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Bat Ye'or *OIC vs Israel*

Damla Aras *Turkey's Ambassadors* vs *Erdoğan*

Ali Alfoneh *Khamene'i* vs *Ahmadinejad*



Jonathan Schanzer

*Palestinians' Online Chat
about Israel*

Nidra Poller

*French Foreign Policy
Bites at Home*

Andrew Roe

Lessons from Waziristan

Interview

Alexander Downer

*Australia's Former
Foreign Minister*

Hilal Khashan

Lebanon on the Brink

Bruce Maddy-Weitzman

Israel's Berber Friends

Plus . . .

- *Reviews by Berman,
Gartenstein-Ross, Ibrahim,
Karmon, Sarsar, Schanzer,
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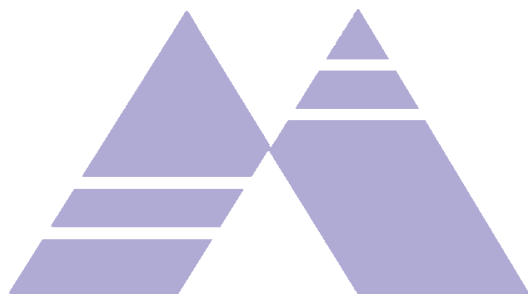
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VOLUME 18, NUMBER 1

- 3 **Bat Ye'or**, Delegitimizing the Jewish State
A global Islamic organization plots an anti-Israel campaign
- 15 **Jonathan Schanzer**, What Palestinians Are Saying Online
A study shows Palestinian opposition to peace and political reform
- 25 **Nidra Poller**, A French Intifada
France's "Arab policy" backfires domestically
- 37 **Andrew M. Roe**, What Waziristan Means for Afghanistan
Britain's colonial experience offers insights for the current conflict
- 47 **Damla Aras**, Turkey's Ambassadors vs. Erdoğan
Ankara's diplomats question their prime minister's foreign policy
- 59 *Interview:* **Alexander Downer**, "Proud of the Role We Played in Saddam's Overthrow"
A former Australian foreign minister reconsiders Middle Eastern conflicts
- 65 *Dateline:* **Hilal Khashan**, Lebanon on the Brink
Lebanon's prime minister prefers stability to justice
- 73 *Dateline:* **Ali Alfoneh**, Khamene'i's Balancing Act
As sanctions bite, Iran's Supreme Leader seeks to assert his authority
- 79 *Dateline:* **Bruce Maddy-Weitzman**, Morocco's Pro-Israel Berbers
The Amazigh view the Jewish state as an ally against Islamism

REVIEWS

- 86 **Daveed Gartenstein-Ross**, Do American Muslims Support Terrorism?
A new book does little to allay fears about increasing radicalization
- 89 Brief Reviews
Arab reform ... Ottoman caliphate ... Iranian hegemony ... Hamas politics

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Delegitimizing the Jewish State

by Bat Ye'or

In a move that caught the Israeli government and the Jewish world by complete surprise, on October 21, 2010, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared the Tomb of the Hebrew Patriarchs in Hebron and Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem "an integral part of the occupied Palestinian territories," admonishing the Israeli decision to add these biblical shrines to the list of Jewish historical and archaeological sites as "a violation of international law."¹

What is less known, however, is that the driving force behind "the attempt to detach the Nation of Israel from its heritage" (to use Israeli prime minister Netanyahu's words)² was the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which pressured UNESCO to issue the declaration and drafted its initial version.³ U.N. secretary-general Ban Ki-moon has recently described the OIC as "a strategic and important partner of the U.N."⁴ In fact, it has been the OIC that has successfully exploited its marked preponderance at the U.N.—where it constitutes the largest single voting bloc—to turn the world organization and its specialized agencies into effective tools in the attempt to achieve its goals, two of which are to bring about Israel's eventual demise and to "galvanize the *umma* [Islamic world] into a unified body."⁵

THE OIC'S ISRAEL OBSESSION

Established in September 1969 as the "collective voice of the Muslim world," the OIC has evolved into the second largest intergovernmental organization after the U.N., bringing together

fifty-six Muslim and other states, as well as the Palestinian Authority.⁶ Though boasting a global range of objectives from the "promotion of tolerance and moderation, modernization, [and] extensive reforms in all spheres of activities," to

Bat Ye'or is the author, most recently, of *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005). This article contains extracts from her forthcoming book *Europe, Globalization and the Coming Universal Caliphate* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2011).

1 "Executive Board adopts five decisions concerning UNESCO's work in the occupied Palestinian and Arab Territories," UNESCO Media Services, Paris, Oct. 21, 2010.

2 *Jerusalem Post*, Oct. 29, 2010.

3 See, for example, International Islamic News Agency (Jeddah), Mar. 3, 2010; "Decisions Adopted by the Executive Board at Its 184th Session," UNESCO, executive board, Paris, May 14, 2010.

4 *World Bulletin* (Istanbul), Sept. 28, 2010.

5 "About OIC," Organization of the Islamic Conference, Jeddah, accessed Nov. 7, 2010.

