan Muslims encounter with the Sunni-Shia division it is necessary to first illuminate key features of the oldest divisions between the followers of the Prophet Muhammad.

Islamic schism - the basic facts

The divisions in the Muslim community began shortly after the death of Muhammad in the early period of the caliphate. During his lifetime Muhammad did not appoint his successor and after his death Muslims were forced to choose a new leader among them by consensus. Since it was broadly accepted that Muhammad can not be inherited as the prophet of God, the question of succession came down to the question of further management over the Muslim community.² The first two caliphs, Abu Bakr and Omar, enjoyed

1 Frequent public concerns made by Saudi Arabia on the rise of Iranian influence in the Middle East strongly support this remark. At the donor conference for the reconstruction of Gaza, held in early March 2009, in Sharm El-Sheikh, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Saud al'Faisal called for Arab unity in suppressing the growing Iranian influence in the region. Saudi calls for anti-Iranian and anti-Shiite mobilization in particular gained strength in particular after the start of the current „Arab Spring”, when Gulf Arab monarchies faced the danger of a stronger Iran-Iraq-Syria-Lebanon (Hezbollah) Shia axis.

2 Muslims believe that Muhammad was the last in a series of prophets. Therefore the revelation that he brought (the Quran) is also God's last and final revelation.

major support among the faithful, but the selection of Uthman ibn Affan to the position of the third caliph became very controversial.³ Turning a large number of Muslims against him, Uthman ibn Affan ended up as the victim of a plot which was a prelude to the bloody civil war which would sow the seeds of discord that would soon permanently divide the Islamic community into three major branches of this religion - Sunnis, Shiites and Kharijites.

Even during the election of Abu Bakr for the first Caliph there was a large number of faithful who believed that the title of successor must remain within the Muhammad's family. Given that Muhammad did not leave male descendants this group of believers gathered around Mohammed's nephew and son in law Ali ibn Abi Talib. They believed that he had the right to Mohammed's spiritual and secular heritage. Ali was forced to accept the appointments of the first two caliphs but when he was bypassed for the third time his party Shi'atu Ali began to confront the newly elected caliph more openly. Uthman's rule led to a general dissatisfaction which culminated in an open rebellion. The rebellion erupted in Medina in 656 and the caliph was killed in the urban riots. After his death, the Muslim community started to slide into anarchy. Ali and Uthman's cousin Muawiyah stepped forward as two most powerful pretenders for the title of the new caliph. Ali's followers in Medina proclaimed him as the new caliph, but Muawiyah's supporters did not accept this choice and war among these fractions became inevitable. Ali came out as "virtual" winner from this conflict. He became the fourth caliph but he gambled away the chance to completely defeat his main rival Muawiyah. Eager to avoid bloodshed among Muslims, Ali agreed to negotiate. Although, he was eventually recognized as Caliph during these negotiations, the decision to negotiate was fatal for him for several reasons. First, because of this decision he lost part of his followers, who will form a separate party since then known as Kharijites. Second, Muawiyah proved to be a more skilled politician than Ali and by skillful fraud and intrigue he would soon significantly weaken the political influence of newly elected caliph and once again start to threaten him militarily. However, Ali will remain caliph until the end of

3 The controversy was most likely caused by the fact that Uthman ibn Affan was from a family of Umayyads, whose members initially opposed Muhammad's preaching of the Allah's truth. However, there are also different opinions on this subject. Some authors argue that dissatisfaction was provoked by much more practical reasons, primarily corruption, nepotism and greed of the third caliph. For more see text Fred M. Donner, „Muhammad and the Caliphate,” in *Oxford History of Islam* (edited by John L. Esposito), Clío, Belgrade, 2002.

his life. He was assassinated, not by his bitter opponent Muawiyah but by the hand of his former supporters. He fell as a victim of Kharijit revenge, who accused him of being too merciful towards Muawiyah and his followers. After Ali's death Muawiyah will take power and establish Umaayyad caliphate in Damascus. This led to the first and most important division in the history of Islam. Muawiyah's followers would form the nucleus of the Sunni Islam which the majority of Muslims in the world profess. Professor Darko Tanasković described their doctrine as follows: "According to the initial Sunni stance, for caliph to be elected or appointed, he must originate from the tribe of Quraish⁴ and his subjects owe him unconditional obedience even when he is wrong."⁵ Ali's followers would form another important branch of Islam-Shi'ism or Shia Islam and they have remained attached to their belief that Muhammad's blood must run through the veins of Islamic rulers. For their rulers they would choose only the direct descendants of Muhammad.

