

Hajj and Its Impact on International Relations

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Abstract: *Hajj (Islamic pilgrimage) is not only the world's largest transnational religious movement, but also the only one in the world explicitly listed as one of the religious pillars of the Islamic faith. Viewing hajj within the context of Islam's continued global territorial expansion of the faith from the perspective of international relations is of great benefit to a better understanding of Islam and its participation in international relations. The total institution of hajj is composed of basic institutions and different countries' management institutions. The two holy cities are the cornerstones in Saudi Arabia's construction of an Islamic international system. Hajj also has impacts on many specific areas of international relations. In the long run, realizing the interaction of hajj and international relations is very important for China's national security.*

Key Words: *Islam; Hajj; International Relations; International System; China's National Security*

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I. Background

Why do we study *hajj* from the perspective of international relations? This results from the fact that since the post-Cold War period, the global revival of religion has become a power as well as a phenomenon that can hardly be ignored in modern international relations. The strengthening of the human rights factors and the transfer of national sovereignty in international relations, the existence of subnational actors, and the pursuit of religion's legitimacy in international relations have formed the trend of the transition of the Westphalia international system. For the first two components, the international community usually holds a detached attitude, while the image of the religion is expanding from a single role as "source of conflict" to a dual role of both "source of turbulence" and "messenger of peace" (Xu, Y., 2012). For a world religion, *hajj*/pilgrimage is a bond to maintain faith and emotions of believers. A world religion itself is the pioneer that has first achieved globalization.^① Therefore, *hajj*/pilgrimage has an obvious and complex impact on the early and contemporary international relations.^②

Generally, "*hajj*" (*chaojin*) and "pilgrimage" (*chaosheng*) in Chinese are both translated as "pilgrimage" in English, which refers to a variety of religious pilgrimage or *hajj* activities. For the three major world religions - Christianity, Islam and Buddhism,

^① Some scholars believe that the three major world religions' global expansion is not a "globalization" process in a modern sense.

^② For example, the Crusades to conquest the holy sites in Jerusalem provoked a huge military conflict with the Islamic world, which led to the deterioration of the relationship between the Roman Empire and the Arab Empire and also cast a shadow for the future relations between the two religions. Another example is that in the 1967 "Six-Day War", Israeli soldiers kissed the ruins of the Temple—the *HaKotel HaMa'aravi* (Western Wall) and prayed there after they captured Jerusalem, which was actually passing their view about the ownership of Jerusalem to the world via a way of religious pilgrimage.

the visits to religious shrines and places are considered as religious practices. Among the three main religions, Islam has the most stringent rules about it. In Catholicism, the places recorded in the Bible where Jesus Christ and his disciples initiated activities, such as Jerusalem and Rome, are the places for pilgrimage, and the Vatican itself is also a holy city. In Islam, it is clearly stated in the *Quran* that visiting Mecca for *hajj* is one of *al Arkan al Khamsah* (Five Pillars) for believers who have the economic capability and physical health; this pillar must be completed once during their lifetime. Moreover, it also has clear and detailed provisions about the date, clothing, food, and rituals for the *hajj*. In addition to the *hajj* in Mecca, the Shiite Muslims also view the places where saints and martyrs died as sacred places for pilgrimage. These places are mainly located in Iran and Iraq, where the Shiite Muslims are concentrated. Buddhism has many branches, and Tibetan Buddhism especially worships religious leaders, the places of their birth, death and major activities can be places of pilgrimage.

The religious pilgrimage is transnational in terms of physical distance and globalization of beliefs; therefore, it has multiple impacts on the existing international system. First, the positive role, for example, Vatican's supports on Catholics visiting Israel for pilgrimage have promoted the development of relations between the Holy See and Israel. South Korea also supports Christians and Muslims to conduct pilgrimage in Israel and Saudi Arabia, respectively, which has promoted its friendly relations with the West and the Islamic world (Niu, S., 2014; Niu, S., 2015). Second, the negative role, for example, India's Dharamsala, where the 14th Dalai Lama went into exile, became a place of pilgrimage for Tibetan Buddhists all over the world. Many of these believers exert their influence on the host governments and civil societies via different ways so as to urge them to support Tibet as a

sovereign state. The third is beyond the existing international system, such as Islam. For Islam has a strong trend of politicization and global expansionary tendency, since the *Enghelābe Eslāmi* (Islamic Revolution) in Iran in 1979, the Islamic international system had begun remodeling in the Middle East: Saudi Arabia, which manages the two holy sites, was trying to build a Sunni Islamic international system, while Iran, which manages Shiite shrines, was trying to build a Shiite world network (Niu, S., 2011: June 9). Middle Eastern Islamic countries internally dealing with many inter-state issues rely on Islamic principles rather than modern international relations principles, which leads to a questioning by Muslims about the recognition of religion, nation-state and even Westphalia international system.