6 *Ibid.*

the cultivation of “good governance and promotion of human rights in the Muslim world,”⁷ this body has constantly and disproportionately focused on Israel and its supposed misdeeds. It was established in response to an attempt by a deranged Australian to set fire to the al-Aqsa mosque, which was duly blamed on “the military occupation by Israel of Al-Quds—the Holy City of Jerusalem.”⁸ The “State of Palestine” (i.e., the then-five-year-old Palestine Liberation Organization or PLO, established as a tool for promoting the expansionist ambitions of Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser) was among the OIC’s original twenty-five founding members, and the pledge of “full support to the Palestinian people for the restoration of their rights, which were usurped”⁹—the standard Arab euphemism for Israel’s destruction—has become a central plank of the organization’s policy, reiterated in countless decisions and resolutions on issues that have nothing to do with questions concerning the Palestinians.¹⁰

OIC activities reveal a systematic effort to devise an anti-Israeli media strategy.

The Islamic Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), an OIC organ mandated “to strengthen cooperation among member states in the field of education, science, and culture,”¹¹ has occupied pride of place in the campaign to delegitimize Israel. Since its inception in 1982, it has run dozens of programs and symposia on the Jewish state’s supposed desecration of Islamic and Christian holy sites and the attendant need to wrest them from the Israelis’ control. The most important of these

were the international conferences on the “Protection of Islamic and Christian Holy Sites in Palestine,” held in Rabat in 1993 and 2002 and in Amman in November 2004 respectively under the patronage of the Moroccan and Jordanian monarchs. An examination of conference activities reveals a systematic effort to devise an anti-Israeli media strategy that was to be adopted not only by Arab and Muslim states but also by international groups and organizations, including some of the U.N.’s most powerful agencies.

UNIFYING THE UMMA, BASHING THE JEWS

In his address to the 2002 Rabat conference, King Muhammad VI of Morocco stated:

The acts of destruction and distortion committed by the occupation authorities to distort the facts and truths of history cause serious damage to the Islamic and Christian holy sites and violate their sanctity and the values they embody for all the believers of the different religions.¹²

For the Moroccan monarch, as president of the OIC’s al-Quds Committee, such actions as archaeological excavations and the placement of artifacts in museums constituted an attack against all believers. In fact, Christian churches that had been reduced to ruins by centuries of Islamic occupation were restored by successive Israeli governments because, unlike Shari’a or Islamic law, the Jewish state has no laws prohibiting the restoration or construction of churches. The king could have also benefitted from a measure of introspection: Morocco, like the other Maghreb states, is a place where virtually no vestiges of pre-Islamic Christian history have survived.

Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri, the Saudi-

7 Ibid.

8 “Declaration of the First Rabat Islamic Conference,” Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Rabat, Sept. 1969.

9 Ibid.

10 “Resolutions,” Second Islamic Conference of the Ministers of Health, OIC, Tehran, Mar. 1-4, 2009.

11 “Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO),” Specialized Institutions and Organs, OIC, Rabat, 2009, accessed, Nov. 7, 2010.

12 “Message of His Majesty Mohammed VI, King of Morocco,” June 6, 2002, Protection of Islamic and Christian Holy Sites in Palestine International Conference, Rabat, June 7-8, 2002 (Rabat: ISESCO, 2004), p. 11.

born, University of Oregon-educated ISESCO director-general, went a step further, asserting that “the crimes against humanity committed by Israel have reached an extent of oppression, injustice, and aggression that humanity has never witnessed, neither in this age nor in previous ages.”¹³ He amplified this diatribe at the Amman conference where he claimed that Muslim responsibilities toward the Islamic and Christian holy sites in the Palestinian territories sprang from ISESCO’s commitment to the Palestinian cause, which in his opinion, constituted the essence of all issues and the supreme task of both the Muslim world and those Eastern Christian circles that were part of the Arab and Islamic civilization.¹⁴

The proceedings of the Rabat and the Amman conferences represent a monument to anti-Jewish hatred and incitement, featuring such assertions as “Jews are the enemies of Allah, the enemies of faith, and of the worship of Allah.”¹⁵ They also brim with denials of Jewish attachment to the Land of Israel and claims to its Arab (and later Muslim) character since the third millennium BCE. The Jews are accused of having “judaized” the biblical prophets who were in fact Muslim and of having usurped the antiquity of other peoples since they themselves have no history. In the words of Adnan Ibra-

13 “Address of Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri,” Protection of Islamic and Christian Holy Sites in Palestine, First International Conference, Rabat, June 7-8, 2002 (Rabat: ISESCO, 2004), p. 15.

14 “Address by Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri,” Protection of Islamic and Christian Holy Sites in Palestine, Second International Conference, Amman, Nov. 23-25, 2004 (Rabat: ISESCO, 2007), p. 18.

15 Adnan Ibrahim Hassan al-Subah, “Role of Palestinian Civil Society in the Protection of Holy Sites in Palestine,” Protection of Islamic and Christian Holy Sites in Palestine, Second International Conference, Amman, Nov. 23-25, 2004 (Rabat: ISESCO, 2007), p. 253.

Photo will not display.

U.N. secretary-general Ban Ki-moon (right, with Libya’s dictator Mu‘ammar al-Qadhafi) has described the Organization of the Islamic Conference as “a strategic and important partner of the U.N.”

him Hassan al-Subah, president of the Jenin Information Center:

People familiar with the Torah, which we believe to have been distorted, know the extent of the evils they attribute to their prophets: corruption, treachery, fornication or approval of it. It is with these facts that we need to arm ourselves when we confront the Zionist propaganda in the world with tangible facts, as part of our defence of the faith and the faithful on earth, wherever they may be.¹⁶

These examples of incitement to religious hatred were on display at the U.N.’s Palais des Nations in Geneva at a reception given by the OIC on December 19, 2008, to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. And why not? After all, the OIC is not only “the collective voice of the Muslim world”¹⁷ but also the U.N.’s largest single voting bloc and a prominent collaborator with many of its specialized agencies.