The conflict between Shiites and Sunnis, the fight that started in the "early childhood" of this great faith, remains to this day one of the main sources of instability in Islam. If we analyze the main characteristics of this schism, it can be noted that in its nature this was primarily a political division. In simple terms, it was a struggle for the succession of Mohammed which can be clearly characterized as a struggle for power. However, another dimension of this schism is very important - a dimension of genealogy. Muslim rulers always tried to trace their origins to either *Quraish* bloodline (Sunni) or with the direct descendants of Muhammad (Shiites).

Theological context of this schism will appear later on, through further development of the Islamic thought. With the further development of Shiism, the division would be deepened with significant theological differences, primarily with the learning of the mystical meaning of the Qur'an in which Ali was initiated by the prophet Muhammad. Also, the belief in divine providence behind the words and actions of Shiite Imams inherited through the bloodline,⁶ emerged over time as one of the main specifics of Shia Islam.

After the first schism, the Islamic community continued to split on the multitude of sects, religious schools and movements. As Tanasković noted

4 Tribe of the Prophet Muhammad.

5 Darko Tanasković, *Islam - dogma i život*, Srpska književna zadruga, Belgrade, 2008, p. 162.

6 This doctrine is known as Ma'sum, which indicates infallibility of the Imam, who is inspired by Allah.

“...singular tree of faith branched in a wide treetop.”⁷ Analyzing the reasons and motives for further divisions in Islam, Oliver Potežica concludes that these schisms were caused primarily by: theological disagreements, differences in religious and legal doctrines, different attitude towards mysticism in Islam, and demands for restoration of the “original” or “fundamental” Islamic teachings.⁸ For our topic, two lines of this latter division are relevant: theological and reform-fundamentalist one.⁹ Wahhabism, the official “version” of Islam in Saudi Arabia, is a religious movement that emerged exactly on these lines of division.

Wahhabism is often described as a both radical fundamentalist and traditionalistic reform movement within Sunni Islam. This movement was founded by Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab in the 18th century. It is important to emphasize that this is one of the first reform movement in the Islamic world. Significant contribution was given to the birth of Wahhabism by dissatisfaction with theological innovation, revision of faith and other deviations of the mainstream Sunni Islam. Even today this movement actively aims to “return” the Muslims to the “path” of *Salaf al Salih* - pious predecessors from the first three generations of Muslims. Therefore, there are some opinions which exclude Wahhabism from the scope of Sunni Islam. Such position is reinforced by the fact that the Wahabi does not recognize the authority of any of the four Sunni *madhhabs* (legal-religious Islamic schools). They also prohibit many of the religious traditions that are practiced throughout the Sunni Islamic world.

Islamic “re-conquest” of the Balkans

For centuries, the Western Balkans Muslims tied their religious identity to the Ottoman Empire and for Hanafi school of Islam, which was the dominant interpretation of Islamic religious teaching on the European territory of the Ottoman Empire. With the war that followed the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the other interpretations of Islamic teachings found their way

7 Darko Tanasković, *Islam - dogma i život*, Srpska književna zadruga, Belgrade, 2008. p.160.

8 Oliver Potežica, *Vehabije između istine i predrasude*, „Filip Višnjić“, Belgrade, 2007.

9 It should be stressed that these two lines of division are deeply intertwined, and that it is impossible to make a strict distinction between them.

to this region. The situation that emerged in Bosnia during and after war in 1992-95 greatly increased and opened up new political, religious and security challenges for the Western Balkans region. One of the major challenges is the increased influence of the leading Islamic, Middle Eastern states on the Muslim population of Bosnia and Herzegovina and on the total Muslim population in the region, particularly the Muslims in the territory of the Republic of Serbia (Sandžak, Kosovo). But it should be emphasized that the same phenomenon can be noticed in Macedonia and Albania.