The Iranian Islamic Revolution (1979), the Gulf War (1990-1991), 9/11, the Afghan War (2001), the Iraqi War (2003), and the "Arab Spring" (since the end of 2010) have all contributed to the rise of Islamic forces and their approach to national power in the Middle East. This is inextricably linked with the Islamic revival thinking in the Middle East. Islam has increasingly had its place in modern international relations. "Believing in Islam" is also expanding globally. "Believing in Islam" means the territorial expansion of the Islamic faith throughout the world, including Muslims in Islamic countries (large settlements), Muslims in non-Islamic countries' Muslim regions (small communities) and Muslims in other regions of non-Islamic countries (scattered and mixed). They have a common bond--the Islamic faith, and Islamic countries constitute the core of the Islamic international system. The continuous expansion of the territory of "Believing in Islam" has coincided with many issues, such as the transformation of the international system, global governance, war and peace and so forth. They completely focused on the major issues of modern

international relations. Muslims around the world are different from each other in terms of correct religious doctrine, political belief and understanding in other areas, but they have no disagreement on the “Five Pillars” and “Six Credendums” which are the cornerstone of Islam. *Hajj* is not only the most spectacular and the largest transnational religious event in the world as one of the “Five Pillars”, but also the sole religious activity that is explicitly regarded as a religious duty within the world religions. As is shown, the study of *hajj* under the perspective of international relations is of great benefit for a better understanding of Islam and its participation in international relations.

II. Hajj and the Holy Land – Saudi Arabia

The *Quran* is the most important classical masterpiece in Islam. The *hajj* is mentioned several times in different chapters of *Quran*, such as “Al-Baqara”, “Al-‘Imran”, “Al-Ma’ida”, “Al-Tawba”, etc., and most concentrated in “Al-Hajj”. These chapters have detailed provisions on the time, places, rituals, taboos, food, and sacrifice during the *hajj*, of which the specific time and places are the most important. First, the time, “They ask you [Prophet] about crescent moons. Say, ‘They show the times appointed for people, and for the pilgrimage’”, “The pilgrimage takes place during the prescribed months.”^① Second, the places, “God has made the *Ka’ba* - the Sacred House - a means of support for people”^②, “Safa and Marwa are among the rites of God, so for those who make major and minor pilgrimage to the House it is no offence to circulate between the two.”^③ Therefore, from the

^① “Al-Baqara” of the *Quran* (2: 189; 2:197). *The Qur’an*, translated by M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

^② “Al-Ma’ida” of the *Quran* (5: 97).

^③ “Al-Baqara” of the *Quran* (2: 158).

perspective of “Believing Islam”, *hajj* is the clarifying words of Allah through its messenger Prophet Muhammad compiled in the *Quran*. In other words, *hajj* is God’s will, and any real Muslim cannot deny the existence of this pillar. *Hajj* is an institutional arrangement for Muslims from Allah.

To observe and analyze the *hajj* from the perspective of institutionalism is quite reasonable. “An institution may be a rule that directs behavior by means of sanctions, i.e., it is a norm that has been institutionalized. Or, an institution may be a system of behavior that is directed by means of a set of rules, i.e. it is organized activity” (Lane, J. & Ersson, S., 2000: 23). From this perspective, Allah has established rules and institutionalized norms for *hajj*. As an annual event with specific time and places, the *hajj* is trans-regionally organized on a considerably scale, and any behavior during *hajj* that is in violation of the Islamic doctrine will be punished, as the *Quran* reads, “The first House [of worship] to be established for people was the one at Mecca. It is a blessed place; a source of guidance for all people”, “Pilgrimage to the House is a duty owed to God by people who are able to undertake it. Those who reject this [should know that] God has no need of anyone.”^① Those who have the ability to perform *hajj* but reject it are actually deprived from the Muslim identity, which is a tremendous deterrent for devout Muslims. As the *Quran* mentions vaguely about Muslims who will “be able to” perform *hajj*, which in fact admits that the existence of Muslims who are “not able to” perform *hajj*. Meanwhile, Muslims have the obligation of performing *hajj* and cannot deny it.

Therefore, jurists have perfected the basic institution of *hajj* designed by Allah, rather than revise it, namely, the required

^① “Al-‘Imran” of the *Quran* (3: 96-97).

conditions of the *hajjis* are: believing in Islam, be an adult, sane person, freeman, and people having the ability to perform *hajj*. People who “have the ability” refer to those who are healthy, can ensure a safe trip, have certain property and own transportation means.^① This has reconciled the contradictions between many Muslims’ faith and their inability to perform *hajj* to a great extent. Jurists make their judgment in strict accordance with the original code words of the *Quran*; therefore, this interpretation is actually still within Allah’s institutional design.