16 Ibid., p. 254.

17 “About OIC.”

Photo will not display.

Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri (left), ISESCO director-general, here with H.E. Nurul Islam Nahid, chairman of the Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO, has successfully goaded UNESCO to declare biblical Jewish sites “an integral part of the occupied Palestinian territories.”

INFLUENCING THE U.N.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that these conferences did not content themselves with anti-Jewish diatribes but sought to devise a strategy to harness the international community to the anti-Israel campaign in general and the re-Islamization of Jerusalem (al-Quds) in particular. As one of the speakers explained, “Jerusalem is the cornerstone of the spiritual edifice and the Zionist Jewish entity. Were it to be dislodged, the whole edifice and the Zionist entity itself would crumble like a deck of cards.”¹⁸

Action plans show a media strategy of employing an attractive style and scientific language and magnifying Palestinian suffering since the establishment of the “racist Zionist entity” in 1948. These plans would be effec-

tively replicated by the U.N.’s Alliance of Civilizations’ Report of the High Level Group (HLG), which would endeavor to “make it clear to the Palestinian people that the price of decades of occupation, misunderstanding, and stigmatization is being fully acknowledged,” although this “story had been left untold or deliberately ignored by the community of nations.”¹⁹

This assertion is not merely false but the inverse of the truth. The Palestin-

ians have benefitted like no other nation from world indulgence. Europe, for one, has vigorously championed their cause since 1973, devising a string of political schemes on their behalf and pouring immeasurable sums of money into the bottomless Palestinian pit.

If anything, it was the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Jews from the Arab countries during and after the 1948 war and the expropriation of their worldly possessions, that was entirely ignored by the Alliance of Civilizations, as was the history of the Jews in their ancestral homeland where they had suffered ethnic and religious oppression by a long succession of foreign occupiers.

While claiming to promote peace, the HLG report added yet another page to both the defamation of Israel and the perennial Palestinian sense of victimization. One wonders what

18 Abdullah Kan'an, “Media Plan for Publicising the Cause of Al Quds, Al Sharif in the West and Mechanisms for Its Implementation,” Protection of Islamic and Christian Holy Sites in Palestine, Second International Conference, Amman, Nov. 23-25, 2004 (Rabat: ISESCO, 2007), p. 195.

19 “Report of the High Level Group,” Alliance of Civilizations, United Nations, New York, Nov. 13, 2006, p. 18, art. 5.7.

prompted it to begin the historical survey with the establishment of the state of Israel, ignoring the millenarian Jewish attachment to the Land of Israel that had been acknowledged as early as 1920 by the U.N.'s predecessor—the League of Nations.

Moreover, the report sought to rewrite, under U.N. aegis, the story of the *nakba* (the “catastrophe,” as Palestinians and Arabs call their 1948 failure to destroy Israel at its birth) as a counterweight to the Holocaust, and to impose this narrative on Israel and the international community. In the words of the report, it is “essential for Palestinians as well as for the Arab-Muslim world and Muslims in general to understand and acknowledge the fact that we ... now know and take responsibility for ensuring everyone knows the price and weight of these sixty years of misunderstanding, stigmatization, as well as veiled and abused truths.”²⁰ Indeed, while the Alliance was established in 2005 with the specific goal “to explore the roots of polarization between societies and cultures today and to recommend a practical program of action to address this issue,” it has quickly become an anti-Israel lobbying machine on a global scale. This is evidenced not only from its implementation plan, which places “a priority on addressing relations between Western and Muslim societies”²¹ at the expense of other faiths and civilizations, but also by its close collaboration with numerous anti-Israel nongovernmental organizations and bodies, notably the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The OIC's influence on the Alliance has been manifested in a wide range of historical and cultural issues, including the presentation of Islam as the source of modern Western civilization; the contrasting of Islamic tolerance with European culpability for the Crusades, imperialism and colonization; and the whitewashing of jihad's true nature and its misrepresentation as a struggle for individual self-improvement.²²

The Alliance's views on social issues often echo OIC charges about the pervasive discrimination against Muslim migrants in the West and the Western media's deliberate dissemination of “Islamophobia.” This state of affairs required, in the words, of the HLG report, that “*American and European universities and research centers should expand research into the significant economic, cultural, and social contributions of immigrant communities to American and European life. Likewise, they should promote publications coming from the Muslim world on a range of subjects related to Islam and the Muslim world.*”²³

Such recommendations follow the injunctions of the religious scholars (ulema) who attended the OIC's 2005 summit in Mecca.²⁴

The U.N.'s Alliance of Civilizations has quickly become an anti-Israel lobbying machine on a global scale.

PLOTTING THE ANTI-ISRAEL CAMPAIGN

Speakers at the OIC's Amman conference stressed the media's crucial role and importance in the fight against Israel. They recommended that the Islamic world should demonstrate its unwavering commitment to Arab and Palestinian rights, alongside the conviction that the re-Islamization of Jerusalem would restore the city's spiritual preeminence and peaceful religious co-existence, enable the flourishing of faith, and make Jerusalem a worldwide agent of culture and civilization.²⁵

In fact, this picture in no way corresponds

20 Ibid., p. 53.

21 “Implementation Plan, 2007-2009,” Alliance of Civilizations, United Nations, New York, p. 2.

22 “Report of the High Level Group,” pp. 11, 15.