Three Muslim states in particular are interested in the Muslim question in this region: Saudi Arabia, Iran and Turkey. Since the end of the 80's these countries have shown continued interest in the Balkans. With the war events that followed the dissolution of Yugoslavia, begins the arrival of the Muslim jihadists from the Middle Eastern countries, which came to help their Bosnian "brothers" in war with Christians (Serbs and Croats). As *John L. Esposito* noted, they came inspired by the new global jihadist sentiment that was conceived on the Afghan battlefield. Sense of solidarity and global jihad sentiment was born among Arab-Afghans fighters (Arabs and other Muslims who had fought in Afghanistan during the Russian occupation) which "...subsequently brought Muslims from various parts of the world to participate in jihads in Bosnia, Kosovo..."¹⁰ Evan F. Kohlmann gives the following description of the true nature of this solidarity: "It would not be long before a much more serious effort was made by distant Islamic extremists to aid the suffering Bosnian Muslims. These young men, galvanized by hateful religious and political ideologies, were determined to turn the global tide against the 'infidel' regimes, even those outside the traditional boundaries of the Middle East."¹¹

This way the Saudi and Iranian interpretations of Islamic teachings found their way to the Balkans region, which had a significant impact on the change in religious consciousness and understanding of Islam among the local Muslim population. Under the mask of Islamic solidarity and through political, military and humanitarian aid, Salafi teachings, as well as the Shia interpretation of Islam arrived to this region from the Muslim states of the Middle

10 John L. Esposito, *Unholy war -Terror in the Name of Islam*, Oxford University Press, 2002., p.116.

11 Evan Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe-The Afghan-Bosnian Network*, Berg, Oxford, 2004., p.16.

East. In this way the traditional Ottoman Islamic heritage ceased to be the only form of practicing Islam and space was opened for different Islamic religious teachings that originated from Middle Eastern countries.

States such as Saudi Arabia and Iran have thus achieved considerable religious and political influence over the Balkan Muslims, thereby becoming, besides Turkey (which has a traditional presence and influence among the Muslims of this region) another “external” factor of their internal religious and political relations.

Bosnian “public debate”

The issue of emerging division among Bosnian Muslims opened manifestly in 2006 with a provocative text about Wahhabism published in Bosnian daily newspaper “Oslobođenje” (“Liberation”). Author of this text was Professor Rešid Hafizović, who is among the most respected and most prominent contemporary Bosnian intellectuals. As Professor of the Faculty of Islamic Studies and a great expert in the field of Islamic philosophy and Islamic mysticism, he is very present in the social and public life of Bosnia and Herzegovina. His comments on current social, religious and political issues are often used by the media in this country. Hafizović shocked Bosnian public for the first time in 1996 when he gave an interview to the Bosnian magazine “Dani” (“Days”) in which he sharply criticized the policy of former Saudi King Fahd. Interview provoked the strong response of the leadership of the Islamic community in the form of statement of Riyasat,¹² which stood to protect the “proven Bosniak friends and benefactor” King Fahd. Hafizović was by then among the intellectuals in Bosnia who were dissatisfied with the politics of the Riyasat (notably a number of professors from The University of *Sarajevo*) became known as one of the fiercest opponents of “wahhabisation” of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This reputation Hafizović will confirm ten years later, when he wrote his article “They’re coming for our children” published in the daily newspaper “Liberation”.¹³ In this article Hafizović attacks without hesitation not