The *Quran* and *Hadith* together constitute the documents of legitimacy for the basic institution of *hajj*, and the *Quran* is the eternal protection for the uncorrectable basic institution of *hajj*. Allah is the designer of this basic system of *hajj*, and Muslims are practitioners; due to the equivalent relations between God and believers, the basic institution of *hajj* designed by Allah has the characteristics of formality and one-directionality, namely, the transfer of norms of *hajj* as a unidirectional process from Allah to Muslims, while the reverse amendment is impossible. Muslims must comply with the institution of *hajj* and cannot modify or abolish it. Although *hajj* serves as one of the basic institutions of Islam, the concrete *hajj* activities planning and protection of the Holy Land depend on the cooperation between the authorities controlling the Holy Land and other countries, which is based on the fact that Muslims spread around the world and the controlled boundaries have limited the free flow of Muslims to Mecca. Muslims must show political loyalty to their motherlands. Therefore, concrete *hajj* management did not exist initially, and authorities that ruled the Holy Land in history and other countries’ governments together composing the designers of the

^① “Necessary Conditions for Hajj”,
<http://www.norislam.com/islamlaw/fd.asp?id=407>. [in Chinese]

hajj management institution.

Since the establishment of the third Saudi State, the Islamic holy city Mecca has been under effective governance of the royal family, the clergy and the government. Therefore, after the abolition of the caliphate in Turkey in 1926 by Kemal Atatürk, Saudi Arabia gradually titled itself as the “Leader of Islam” due to its unique status and thus is at the heart of the *hajj* management institution. Saudi Arabia not only set up the Ministry of Hajj within the central government, but has also spent a huge amount of money to repair *Al-Masjid al-Ḥarām* (Sacred Mosque), the *Ka’ba* and other sites in Mecca, developed a differentiated policy of *hajj* for Muslims in Saudi Arabia, in other Islamic countries and in non-Islamic countries. Its core principle is Saudi Muslims should leave more opportunities for foreign Muslims. For example, since 1999, the Saudis are allowed to perform *hajj* only one time in every five years, and there is a quota allocation for Muslims in other Islamic countries; but for Muslims in non-Islamic countries, there is no quota restriction in principle. Saudi Arabia’s effort in differentiating the quota of *hajjis* matches their positions in different kinds of countries.

1) *Hajj* management institution docking between the governments of Saudi Arabia and other countries varies in accordance with concrete situations.

First, it is easier for Saudi Arabia to reach agreements with Islamic countries in an organized and institutionalized way, that is, *hajj* management institution docking under a formal cooperation mechanism. It comes from the core role of Islam in Islamic countries, so that the governments of these countries’ attaching importance to *hajj* is of religious nature primarily. The Islamic World League was established in 1962, which played an important role in coordinating every country’s *hajj* policies, and promoting

the cooperation among Islamic countries in various fields. But there are different types of countries within the Islamic world, countries vary in different types. Geographically, they can be divided into Middle Eastern countries, Central Asian countries and Southeastern Asian countries; in terms of relations between state and religion, they can be divided into theocratic republic, monarchy of the state-religion alliance, and secular republic, etc. Those secular republics under the long reign of authoritarian leaders, often suppress Islamic forces. For example, Turkmenistan put very tight control over *hajj* activities, and even prohibited Turkmen Muslims from performing *hajj* in some years. The Turkman government takes strict control over mosques and Muslims, and decides who can participate in the annual *hajj*. In 2010, they only dispatched 188 *hajjis*, far less than Saudi government's quota for Turkmenistan, allocated for 4,500, based on the proportion of 1‰ in accordance with the country's population (Ataeva, N., 2010: November 10). Unfriendly relations between some Islamic countries and Saudi Arabia will also affect their citizens' *hajj* activities. For example, in December 2004, Gaddafi was accused of being involved in the assassination attempt on the Saudi Crown Prince which happened to occur shortly before the start of *hajj*. Although Prince Faisal condemned it, he still said, "the Saudi government promised to limit our reaction within the current initiatives...although the outrageous thing happened...this is for our fraternal Libyan people, especially when the *hajj* in Mecca is approaching, we do not want to see any obstacles in front of the Libyan *hajjis*" (Ye, P. & Liu, G. & Tu, L., 2004: December 24).

Second, *hajj* management institution docking between Saudi Arabia and non-Islamic countries varies from country to country, and there even are contradictions and conflicts. The US, European

countries, and South Korea which believe in the values of freedom and democracy, and support freedom of beliefs, do not interfere with their Muslim citizens' *hajj* from the aspect of institution. There are usually no *hajj* management sectors or regulations on *hajj* in these countries, and *hajj* is just treated in the context of personal belief. As a result, Muslims in these countries often organize their annual *hajj* activities through unofficial travel agencies authorized by the Saudi government. However, at times, certain government sectors of these countries behave negatively regarding *hajj*. For example, in 2010, 17 Muslims from North Virginia missed their flight to Saudi Arabia, because customs and frontier inspection departments detained their passports with *hajj* visas, which were sent by an authorized *hajj* travel agency via UPS. The chairman of the Virginia Muslim Association, Rafi Uddin Ahmed, said, "Some people commented that if those passengers were sent to 'John Smith', will they still be detained?" (Bahrampour, T., 2010: November 9). This has reflected the mistrust toward US Muslims after the 9/11 due to Islamophobia. In some other non-Islamic countries, such as China, the government regulates the *hajj*. All in all, the basic institution of *hajj* and the *hajj* management institutions in all countries together constitute the general *hajj* institution of Islam.