23 Ibid., p. 39, italicized in the text.

24 “Recommendations of the OIC Commission of Eminent Persons (CEP),” Makkah al-Mukarramah, Saudi Arabia, Dec. 7-8, 2005.

25 Protection of Islamic and Christian Holy Sites in Palestine, Second International Conference, Amman, Nov. 23-25, 2004 (Rabat: ISESCO, 2007), p. 175.

to the actual Islamic history of Jerusalem, which for most of the time was a sleepy and neglected backwater. Rather it is a usurpation of the Biblical vision of Jerusalem as “a light unto the nations,” developed by generations of Hebrew prophets more than a millennium before Muhammad.

Abdullah Kan'an, secretary-general of the Royal Committee for al-Quds Affairs in Jordan—whose government signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994—presented a comprehensive plan for inculcating Islamic policy into all Western cultural and media sectors and delegitimizing

The media plan called for delegitimizing laws against anti-Semitism.

the Jewish state, starting with turning the Muslim and Christian holy places in Jerusalem into a central world problem. As a first step, he suggested publicizing the history of Jerusalem as he saw it—from the city's

foundation by the “Canaanite Jebusites” to date—so as to negate “the Torah-based history.” He also proposed to popularize Islamic and Christian holy sites in the same manner, starting with al-Aqsa Mosque, which “according to the noble Hadith, is only forty years older than the first shrine ever created for humanity, al-Haram Mosque in Makkah.”²⁶

In enumerating the themes of ISESCO's media war against Israel in the West, Kan'an evoked arguments repeated by many Western journalists, intellectuals, ministers, and heads of state. These included,

- Convincing the EU that a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict was in its vital interest, thus helping Europeans (especially Germans) free themselves of their guilt complex vis-à-vis the Jews and the weight of history more generally.
- Persuading Western leaders that as long as the Palestinians did not have their own

state, relations between the EU and the Arab world would remain unstable. Once this goal had been achieved, Europe could look forward to an expanded partnership with the Arab world and full access to its markets.

- Emphasizing that America's pro-Israel position was in contravention of international law, threatened U.S. vital interests as well as those of Europe, and jeopardized world peace and security. This argument, consistently inculcated in European leaders and journalists by the OIC, was hammered home by the Western media and became an important catalyst of European hostility toward the United States, especially during the George W. Bush administration.

- Underscoring the alleged threats to Western interests as a result of supporting Israel. This support had to be presented as one of the foremost causes of anti-Western violence, both in the Middle East and in the Western countries themselves, by individuals and groups who reacted emotionally to personal and collective tragedies. This argument was frequently used by Romano Prodi, then-president of the European Commission, and French president Jacques Chirac, among other European politicians, to explain away the resurgence of European anti-Semitism during 2000-05, and was also invoked by President Obama in March 2010 when he publicly humiliated Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu.²⁷

- Convincing Westerners that peace was only possible through the creation of an independent Palestinian state in the entire territory occupied in 1967 with al-Quds as its capital, the “return” of Palestinian refugees, and the abandonment of

26 Kan'an, “Media Plan,” p. 201.

27 *The Sunday Times* (London), Mar. 26, 2010.

Israel's "Zionist, racist character"—standard Arab and Muslim euphemisms for the destruction of the Jewish state.

- Persuading Westerners that their shared interests with Arabs and Muslims far exceeded those they shared with Israel.²⁸

Kan'an then summarized the long-term objectives of the media plan, two of which are of special note:

- Persuading the EU to abandon its slavish trailing of Washington and to form its own independent vision and positions, which "would be more in harmony with the international will vis-à-vis the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Israeli occupation of Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and the right of the Arab Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of its independent state with Al Quds as its capital."²⁹
- Transforming the Palestinian question and the Arab-Israeli conflict from internal U.S. issues to external problems, primarily governed by the mutual interests of Americans, Muslims, and Arabs. This would break the immunity of the Israeli policies and force the Israeli government to bow to the will of the international community and adhere to all of the U.N. resolutions.³⁰

To achieve these goals, Kan'an recommended obtaining the support of certain intellectuals, literary figures, and influential political



The United Nations has become a foremost purveyor of anti-Israel and anti-Semitic incitement. Nowhere has this obsession been more starkly demonstrated than at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance, held in September 2001 in the South African town of Durban.

movements that were capable of molding Western public opinion within the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict and especially with regard to the Jerusalem question. This campaign would refer to U.N. resolutions that formed the basis for the media plan. Here, too, EU support for the U.N.'s international law amounted to endorsement of the strategy and policies of the OIC, whose position as the U.N.'s largest single voting bloc gave it the unrivalled ability to predominate the world organization and its specialized agencies.

Another proposed tactic was to infiltrate the media as well as influential cultural, intellectual, and economic circles with a view to exposing them to the Arab perspective and convincing them that their countries' policies were subservient to "the interests of the Zionist movement with its various formations and bodies and not [to] the interests of their own countries"³¹ Other themes included:

- Discreetly and indirectly encouraging trends critical of Zionism and the Israeli

28 Kan'an, "Media Plan," pp. 202-3.

29 Ibid, p. 205.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid., p. 204.

government's "judaization policies" in Jerusalem within Western circles, so as to make them effective opponents of the "Zionist lobby and the coalition of Jewish and Christian Zionists" and defenders of their countries' vital interests.