12 Highest Islamic religious and administrative body of the Islamic Community in *Bosnia and Herzegovina*.

13 Rešid Hafizović, „Oni dolaze po našu decu”, Oslobođenje, Sarajevo, 25th November, 2006.

only the Wahhabi community in Bosnia, but the very validity of the Wahhabi teaching itself. He also wrote that Wahhabism is the greatest tragedy in the history of the Islam and the fatal virus which will soon dissolve the very substance of Bosnian Muslims. Those charges would again provoke very sharp response of the Riyasat and Bosnian Reis ul Ulema Mustafa Cerić. In the new statement from the Riyasat, Bosnian Islamic Community condemned “inappropriate qualifications of Professor Rešid Hafizović on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which was immensely helpful to our country and our people, when it was most difficult”¹⁴ The statement of Riyasat regarding the Hafizović article would then cause division in the Bosnian public and provoke a large debate in Bosnia about Saudi influence.

On this occasion, in a new interview given to the magazine “Dani”, Hafizović talked more openly about Saudi influence on the current leadership of the Islamic community. He said “...I must honestly admit that I have never imagined how far does the hand of the mentioned monarch reach. To the point where he begins to prescribe our academic standards and patterns of thinking and speaking. So things seem to have gone much further than we thought”¹⁵

Hafizović indicated without hesitation a problem of Wahhabism as a key issue for survival of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the problem that must be solved, otherwise “again a river of blood will start to flow trough Bosnia”¹⁶ In a few places in the text, Hafizović again predicted the possibility of bloodshed among Muslims.

The other professors from the Faculty of Islamic Studies have also take part in this debate. For example Esad Duraković and Adnan Silajdžić. Professor Silajdžić also strongly opposed the trend of the increasing Wahhabi influence. He said that Wahhabis in Bosnia are not able to articulate the ways of Muslim modernity. He pointed that they are not able to do that neither for themselves, nor for the others Muslims. Silajdžić warned of the danger of Wahhabis in terms of the dissolution of the essence of the traditional Bosnian Islam. “Wahhabism in Bosnia is installed as a distinctive religious, cultural and social

14 Statement of Riyasat from November 26th 2006.

<http://www.bosnjaci.net/prilog.php?pid=19911> (accessed on December 20th 2013.)

15 Interview given to the magazine Dani, Sarajevo, 1st December, 2006.

16 Dani, Sarajevo, December 1st, 2006.

phenomenon and as such it affects the social practice of Bosnian Muslims and other citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It seriously divided parents and children, spiritual leaders and imams, teachers and students etc.”¹⁷

During this debate, public began to talk about how Wahhabists penetrated deep into Bosnian institutions - secular and those of the Islamic community. It became clear that the Wahhabists already operate institutionally, through Islamic pedagogical academies, run by people who were trained for their educational work at the very source of this uncompromising Islamic movement, at the Wahhabi universities of Mecca and Medina. The Bosnian public found out that at the University of Zenica and Bihać students do not learn anything about Islamic philosophy or Sufism, because the Wahhabi teachings marked them as deviations or “infidel” learning.

On the other side, representatives and supporters of the Wahhabi circles also joined the debate. Infamous Abu Hamza, one of the founders of the Wahhabi community in Bosnia and Herzegovina responded strongly to these attacks, but he also went a step further. He said that Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina did not live the authentic Islam, which was introduced only after “their” arrival, and that the Muslims in Bosnia live a form of a communist, reduced Islam!¹⁸ Pro-salafi journal Saff also joined the debate, attacking the mentioned professors, and opening many questions about the orthodoxy of certain religious practices such as the practice of *Dovište* which is a traditional Bosnian “pilgrimage site”.¹⁹ In this way, the public debate moved away from the problem of harmful impacts of Wahhabi teachings on the Bosnian Islamic Community, to the question of orthodoxy of the Bosnian Muslim religious practices.