2) Saudi Arabia has established the Islamic international system based on the control over the Holy Land

Mecca is the destination of *hajjis*. Muslims worldwide, view Mecca as the center of the world. Nowadays, Saudi Arabia actively conducts a Saudi-led Islamic international system based on the control of *hajj* over the Holy Land. *Hajj* is very important for Saudi Arabia. In 1970s, Egypt made peace with Israel, which signaled the end of Nasser's Arab nationalism. Moreover, highly modernized Iran became a theocratic republic in 1979, which

substituted of the Westphalian principles by Islamic principles (Xu, Y., 2016: April 5). The Islamic Republic of Iran itself is a combination of Islamic principles and Westphalia principles: Firstly, influenced by Christianity's "return" to international relations during the Cold War. As for the Islamic world as a whole, Islam was not described in the Westphalia principles, and it has never been "exiled" in modern international relations. Secondly, the dilemma from unsuccessful modernization or the corruption and depravity in the modernization process in the Middle East has resulted in the revival of traditional Islamic values. Iran exports its Khomeini doctrine-centered values worldwide, intending to establish a community of Islamic radicalism, which includes Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Palestine, and Syria authorities. Saudi Arabia is pursuing anti-Nasserism and anti-Khomeini principles, trying to build an international Islamic camp with the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) as the main forum. After the end of the Cold War, al-Qaeda emerged as the representative of Islamic extremism, building a global network of extremism and terrorism. The three above together constitute the Islamic international system. Such a system is largely beyond the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in the Westphalia system; sovereignty belongs to God, according to the Holy *Quran* (Niu, S., 2011: June 9). As a moderate Islamic country, Saudi Arabia wishes to gain the leadership in the Islamic international system with its advantage of owning the two holy cities, because "in more than a thousand years, the institution of *hajj* in holy land, plays a major role in uniting Muslims around the world, and plays the most effective linking role in connecting a variety of religious sects" (Hitti, P., 1995: 159).

3) The role of revenues from *Hajj* help in maintaining Saudi Arabia's national independent status, and based on this to

promote its great diplomatic influence as the “Leader of the Islamic World”.

Mostly a desert, Saudi Arabia, before the discovery of oil, was a barren land. As a result, Great Britain agreed to allow the Saudi royal family to unify most parts of the Arabian Peninsula. In 1919, the Kingdom of Hejaz dominated by the Hashemite family successfully took part in the Paris Peace Conference as a victorious nation, and gained its sovereignty much earlier than most other Middle East countries. With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the disregard of the Republic of Turkey, the Saudi royal family eventually overthrew the Hashemite rule and captured Mecca in 1924. Because of the ownership of the two Islamic holy cities and the existence of the basic institution of *hajj*, *hajj*-related economic activities have become Saudi main source of revenue before the large-scale exploitation of oil, which laid a solid financial foundation for the survival of Saudi Arabia, and the future establishment of an Islamic international system after the end of caliphate. Nowadays, the *hajj*-related tourism, industries and infrastructure construction are also a considerable source of incomes for Saudi Arabia. As the *hajjis* come from around the world, Saudi Arabia was heavily hurt during the “Great Depression” (1929-1933), with the sharp drop in the number of *hajjis*, which posed a deadly threat to the survival of the newly-born Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In 1932, Saudi Arabia was under a debt of up to £219,000, and King Ibn Saud said, “If any one now gives me one million pounds, I would welcome him with all the privileges he wants in my country” (Wang, T. & Lin, S., 2000). At that time, the US seized this opportunity and got involved. The United States-Saudi Arabia alliance, sealed in the 1930, has lasted until now.

4) Saudi Arabia utilizes *hajj* as an opportunity to promote of

its brand of Islamic doctrine, which laid the foundation for the modernization reform in the Islamic world.

Since the early modern times, the Islamic world lagged far behind the West. In addition to the external colonial invasion, the most important reason is the religious rigidity, which leads to rejection of science and technology. During the period between the "Translation Movement" in Abbasid Dynasty to the European overseas expansion activities in the 15th century, the Islamic world held a leading position in technology. Neither the decline of the Islamic world nor the rise of Europe is an odd event, and the Islamic world's attitude toward science and technology has played a key role, which is actually closely linked to religion. "While Islamic religion was the main impulse behind the renaissance of science at the zenith of Muslim Arab civilization, it was partly the post-sixteenth century rise of clerical faction which froze this same science and withered its progress", "but the triumph of religious fanaticism over science in Muslim lands would not have succeeded had there been sufficient economic prosperity to generate a demand for science and technology"...the tragedy of the demolition of the last observatory in Islam, established in Constantinople by Taqi al-Din in 1580, exemplifies this victory of the clerical faction over science"(Hassan, A. & Hill, D., 1992: 282-283). The orthodox Sunni Wahhabi sect followed by Saudi Arabia alleges that it best meets the ideas of Prophet Muhammad. As the guardian of the Holy Land and leading player of *hajj*, the Saudi royal family and Sheikh family in charge of the religious authority, have sought to impose a new Islamic doctrine by broadcasting the Islamic scriptures, transporting *hajjis* with vehicles, etc., to promote the combination of modern technology and Wahhabi-inspired Islamic precepts. Its unique position also provides an opportunity and source of legitimacy for the

modernization of Islam, especially the development of Islamic countries' modernization. The development of technology has contributed to more convenient transportation, this reduces the time and cost to perform *hajj*, and so does the increased number of *hajjis*.