- Delegitimizing laws against anti-Semitism, such as France's 1990 Gayssot

Act, which made it an offence to question the occurrence or scope of crimes against humanity,³² and George W. Bush's 2004 law requiring the Department of State to monitor global anti-Semitism,³³ as laws that have no bearing on Western interests but are rather a part of a Zionist ploy to feed Westerners' guilt feel-

ings so as to keep them subservient to Zionist machinations.

MOBILIZING WESTERN MUSLIMS

No less importantly, the ISESCO campaign envisaged the mobilization of members of Arab and Muslim communities in the West, especially in the United States, who were to be enticed into becoming politically active so as to end their marginalization and gain major political weight. This was believed to be feasible given that these communities comprised high quality populations, including important scientists, intellectuals, and politicians. Arab and Muslim thinkers, religious scholars, and intellectuals living in Western societies ought to recommend to Mus-

lims to reject extremism, fanaticism and violence "as this tends to be detrimental and generates negative reactions to Arab and Islamic issues."³⁴

Another step would involve blocking attempts in Europe and the United States to ban Islamist charitable societies, which according to Kan'an were purely humanitarian organizations but in fact were funneling funds for jihadist and terrorist groups.³⁵ Within this framework, he recommended:

- Encouraging the investment of Arab and Muslim capital in all forms of the media (written, audio, and visual), especially in the United States, thus paving the way for breaking the alleged Jewish monopoly in the field. Arab radio stations and satellite television channels such as al-Jazeera and al-Arabia should broadcast "weekly programs in English [about al-Quds], targeting Western public opinion, benefiting from media personalities knowledgeable about the Western mentality and capable of influencing it to the benefit of the issue of al-Quds with the help of U.N. resolutions." Programs about al-Quds in English, French, Spanish, German, Russian, and other languages should be created, and a multilingual satellite channel called al-Quds would be created, "staffed with a media, information, intellectual, and historical team knowledgeable about the question of al-Quds and its various dimensions."³⁶

- Encouraging Muslim and Arab investments in modern information and communication technologies, notably the Internet, and the filming of television and cinema documentaries with a view to shaping Western public opinion,

32 *Tendant à réprimer tout acte raciste, antisémite ou xénophobe*, République Française, Paris, July 13, 1990.

33 *Global Anti-Semitism Review Act of 2004*, PL 108-332, U.S. Congress, Oct. 16, 2004; *BBC News*, Oct. 20, 2004.

34 Kan'an, "Media Plan," pp. 205-6.

35 See, for example, Daniel Pipes and Sharon Chadha, "CAIR: Islamists Fooling the Establishment," *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2006, pp. 3-20.

36 Kan'an, "Media Plan," pp. 206-7.

Europe has supported Palestinian NGOs that have systematically demonized and delegitimized the Jewish state.

which is heavily reliant on this type of educational and media sources. A special emphasis should be placed on the possibilities of “utilizing modern communication technologies, especially the opening of websites dedicated to al-Quds, and encouraging Muslims to embark on an Internet-supported war for al-Quds to counterbalance the activities of

the Zionist movement and its octopus-like formations, the most dangerous of which is Christian Zionism and its mas-terminism, the Neo-Conservatives.”³⁷

On a broader level, Kan’an advised Arab and Muslim communities “to integrate as much as possible within the societies where they live, in order to gain credibility,” especially in universities and institutions of higher learning. “Friends of al-Quds” associations in U.S. and European universities, organizations, and working places were to be established to support those NGOs working for the cause of al-Quds. To this would be added the worldwide distribution of propaganda materials “issued by Americans, Europeans, and Jews against Israel, its policies, and Zionism,” including specifically-produced films that “reveal the barbarity of Israel, the dangers inherent in the policy of demolishing houses, murder and massacre of the Arab Palestinian people, and distributing these films

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As the second largest intergovernmental organization after the U.N., bringing together fifty-six Muslim and other states, the OIC has been central to President Obama’s outreach to the Muslim world. Here OIC secretary-general Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu (left) welcomes Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and newly-appointed U.S. envoy to the OIC, Rashed Hussein (right), at the bloc’s headquarters in Jeddah.

as widely as possible in the Islamic world.”³⁸

Finally, specialists and experts in Western affairs should be drawn into “the discussion of the broad lines of the media plan in order to enrich it and guarantee all conditions of its success.” Such experts would specialize in Western media, politics, public opinion, psychology, religions, law and culture, as well as in history of al-Quds. In two notes that appear in the French text but are omitted from the English proceedings, the lecturer ridicules the “Zionist stories of alleged Nazi slaughters.”³⁹

THE OIC’S WORLD COLLABORATORS

These were by no means novel, let alone maverick ideas. The intention to extend the OIC’s influence to Western countries through immigrant populations and their growing weight in

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 207-8.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 208.

the host societies had been insinuated on previous occasions, notably by OIC secretary-general Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu at the European parliament in 2005⁴⁰ and by the founders of the Euro-Arab Dialogue, which evolved from a French initiative in the late 1960s.⁴¹

According to unpublished sources from the Euro-Arab Dialogue movement,⁴² in November 1973, Christopher Mayhew, a member of the