The tragicomic part of this story is that this debate took place in the shadow of the “Resolution on the constitutional changes and the interpretation of Islam” of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, written only few months earlier. Item II/4 of this Resolution underlines that “Riyasat believes that in Bosnia and Herzegovina there are no extremist individuals or groups that may undermine the unity of Muslims”!²⁰

17 Interview given to daily newspaper *Oslobođenje*, Sarajevo, November 11th, 2006.

18 For more information, see the interview with Professor Silajdžić in *Oslobođenje*, Sarajevo, November 11th, 2006.

19 Traditional prayer in the open, usually on the site of former pagan temples.

20 http://www.rijaset.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=195:rezolucija-o-ustavnim-promjenama-i-tumaju-islama&catid=235&Itemid=223 (accessed on December 20th 2013.)

As we saw, with their engagement in the field of anti-Wahhabi action professors from the Faculty of Islamic Studies provoked rage of the members and supporters of the radical Islamic movement, and of the highest levels of the Bosnian Islamic Community. And in that particular moment this story becomes more complex. Division stopped being based simply on “black and white” distinction (Bosnian muslim vs. Wahhabi), because Wahhabis would play the Shia card and accuse Hafizović to be a Shia Islam promoter. And with this counterattack, the whole public debate began to slide into murky waters...

In further verbal clashes and accusations, Professor Hafizović was marked as Iran’s insider in the Bosnian Islamic community. He was accused to be an enthusiastic missionary and agitator of Iranian Shiism. These charges will again revive rumors from the nineties about pro-Iranian subversive activities of his close colleague Enes Karić and Adnan Silajdžić. Yet it seemed that some of these rumors have ground in reality. Professor Hafizović’s involvement in work of scientific research Institute “Ibn Sina”, a non-governmental organization which is financed by Iran, could be easily characterized as an “effort” on bringing Shiism closer to the Bosnian Muslims. For this purpose Hafizović wrote and translated a number of articles of similar topic, seeking to awaken interest of Bosnian public for this form of confession and practice of Islam.²¹ Although he never explicitly declared himself as supporter and advocate of political system introduced by Khomeini in Iran, he has repeatedly expressed open sympathy for the political organization of Islamic republic. However, these views could still be considered relatively benign had Hafizović not, according to his opponents, crossed the line of sympathy and entered into open invocation of spreading achievements of the Islamic revolution beyond the borders of Iran in certain public events.²² It is also very

21 In 1997 Hafizović published a book “Signs of Shiite spirituality” (published by The Bosnian Book, Sarajevo), and in 2001 he wrote an article “To be Shia - being a Muslim in another way” (in the magazine Signs of the Times, published by “Institute of Ibn Sina”). In addition, he wrote impressive number of books and papers devoted to great Iranian philosophers and thinkers.

22 At the panel which marked 19th anniversary of the death of Imam Khomeini, Hafizović said: „The Iranian friends should take into account that it is much harder to preserve the achievements of the revolution, and even harder to do everything you can to spread those values to the Muslim world. It (the Muslim world) has long been ready to remove some of its political regimes.” Video of this speech can be found at the following address:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0k3nHHOIJQc> (accessed on December 20th 2013.)

indicative that his fiercest attack on the Bosnian Wahhabis and on the policy of Saudi Arabia (his article in “Oslobodjenje”), came less than a month after he officially became a member of the Iranian Academy of Philosophy in Tehran. In October 2006 he became the second non-Iranian member in the entire history of this famous academy. Also in late 2009 Hafizović went to Iran, where he was given the “Al Farabi” award for the best scientific research in the field of Islamic studies.

If we put aside the rumors of subversive involvement of Professor and Academic Raešid Hafizović (rumors of him being an Iranian “agent” and “insider”) and if we take into consideration only the presented facts, it is clear that his professional and social “engagement” may be, with a considerable degree of certainty, denoted as missionary activity. It is necessary to clearly pointed out that Hafizović and his colleagues from the Institute “Ibn Sina” and the Foundation “Mulla Sadra” (some of whom are Iranians by nationality) do not directly promote Shiism. However, in the part of Bosnian public their actions were for a long time perceived as “selling Shiism under the mask of Sufism”. Although Sufism (a mystical form of Islam) is not unknown to Sunni Islamic tradition, the fact is that Sufism is very compatible with Shiism and that it is very easy to sell Shiism under the mask of mystical teachings. So, the awakening of interest in Sufism among Bosniaks, can easily serve as a first step towards the awakening of interest in Shi’ism. That is why this activity can be seen as preparing the ground for conversion of the interested ones into Shi’ism.