5) *Hajj* has provided opportunities for Saudi Arabia to improve relations with other countries

Due to the differences in religions, ideologies and social systems, there are many potential conflicts in Saudi Arabia's relations with other countries. First, the *hajj* usually serves as a platform for religious and political communication in terms of Saudi relations with the Islamic countries, especially with Shiite countries. Islamic countries follow different religious teachings; because Saudi Arabia is a Sunni country, the Shiite is often subjected to discrimination and restrictions in the Islamic world, which in turn leads to conflict between Shiite countries, such as Iran and Iraq, and Sunni countries, such as Saudi Arabia. This has increased the complexity of international relations in the Gulf region. Saudi Arabia takes full advantage of *hajj* as an opportunity to hold the Islamic World League meetings to enhance communication between Sunnis and Shiites. Moreover, *hajj* has become the best time for GCC countries to improve relations with Iran. In December 2007, 28 years after Iran's Islamic Revolution, Saudi Arabia invited the Iranian President to perform *hajj* in Mecca for the first time; "Ahmadinejad is devout in his *hajj* journey. On his way to Mecca, he was earnestly reading the *Quran*; even upon arrival at the Saudi city Medina for transiting, he was holding the *Quran* in his hand all the time and reciting the Psalms". "Ahmadinejad's *hajj* journey can be regarded as a symbol of a great leap forward of the relationship between Iran and the six Gulf countries" (Fan, X., 2007: December 21). In terms of Saudi

bilateral relations with the new “country” with Muslims as its majority that are seeking independence, *hajj* also becomes a key element, as in Kosovo. In 2008, Kosovo announced the “Republic of Kosovo Passport”, “for those Kosovo *hajjis* who fly to Saudi Arabia directly, even if Kosovo was not yet recognized, Saudi Arabia treated the new Kosovo passports as valid travel documents” (Niu, S., 2013: 39). Hence, although Saudi Arabia was not the first Islamic country to recognize the “Republic of Kosovo”, it was the first Islamic country to establish diplomatic relations with Kosovo—establishing formal diplomatic relations on August 7, 2009. Secondly, *hajj* has become a breakthrough in the development of Saudi bilateral political relations with non-Islamic countries who boast a considerable number of Muslims. For example, after the founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, Saudi Arabia still maintained its diplomatic relations with Taipei, while having minimal relations with Beijing. It was even hostile to the PRC. In 1955, during the Bandung Conference, former PRC premier Zhou Enlai talked in person with Saudi Prince Faisal about the *hajj* for Muslims from mainland China. In the same year, the PRC successfully sent its first *hajj* delegation to Mecca. Before Saudi Arabia established diplomatic relations with the PRC in 1990, the most regular people-to-people exchanges between the two countries was the annual *hajj* (except from 1965 to 1978). Moreover, the first PRC *hajj* delegation also visited Egypt and other Islamic countries: “The *hajj* of Muslims in PRC is an important factor that has facilitated the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Egypt”, said General Nasser to Gram Imam Da Pusheng (head of the PRC *hajj* delegation), who was the first person orally told by Nasser about the establishment of diplomatic relations between PRC and Egypt after the release of the joint communiqué (Min, J., 2009: September 15).

III. *Hajj* and Its Influence on Specific Areas of International Relations

There are fundamental differences between ancient countries and modern sovereign states. Due to the inconvenience of transportation via lands and oceans, as well as the limits of transportation means, trans-national relations tended to be concentrated in a certain region. Trans-regional interactions among states were not frequent. At that time, international relations were usually relations among states within the same region. With the activities of human beings turned from separation to integration, modern international relations principles, which were originated from Europe, began to spread to the world. International relations have gradually transferred from the traditional political and military relations to many common issues, such as the economy, culture, and even environment, climate, energy conservation and emission reduction, which are the very specific areas of international relations. Thus, *Hajj* has an indisputable impact on those specific areas in international relations.