British parliament, and Raymond Offroy, a member of the French national assembly, envisaged the creation of an association for improving Europe's relations with the Arab world.⁴³ Its launching coincided with the European Commission (EC)'s Brussels declaration that urged Israel to return to the pre-1967 lines and, for the first

time, recognized the PLO.⁴⁴ Mayhew and Offroy, now supported by the EC, were the first to create a Euro-Arab network, the European Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Cooperation (PAEAC), at a conference in Paris on March 23-25, 1975. Its secretary-general, Robert Swann, a former foreign office diplomat, had been a secretary-general of Amnesty International. The funds for PAEAC came from a Swiss foundation, ANAF, set up in 1969 and managed by an administrative committee consisting of European political personalities. PAEAC benefited from the

financial aid and support of the EC and its networks, in liaison with the Council of Europe. The minutes of the PAEAC meetings were published over the years in the *Documents d'Actualité Internationale* by the French foreign office. These reveal the effective extension of OIC strategy to Europe, combining a policy of immigration with the cultural and political Islamization of Europe.⁴⁵

Extensive U.N.-sponsored networks, bringing together the EU, the OIC, and ISESCO, would effectively implement this strategy in all Western countries. Europe, for example, has lavished millions of Euros on Palestinian NGOs and organs of "civil society," which advocate the economic, political, educational, and cultural boycotting of Israel and which have systematically demonized and delegitimized the Jewish state in schools, the media, Palestinian publications, and on the international scene.⁴⁶

Since 2005, a "Palestinian Week against Israeli Apartheid" has become a regular feature on campuses and in major cities throughout Europe, Canada, and the United States, calling for divestments, sanctions, and boycotts against Israel. According to NGO Monitor, most speakers at these demonstrations belong to organizations financed by European governments, the European Commission, and the New Israel Fund.⁴⁷

To these NGOs must be added "The Elders"—a newly-established "independent group of eminent global leaders brought together by Nelson Mandela, who offer their collective influence and experience to support peace building, help address major causes of human suffering, and promote the shared interests of humanity."⁴⁸ Generating much international influence

The Geneva World Council of Churches urged churches to initiate a policy of economic strangulation and defamation of Israel.

40 Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, secretary general, Organization of the Islamic Conference, address to Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe, Oct. 4, 2005.

41 Roy H. Ginsberg, *The European Union in International Politics. Baptism by Fire* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), pp. 112-3.

42 1974-1994 *Association Parlementaire pour la Coopération Euro-Arabe*, association archives, unpublished document in author's possession, pp. 6-12.

43 Ibid.

44 Joint statement, European Economic Community, Copenhagen, Nov. 6, 1973.

45 Bat Ye'or, *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis* (Cranbury, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005), pp. 93-5.

46 Gerald M. Steinberg, "Europe's Hidden Hand. EU Funding for Political NGOs in the Arab-Israeli Conflict. Analyzing Processes and Impact," NGO Monitor Monograph Series, Apr. 2008.

47 "Israeli Apartheid Week 2010: NGO Involvement," NGO Monitor, updated Mar. 3, 2010.

48 "About the Elders," The Elders website, accessed Oct. 13, 2010.

and considerable funds, the group comprises twelve leaders and dignitaries, quite a few of whom—notably former U.S. president Jimmy Carter and former Irish president Mary Robinson of Durban conference infamy—are harsh critics of Israel. It is chaired by former South African archbishop Desmond Tutu—the spiritual instigator of the world campaign of cultural and economic apartheid against Israel.

Small wonder that the group, in line with the former policies of its members while in power, has consistently misrepresented the Israelis as the unjust and warlike party and the Palestinians as hapless victims of their predatory neighbor. For The Elders, the Palestinian denial of Israel's right to exist embodies natural justice (hence, for example, their advocacy of “engaging” Hamas) while Israel's attempts to protect its citizens from sustained terror attacks—from the erection of the security fence, to Operation Cast Lead, to the naval blockade of Hamas—are illegal and disproportionate uses of force. Tutu congratulated Turkey for having sent its flotilla of supposed humanitarians in May 2010 while the Elders condemned Israel's attempt to stop this effort on behalf of Hamas, a terror organization, whose constitution openly calls for Israel's destruction.⁴⁹ They also urged the U.N. Security Council “to debate the situation with a view to mandating action to end the closure of the Gaza Strip.”⁵⁰

In what had by now become an instinctive reaction, the European parliament joined the Elders and condemned Israel by a crushing majority, insinuating its massive support for Hamas. Catherine Ashton, the EU's high representative for foreign affairs and security policy and vice president of the European Commission, argued that lifting the blockade would bring peace,⁵¹ conveniently overlooking the fact that the blockade was a defensive response to Hamas'

genocidal policies rather than their catalyst.

EXPLOITING THE PALESTINIAN CHRISTIANS

Nor has the OIC, together with its willing international collaborators, shied away from exploiting West Bank and Gaza Christians—discriminated against and oppressed by both Hamas and the Palestinian Authority, which have ruled over them for the past fifteen years—for its anti-Israel propaganda campaign.

Consider the document titled *Kairos Palestine*, drawn up by Palestinian theologians and published in Bethlehem on December 11, 2009, by the Geneva World Council of Churches.⁵² In the name of love, peace, and justice, the paper portrays Israel as the epitome of evil and oppression, urging all Western churches to initiate a policy of economic strangulation and defamation of the Jewish state. This was followed by a letter from the Greek Catholic patriarch of Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem, Gregorios III, to Pope Benedict XVI⁵³ in preparation for the October 2010 Synod, planned to bring together the Catholic churches of the Middle

East to discuss the greater problems facing the local Christians and to devise ways and means for stopping their ongoing flight from the region.

Invoking his duty to inform the pope on the dangers in the region, the patriarch had no qualms about blaming Israeli actions for the surge of militant Islamism throughout the region

Islamic extremism is “provoked by the threats of the Israeli government against Palestinians.”
—Greek Catholic Patriarch

49 “Hamas Covenant 1988,” Yale Law School Avalon Project, accessed Nov. 4, 2010.