All these reasons made it possible for Bosnian Wahhabis to draw attention from themselves towards, until then, an almost imperceptible Shiite missionary activity. From that moment the public debate is not only having in mind the Wahhabi community, but also the community of Shia converts which according to some unofficial data today has 2500-3000 followers. Bosnian public has focused on the activity of a wide range of institutions and associations which were associated with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Beside the mentioned “Ibn Sina” Institute and “Mulla Sadra” foundation, as main centers of Shiia missionary work were marked the Iranian Cultural Center, “Zehra” association, and Persian-Bosnian College in Iljaš. Dr. Šukrija Ramić, professor at the Bosnian Islamic Pedagogical Faculty, emphasizes a number of effects of their actions: “We already have the Bosnian Muslims who converted to Shiite

Islam. According to some estimates, there are about three thousand of them (Shia converts). They don't pray Friday prayers and *Tarawih* prayers, they don't pray daily prayers with our priests, they do not recognize Reis ul Ulema as their leader, they do not pay *Zakat* to Islamic community, but they send a fifth of their income to Iran to their spiritual leader.”²³

After a lot of mutual accusations, which eventually caught up media representatives too,²⁴ Bosnian public debate on “foreign” influences in the local Islamic community ended as suddenly as it began. Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, in order to promote Turkey's new foreign policy doctrine, came to Sarajevo in 2009 and in front of Sarajevo's central mosque delivered a speech about “big comeback” of Turkey to the Western Balkan region. In this way, he openly marked Bosnia and Herzegovina as the Turkish sphere of influence. After that, Bosnian media became less and less interested in the problem of Saudi and Iranian influence, and all the “lights” were pointed (and still they are) at new “Turkish March” toward the Balkans. Problem of Bosnian Muslim division was “pushed under the carpet”. But it's still far from being solved. That is why the Riyaset of Islamic Community recently established an “Institute for the Study of the tradition of Bosniaks” in order to determine what is, and what is not, the traditional Bosnian Islam. But this institution has failed to provide answers to the key questions so far. So the problem remains unsolved.

Conclusion

It is clear that the confessional “reconstruction” of Bosnia and Herzegovina is in progress and that the consequences of this process can not be accurately predicted yet. We must be objective and admit that “new” or “im-

23 Interview with Šukrija Ramić published in the magazine SAFF, Zenica, 25th October, 2008.

24 For example, at 16th Decembar 2009. Riyaset issued a statement which criticizes Duška Jurišić, host and editor of the TV show „Pošteno” („Honestly”), for the topic about Wahhabism in Bosnia. In this statement Riyaset expressed „surprise that Federal Television, as a public service broadcaster, took for the topic of its show a narrower doctrinal issues in the field of specialist discussions of Islamic experts.”

http://www.rijaset.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5526:saopenje-rijaseta-u-povodu-emisije-ftv&catid=203:mina-vijesti-kat&Itemid=459 (accessed on December 20th 2013.)

ported” Islamic teachings can not seriously jeopardize the primacy of Hanafi Islam traditional in this region. Turkish diplomatic offensive in this region additionally reduced chances for the success of Shiite and Wahhabi teachings. But their very presence brings confusion among the Balkan Muslims. Bosnian public debate clearly pointed that out.