First of all, *hajj* has an impact on the Westphalia system. 1) the Westphalia principles, which serve as the foundation of modern international relations, were tailored to Europe, and its principles on sovereignty and nations come from the “exile” of Christianity. Due to the loss and shocks brought to the lords and people by the Thirty Year’s War, religion was regarded as the trigger of disorders, chaos and wars. When the religious issues were resolved in Europe, religion was actually “exiled” from the internal affairs of European countries and international politics. When those religious issues were no longer a problem, European countries established the holy principles of the Westphalia system

on the basis of de-politicization of the holy religions. Those principles rest on the independence of the nation-state, mutual non-interference in the internal affairs among nations, and states cannot be arbitrarily deprived of their sovereignty. Although *hajj* has existed since the revelation of Islam, before the European global expansion, it had no significant influence in Europe. In the current era of Islamic global revival, *hajj*, as an important sign of Islam, becomes a threat to the modern international system with “de-religionization” as its nature, together with the revival of other religions. 2) as non-state or super-state actors are playing more and more important roles in international relations, the global or regional international organizations, transnational companies, and cross-border missionary movements have also posed challenges to sovereign states. *Hajj* is related to the Islamic states network and global Muslims network built by Islamic countries, the Islamic World League, and individual Muslims. Western hegemony in the Middle East, especially the US unbalanced Middle East policy, has resulted in dissatisfaction of many Islamic countries’ governments and their people. The global cross-border *hajj* is actually a collective reflection of the protest against the Westphalia system initiated by the West.

Moreover, *hajj* has a positive effect on world’s integration from the perspective of transportation. It has taken several hundreds of years for countries around the globe to be connected, with European countries playing an important role. The discovery of the New Route came along with the expansion of colonialism, in which the Protestant ethic played a role of spiritual impulse (Weber, M., 2001). The construction of global transportation network by the Europe actually inherited many of the existing routes and technologies from Muslims. Since the birth of *hajj*, it has seldom been interrupted. Muslims all over the world try their

best to go to Mecca via different routes. In the ancient time, Muslims in North Africa and Southeast Asia arrived in Mecca via land and maritime routes. This self-driven action, which is different from the actions driven by European commercialism, actually maintains the communication between East Asia and the Middle East. For example, since the fourth navigation, China's Zheng He (also Zheng Ho) fleets had visited many Arab cities, including Mecca. This is mainly related to Zheng's identity as a Muslim and his ancestors' *hajj* in Mecca. In a sense, Zheng's trip to West Asia and North Africa was actually a journey of *hajj*. Muslims from different countries gather in Mecca because of *hajj*, which makes Mecca a platform of cultural communications and commercial exchanges. *Hajj* has played an intermediating role in connecting the Orient and the West, and in maintaining their economic and cultural exchanges. The Ottoman Empire blocked the land access routes between the Orient and Europe. As a result, after the end of Muslims' domination, Spain and Portugal stepped on their way to explore and connect the world, utilizing the navigation technologies from the Arabs.

Furthermore, *hajj* and its impact on the global health issue. *Hajjis* come from all over the world, due to their different health conditions and censorship policies in different countries, *hajjis* who gather in Mecca have a large chance to spread disease or threats to public health. *Hajjis* that are infected with new diseases are very likely to spread it when they are back to their motherland, which also has negative effect on the public health. Before the 20th century, Islam only spread within limited areas and the traffic ways were relatively backward. As a result, there were few numbers of *hajjis* that came to Mecca, and they were mainly Muslims from the Middle East. Even so, concerns over public health, which might be accomplished by from different regions,

had raised concerns in the past. In the 9th century, Doctor Qustā Ibn Lūqā noticed the health issues that might be caused by *hajj* and then designed a mechanism for it (Bos, G., 1992). In the 20th century, Islam began to spread to European countries, the US, and Northeast Asian countries. It became a significant force that can hardly be ignored. Some non-Islamic countries with single ethnic groups, such as South Koreans and Japanese, also have a certain number of native Muslims. More and more Muslims come to the *hajj* with diverse origins. The public health issues during *hajj* not only pose challenges to Saudi Arabia's health management ability, but also gain wide attention from the international community. In the "International Sanitary Convention", enacted in 1926, there are special provisions about *hajj* (Allen, S., 2010). The Saudi Red Crescent Society play a positive role in managing health issues during *hajj*. It has established 14 major hospitals and 80 medical centers in Mecca to provide timely medical care for diseased *hajjis*. Since the 21st century, there have been several global health events. During the outbreak of SARS in 2003, the Saudi Ministry of Hajj announced a suspension of visas for *umrah*. In 2009, during the outbreak of H1N1, Saudi Arabia and the WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Office had new rules on the health requirement of the *hajjis* in that year.

Finally, Saudi Arabia allowed the military presence of US troops within its territory, which triggered the anti-Western activities by Islamic extremists and terrorists. Although US interference in global affairs has led to many complaints and opponents, the religious opposition is mainly due to the presence of US troops in Saudi Arabia after the Gulf war. As there are two holy cities located in Saudi Arabia and its king even changed his title to "Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques", Saudi Arabia as a whole is viewed as holy land by Muslims. "From the perspective

of the Islamic religion, allowing US troops, including many Christians and female soldiers, to be stationed on Saudi territory is an extraordinary event that matters to Saudi Muslims and to Muslims all over the world, which inevitably results in strong opposition" (Chen, M., 2008: November). Although the Saudi royal family asked the Sheikh family to issue a *fatwa*, it failed to get unanimous approval of Muslims around the world because of the characteristics of Sunni Islam, for, "In Sunni Islam a *fatwa* is a non-binding opinion or interpretation, issued by a recognized authority or legal scholar, on a point of Islamic law or practice" (Siddiqi, D., 2011: 200). In other words, Sunni *fatwa* has no binding force for individual Muslims. Therefore, Osama Bin Laden's anti-Americanism insists that the US and Saudi royal family have jointly tarnished the Islamic Holy Land. Al-Qaeda began to conduct violent anti-American activities since the 1990s, and its terrorism and religious extremism have completely changed the landscape of international relations in the 21st century. After 9/11, US-Saudi relations have undergone major challenges. Saudi Arabia had to conform to the voice of the Islamic world and to argue for the withdrawal of US troops.