50 “The Elders Condemn Israeli Attack on Gaza Relief Ships,” The Elders, May 31, 2010.

51 Catherine Ashton, speech to the European Parliament, Strasbourg, June 16, 2010.

52 *Kairos Palestine*, Bethlehem, Dec. 11, 2009; *Al-Jazeera*: *Cross-Cultural Understanding* (Dalton, Ga.), Dec. 15, 2009.

53 Gregorios III, Patriarch to Pope Benedict XVI, Melkite Greek Catholic Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East of Alexandria and of Jerusalem, Mar. 1, 2010.

and its adverse implications for the local Christian communities. He wrote:

There is a diffuse but sure rise of Islamic extremism, provoked by the threats of the Israeli government against Palestinians, Lebanon, Syria, [and Iran], which is spreading

throughout all the countries in the region. Even in Syria, where such extremism has been up to now very limited, its advance has become more and more evident, despite efforts from the government against it.

Gregorios lamented the widespread terror attacks by these Islamists

on local Christians, especially in Iraq and Egypt. Yet rather than ask the pope to help restrain the perpetrators of this violence, he begged that

the Holy See's diplomacy redouble its efforts to persuade the Tel Aviv government, despite the views of its most intransigent wing—probably via the United States and those European countries which, having sponsored the birth of the State of Israel and supported it ever since, should be able to exert effective pressure on it—of the grave danger of this development which in the medium and perhaps short term, runs against the interests and future of the State of Israel itself, which needs peace in the region just as much as Arab countries, to be able eventually to live normally all together.⁵⁴

54 Ibid.

CONCLUSION

Judging by Israel's growing international isolation, the OIC's sustained effort to delegitimize the Jewish state has borne substantial fruit. Not only is Israel's right to exist constantly debated and challenged in Western public opinion forums, but sixty-three years after establishing the Jewish state in an internationally recognized act of self-determination, the United Nations has become a foremost purveyor of anti-Israel and anti-Semitic incitement.

Time and again, year after year, its Commission on Human Rights discusses Israel's supposed abuses while turning a blind eye to scores of actual atrocities around the globe. This world organization has 192 member nations, but its Security Council has devoted about a third of its activity and criticism to only one of those states—Israel. Nowhere has this obsession been more starkly demonstrated than in the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in September 2001 in the South African town of Durban where, for eight full days, delegates from numerous countries and thousands of nongovernmental organizations indulged in a xenophobic orgy of anti-Israel and anti-Semitic incitement that made a mockery of the conference's original purpose.⁵⁵

As UNESCO follows suit by denying the Jews some of their most cherished historical and religious symbols, the OIC scores yet another palpable hit in its ceaseless hate campaign.



55 Gerald M. Steinberg "NGOs Make War on Israel," *Middle East Quarterly*, Summer 2004, pp. 13-25.

What Palestinians Are Saying Online

by Jonathan Schanzer

During the past decade, Washington has repeatedly failed to gauge the extent of Palestinian anti-peace sentiments with devastating consequences. The July 2000 Camp David summit triggered the worst wave of Palestinian violence since 1948 (euphemized as the “al-Aqsa *Intifada*”); the Palestinian parliamentary elections of January 2006 led to a victory for the Hamas Islamist group. Now that President Obama has announced his ambitious timeline for Israeli-Palestinian peace, could the administration be rushing headlong into yet another diplomatic failure?

A recent nine-week study by the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD) of online Palestinian political sentiments suggests that this could be the case.¹ Palestinian Internet users often derided diplomatic initiatives, and their discussion of the peace process was overwhelmingly negative. More alarmingly, the study revealed several troubling trends among Palestinian social media users—notably the prevalence of Islamism, fissures between factions, and the inability of liberal reformers to be heard—that cast doubt on both the prospects for peace and the likelihood that a democratic Palestinian state will emerge.

BACKGROUND

For years, reliance on faulty poll data and input from “experts” on the ground has thwarted Washington’s ability to take the Palestinian pulse. The George W. Bush administration’s decision to support the Palestinian legislative elections in January 2006, for example, was due, in no small part, to polling data that all but guaranteed a Fatah victory over Hamas. The polls were produced primarily by Khalil Shikaki, the director of the Ramallah-based Palestinian Center for Policy and Research, which conducted

three studies of Palestinian opinion in June, September, and December 2005. These indicated that Fatah’s support among Palestinians ranged from 44 percent to 50 percent while support for Hamas ranged from 32 to 33 percent.² “With each new Shikaki poll,” Middle East scholar Martin Kramer noted, “U.S. policymakers grew more lax when it came to setting conditions for Hamas participation.”³

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1 Jonathan Schanzer and Mark Dubowitz, “Palestinian Pulse: What Policymakers Can Learn from Palestinian Social Media,” Federation for Defense of Democracies, Washington, D.C., Oct. 19, 2010.

2 PSR Index of Polls: Polls conducted since the year 2000, Palestinian Center for Policy and Research, Ramallah, accessed Oct. 27, 2010.

3 Martin Kramer, “Polls that Hid Hamas,” *Sandbox*, Jan. 28, 2006.

Reliance on these polls proved a grave error, as Hamas won the election by a landslide. The Islamist faction, best known for acts of violence against Israel, claimed 76 of 132 seats (74 under the Hamas banner, plus 2 independents), granting it the right to form a government.⁴ In the end, more than one million Palestinians cast their votes in what observers considered a rela-

tively free and fair election—a rarity in the Arab world.

