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A cry for 'Daddy'

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FOLLOWING the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, American professor Francis Fukiyama concluded the world had reached the "end of history".

Liberal democracy had prevailed as the chosen form of government by most nations.

However, this comforting illusion was shattered very quickly as certain of the old "isms" again began to rear their ugly, apocalyptic heads in this supposedly enlightened post-modern age.

In the seeming blink of an eye we moved from the Cold War to an increasingly warming one between the values of liberal democracy, characterised by individual choice, and an extremist version of Islam that demands total subservience to its precepts.

As Hezbollah, the puppet of fanatical Iran and Syria, remains armed and continues to hold Lebanon to ransom; as the latest gang of British home-grown wannabe Jihadis are thwarted in their wish to crash planes full of innocent travellers; and as Iran comes ever closer to being a nuclear power, it is easy to conjure a picture of masked, cold-eyed men, shooting their pistols in the air as they march in hot dusty Middle East streets.

For people aware of the events of World War II, such a scene brings to mind other robotic thugs, just as committed to the creation of a new world order. And, of course, the order they see is "us". Just as in Nazi Germany, there's no room for anyone else in today's scenario.

Just "us": no more Jews, Christians, Hindus, Bahais, Sikhs, Buddhists or atheists.

And, a point that is often overlooked, no more Muslims who refuse to toe the fundamentalist line.

Welcome to the Orwellian world of Islamic fascism, characterised by hypocrisy and fanaticism, a mass movement of imperialist totalitarianism designed to crush any trace of individuality.

As occurred with Nazism and Communism, many seemingly intelligent and idealistic people have allied themselves with 7th-century absolutists who unquestionably and inevitably will outlaw the beliefs the former hold dear.

Terrifyingly, it is only the ruthless, perverted, cruel and lost who will remain committed and prosper.

A few weeks ago, I received a hand-written letter from a stranger in response to something I had written in opposition to totalitarianism.

She outlined various concerns including global warming, over-population and poverty and concluded: "No use sneering at dictatorships while we understand how profoundly people long to be protected, to be looked after by some immensely strong and wise leader."

This (and I do not say this in a derogatory way) pathetic, childish cry for Daddy exemplifies the fear many feel in this increasingly unstable world; hence their abdication of responsibility for one's life and embrace of fascism, in the guise of compassion.

While all tyrannies are fanatic by definition, there is something even more horrifying about the added religious dimension.

If the Lord is on your side, then every murder, rape, enslavement, destruction, every imaginable horror is justifiable. I have no pat solutions for avoiding this Armageddon.

The ideal answer would be the assertion by moderate Muslims that it is possible to practise their religion in ways compatible with living in a modern, democratic society.

Whether they have the will and courage, however, remains to be seen.

Other people will put their faith in diplomacy, or reason, or common sense, or military strength. Some will surrender or succumb to despair.

My prayer and hope are that there are enough people with imagination and foresight, and more importantly with love of life, who will stand up and say "no!"

But we are starting to run out of time.

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