IV. *Hajj* and China

With the advent of the age of globalization, global flows of capital, messages and population has become more and more frequent, which has posed many new challenges to sovereign states' national security. *Hajj*, as the world's largest annual transnational activity, and *hajjis'* diverse states' backgrounds, ethnic groups, religious sects and ideologies have made Mecca a junction of multi-religions and political thoughts. China is a multi-ethnic groups' country. Ten domestic ethnic groups believe

in Islam, such as the Hui and Uygur. There are over 22 million Muslims in China. Therefore, there is a large number of Chinese Muslims who need to perform *hajj*. China is not an Islamic country, so in principle, there is no *hajj* quota restriction for Chinese Muslims by the Saudi government. In fact, the number of Chinese Muslims that can perform *hajj* each year is much lower than the 1% proportion Saudi Arabia allocated to Islamic states. From 1955 to 1964, the total number of *hajjis* from mainland China was only 132, and in recent years, the Muslims from mainland China to perform *hajj* were more than ten thousand through a variety of channels (Ma, X., 2009: December 7).

First, some ethnic separatist and religious extremists use *hajj* as an opportunity to export extremism and separatism. Many countries' governments are vigilant about this. For example, the "East Turkestan Islamic Movement" (ETIM) tried to "brainwash" Chinese *hajjis* in Mecca with separatism. China's politics is government-led, therefore, in order to safeguard the national security of border areas, the Chinese government only allows relevant ministries and the China Islamic Association to deal with *hajj* affairs, and is resolutely against all forms of unofficial-led *hajj*. The Chinese government also has issued some administrative regulations on this.

On January 28, 1995, seven agencies, including the Religious Affairs Bureau of the State Council, State Administration of Foreign Exchange, Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bank of China, General Administration of Customs, and the Civil Aviation Administration of China, jointly issued the *Notice on Provisions of Self-Financed Hajj*. Its core objective is that "Hajj is a large-scale foreign-related religious activity, which is strongly policy-oriented. The State Council clearly authorizes the Religious Affairs Bureau of the State Council to be in charge of it,

all the seven agencies should do the work of coordination and cooperation, and entrusts the Chinese Islamic Association for organizing and implementing it. Any other agencies are forbidden from organizing *hajj*, *umrah* or disguised *hajj* activity under any name or form." According to this the notice, the quota for *hajj* participants is 2,000 per year, the *hajjis* should be selected by each of the provinces and municipalities, respectively. It also announced the formation of the Chinese Hajj Delegation. The notice has very detailed provisions on passport issuance, fee, and ban for individual *hajj*, etc. On November 30, 2004, the State Council issued the *Regulations on Religious Affairs*. Chapter II Article XI, stipulates that, "the national Islamic religious group will be responsible for organizing Chinese citizens who believe in Islam to travel abroad for *hajj*". Chapter VI Article XXXIII states that, "unauthorized actions of organizing citizens who believe in religion to go abroad for *hajj* should be ordered to stop by the agencies of religious affairs. Any illegal revenue from these activities will be confiscated and the agency could impose a fine of 1-3 times of amount of the illegal revenue." On June 3, 2005, the National Tourism Administration issued *Provision on Forbidding Travel Agencies to Organize Go-abroad Individual Hajj*. It identified the *hajj* as "a political and policy-oriented religious activity associated to national unity, social stability, national security and our country's international image". The main objective of these provisions is to regulate unauthorized individual *hajj* activities and travel agencies that get involved.

Obviously, the Chinese government's recognition of *hajj* is becoming more and more politicized. *Hajj* is titled with too many labels, such as national unity, social stability, national security, and national image, etc. This actually alienated the function of *hajj*. Moreover, there are problems in the selection of the candidates to

hajj: regions with fewer Muslims dispersed usually have extra quotas, while regions inhabited by a large number of Muslims are usually allowed small quotas. *Hajj* quota even becomes a commodity in the black market, and there is corruption of authority related to *hajj* expenses. These problems have resulted in many irreconcilable conflicts between Muslims and the government: on the one hand, the waiting time to get an official *hajj* quota is too long, especially for many older Muslims who might actually lose the possibilities to perform *hajj*; on the other hand, individual *hajj* activities are constantly suppressed, and the organizers face severe sanctions.