This kind of confusion can have serious consequences. In theological terms unity of the Muslim community could be seriously threatened. And to some extent it already is. Members of the Wahhabi community have already shown hostility and animosity towards the religious heritage of the Balkan Muslims. Their mentors from Saudi Arabia assist this intolerance by all means available: “Saudi aid agencies have been responsible for the destruction or reconstruction of many historic mosques, libraries, Quran schools, and cemeteries in Bosnia and in Kosovo because their Ottoman architecture, decorations, frescoes, and tombstones did not conform to Wahhabi iconoclastic aesthetics that regard statues, tombstones, or artwork with human representations as idolatry and polytheism.”²⁵ But, architecture and other material historical heritage is not the only Islamic legacy which is threatened. Certain traditional religious practices are also “under fire”. For example, the already mentioned *Dovište* - traditional prayer in the open, or the local Ramadan tradition of eating plums for *iftar* meal. No matter how ridiculous it may sound, these and similar religious practices represent thorn in the eye of the local Wahhabis, and may in the future provoke some security incidents.²⁶ And when we take into consideration the fact that among the local Muslims we now have Shia minority too, it is not difficult to imagine that the traditional Islamic rivalry between Sunnis and Shiites, especially Wahhabi and Iranian Shiites, may also, in the near future, come to life in this region. Professor Ramić stresses this concern: “I’m afraid that, in Bosnia, in the near future, we will have conflicts of radical Bosnian Sunnis and radical Bosnian Shiites, in a similar way that we have them today among the Arabs in Iraq, and Pakistanis and Afghans in Pakistan in Afghanistan.”²⁷

25 John L. Esposito, *Unholy war -Terror in the Name of Islam*, Oxford University Press, 2002., p.108.

26 Some incidents of this kind have already happened. For example, a bomb attack on a police station in Bugojno in 2010., conducted on the jubilee of five hundredth Ajvatovica, which is the largest *Dovište* site in Bosnia.

27 Interview with Šukrija Ramić published in the magazine SAFF, Zenica, 25th October, 2008.

Therefore, it is necessary to closely monitor further developments: the potential growth of Wahhabi and Shiite community in Bosnia, their mutual confrontation and rivalry, and engagement of professors like Professor Hafizović and his colleagues (especially those from the institute “Ibn Sina” and the Foundation “Mulla Sadra”), as well as non-governmental organizations which are associated with the Islamic Republic of Iran or the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Bibliography

- Fred M. Donner, “Muhamed i kalifat”, *Оксфордска историја Ислама* (приредио Џон Л. Еспозито), Клио, Београд, 2002.
- John L. Esposito, *Unholy war -Terror in the Name of Islam*, Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Evan Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe-The Afghan-Bosnian Network*, Berg, Oxford, 2004.
- Гордон С. Метју, *Ислам*, Чигоја штампа, Београд, 2002.
- Oliver Potežica, *Islamska republika Imama Homeinija*, “Filip Višnjić”, Beograd, 2006.
- Oliver Potežica, *Vehabije između istine i predrasude*, „Filip Višnjić“, Belgrade, 2007.
- Ferdinand Schevil, History of the Balkans: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, New York: Dorset Press 1991.
- Darko Tanasković, *Islam - dogma i život*, Srpska književna zadruga, Belgrade, 2008.

Articles

- Interview with Adnan Silajdžić published in *Oslobođenje*, Sarajevo, November 11th, 2006.
- Interview with Rešid Hafizović published in the magazine *Dani*, Sarajevo, 1st December, 2006.
- Interview with Šukrija Ramić published in the magazine *SAFF*, Zenica, 25th October, 2008.
- Rešid Hafizović, “Oni dolaze po našu decu”, *Oslobođenje*, Srajevo, 25th November, 2006.

Documents

Statement of Riyasat (November 26th 2006.)

<http://www.bosnjaci.net/prilog.php?pid=19911>

Statement of Riyasat (Decembar 16th 2009.) http://www.rijaset.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5526:saopenje-rijaset-a-povodu-emisije-ftv&catid=203:mina-vijesti-kat&Itemid=459

http://www.rijaset.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5526:saopenje-rijaset-a-povodu-emisije-ftv&catid=203:mina-vijesti-kat&Itemid=459

“Resolution on the constitutional changes and the interpretation of Islam” of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina

http://www.rijaset.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=195:rezolucija-o-ustavnim-promjenama-i-tumaju-islama&catid=235&Itemid=223

Other

Resid Hafizovic speech on commemoration of the nineteenth anniversary of death of Imam Khomeini

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0k3nHHOIJQc>