Secondly, *hajj* is a religious but not political activity, the participants are individual Muslims rather than sovereign states. As a result, many unacknowledged “states” and regimes utilize *hajj* to conduct pan-religious activities. For example, Taiwan Muslims’ *hajj* activity has broadened Taipei’s international space in the international community.

For a long time, Chinese Taiwan Muslims’ *hajj* activities have been strongly supported by Taipei authorities. It is also considered as part of Taipei’s “civil diplomacy”. Take, for example, the *hajj* in 2011, the so-called “Republic of China (ROC) Centennial”; it contains distinctive elements of “Taiwan” and the “ROC”, which could hardly be presented to the international community as other political or non-political activities. The activities of the “ROC Hajj Delegation” can be summarized into the following aspects: 1) *Hajj* delegation members wear the same type of vests, where they printed with Taiwan island map and the “ROC national flag” on it. The delegation also held “ROC national flag” openly in Saudi Arabia. 2) Due to Taipei’s unremitting efforts and its long-term friendly relationship with Saudi Arabia, all the members of the “ROC *Hajj* Delegation” were able to live in the holy city Mecca, instead of Jeddah, where they had stayed previously. The hotel

was not far from the Sacred Mosque in Mecca (Zhu, Y., 2012: 10). 3) "ROC Hajj Delegation" conducted civil diplomacy toward the royal family and government of Saudi Arabia. For example, some members visited the Deputy Chairman of the Southeast Asian Countries Committee, Saudi Ministry of Hajj, and negotiated the itinerary, transportation, and *hajj* camp planning. Moreover, some members also met senior officials, such as the Minister, Deputy Minister of Saudi Ministry of Hajj, and the Secretary-general of the World Islamic League. Some members of the *hajj* delegation were even invited by King Abdullah to the royal palace for state banquet (Zhu, Y., 2012: 14). 4) The delegation actively interacted with overseas Chinese living in the Holy Land. For example, Ahmed family, the leader of overseas Chinese in Medina, had welcomed Taiwan *hajjis* for many years. 5) The delegation also carried out religious education exchanges. For example, two members visited the president of the Islamic University of Medina and exchanged views on the student exchange programs.

In addition to the strong endorsement and assistance from Taipei Economic & Cultural Office in Saudi Arabia, the *hajj* trip was also funded by the "ROC government" and was welcomed courteously after returning to Taiwan. "The ROC Hajj Delegation has been funded by the government for many years. Therefore, the *hajj* trip is not only about the members completing their own religious obligations, but also about shouldering the responsibility of conducting civil diplomacy, specifically, coming and visiting related Saudi government sectors and civil institutions" (Yu, J., 2012: 16). After the 2011 *hajj* trip, then "Vice President" Siew Wan-chang cordially received the delegation, and spoke highly of Islam's "important contribution to social development and human civilization", and "expect Taiwan Muslims can play a more active role in promoting a more profound partnership between our country and the Islamic world" (*Islam in China*, 2012: 7).

It may be reasonable to view the Chinese government's *hajj* management from a perspective of the overflowing of religious terrorism and ethnic separatism in modern international relations, but in the long run, a perspective of how to benefit from the interaction between *hajj* and international relations is of great importance for China's national security.

First, to observe *hajj* from the perspective of religion. Performing *hajj* is both an obligation and a duty for Muslims, and it is a crucial event for Muslims' lives. But it means nothing for non-believers. In the eyes of most ordinary Muslims, *hajj* is just *hajj*, and it does not have many other meanings. Even if Muslims utilize *hajj* to take part in political or illegal activities, it firstly violates the Islamic doctrine which forbids political activities during *hajj*. Any violation of this doctrine will be punished under Islamic law. "Let religion back to religion" must be the policy to follow.

Second, to observe *hajj* from the perspective of the real relationship between transnational religions and sovereign state. With the consideration of maintaining national unity, China strictly manages the Muslims' participation in *hajj* to some extent. In fact, in the era of globalization, cross-border flows of population are frequent, so relying purely on strict control cannot completely eliminate individual *hajj* activities. Muslims' religious belief and its important manifestation—*hajj*, is not conflict with nation-state and sovereignty. The behaviors and political intentions that threaten China's sovereignty and territorial integrity during *hajj* are associated with extreme nationalism, but have nothing to do with religion. In China, religion is unlikely to intervene in politics. Therefore, *hajj* is only a religious issue, rather than a political or national issue.

Third, to treat *hajj* as a personal public diplomacy activity and to accurately identify the national image. In the current *hajj* management institution, the Chinese government completely

views *hajj* as a showcase to present its national image, and therefore strives to select those who meet government's standards, thinking that if not so, it will damage its national image. This way of thinking is far behind the recognition of the information era. The image of Chinese Muslims is presented not only when they go abroad, such as in *hajj*, but also presented when foreigners came into their daily life. Any "image" shaped and displayed by government often plays a counterproductive role in the modern era. The most important thing is to improve the quality of life in border areas, promote economic development, and improve the overall educational quality of religious believers, which could truly result in a better national image.

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