What went wrong? Shikaki's critics alleged that his polls may have been part of Fatah's election strategy to project its strength.⁵ But whatever it was that led Washington astray, the outcome of the elections made clear that the U.S. govern-

ment lacked a reliable read on the Palestinian street. As former secretary of state Condoleezza Rice said of Hamas's victory in congressional testimony, "I've asked why nobody saw it coming ... It does say something about us not having a good enough pulse."⁶

Four years later, Washington may still be unable to assess Palestinian allegiances in the West Bank and Gaza, and the stakes are even higher.

GENERAL TRENDS

Despite the fact that their Internet access is free of outside manipulation, most Palestinian activists do not reveal their names online. Indeed, few Palestinians maintain personal Facebook or Twitter accounts, presumably to ensure that their viewpoints or posts cannot be attributed to them directly. Rather, the majority

of Palestinian web users engage in political debate on impersonal discussion boards. Writing under pseudonyms, they maintain anonymity while discussing the most heated issues of the day without fear of retribution.

The bulk of Palestinian political discussion online takes place on these web forums, which typically provide space for like-minded people to express their views. For example, some are pro-Hamas (paldf.net) whereas others are pro-Fatah (palvoice.com). And while some sites feature adversarial posts, such as pro-Hamas users posting on Fatah sites, most are dominated by sympathizers of the owner faction.

In a sense, the tribalism and factionalism that traditionally dominate Palestinian society can be observed in the form of similar groupings online. Groups allow individuals to break with their thinking, but only to a point.

REFORM FACTIONS

The survey sought, *inter alia*, to shed light on the desire for political reform in the Palestinian territories, "third party" alternatives to Hamas and Fatah, and nonviolent or moderate political ideologies. It found some discussion about such issues among Palestinian Internet users in the West Bank but did not identify any discussion threads that addressed this issue in the Gaza Strip—an apparent affirmation that Hamas does not welcome secular reform parties under its rule.

The now-defunct Third Way (*al-Tariq al-Thalith*) was, until 2007, probably the most recognizable Palestinian reform faction. It advocated land for peace with Israel in accordance with U.N. resolutions 242 and 338, renounced violence, and rejected the implementation of Islamic law (Shari'a) in Palestinian society. The faction also called for a total overhaul of the Palestinian security apparatus. Formed in 2005 by current Palestinian Authority prime minister Salam Fayyad, its founding can be attributed to a rejection of both Fatah's corruption and Hamas's extremism. In the January 2006 Palestinian parliamentary elections, Fayyad and former Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

4 "Nata'ij al-Intikhabat at-Tashri'iyya 2006," Palestinian Central Elections Committee, Ramallah, Jan. 29, 2007.

5 Kramer, "Polls that Hid Hamas."

6 *The New York Times*, Jan. 30, 2006.

spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi headed the Third Way list but won only two of the Legislative Council's 132 seats.⁷ The faction folded when Fayyad became prime minister in June 2007. Since then, world leaders have come to view him as crucial to Palestinian reform.⁸

In the Palestinian web forums, Fayyad dominated much of the discussion but was generally described as prime minister—not a reformer. Discussion about Fayyad was divisive, attracting intense criticism from both supporters and opponents of the Palestinian Authority (PA).

For example, some forums circulated a pro-Hamas Palestine Information Center article titled “Salam Fayyad: Master or Puppet?” praising the prime minister’s intellect but warning that he lacked the political expertise to lead effectively.⁹ Radicalized forum users also re-posted editorials claiming that Fayyad’s government has no constitutional legitimacy.¹⁰ Others noted that Fayyad’s role as financial gatekeeper had sparked tension among Fatah leaders as had his plans to declare a Palestinian state in 2011 without Hamas’s involvement.¹¹ Another widely circulated article, “When a Fighter Turns into a Spy,” criticized Fayyad’s “economic peace” for turning “resistance fighters” in the West Bank into “tools of the occupation.”¹² When Fayyad condemned the June 2010 attack that killed an Israeli police officer in Hebron,¹³ he prompted



Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice excused the administration’s failure to anticipate Hamas’s landslide victory in the 2006 Palestinian parliamentary elections as “not having a good enough pulse” of Palestinian society and politics.

critical comments on the pro-Hamas paldf.net website and the Iraq-focused, jihadist site alburqaq.info.¹⁴

Whereas Fatah sympathizers used their forums as a platform to criticize their opponents (especially Hamas), few users, with the exception of a handful of bloggers, expressed viewpoints conducive to political reforms in the West Bank. Indeed, the lack of positive sentiment or even mentions of Palestinian reform was one of the most important findings of the study.

This runs counter to Fayyad’s image in the West where he is widely revered for revitalizing the West Bank, reforming state institutions, and presiding over unprecedented Palestinian economic growth. So much so that *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman coined the term “Fayyadism” to describe his approach to Palestinian governance: basing legitimacy on transparent and efficient administration, rather than

7 Kevin Peraino, “Palestine’s New Perspective,” *Newsweek*, Sept. 4, 2009.

8 Keir Prince, “Palestinian Authority Reform: Role of the International Community,” *Arab Reform Bulletin*, Carnegie Endowment, Washington, D.C., Nov. 14, 2007.

9 See, for example, “Salam Fayyad: Sayyid am Adah?” Palestine’s Dialogue Forum, accessed May 10, 2010.

10 See, for example, “Mufawadat Tahn al-Ma,” Palestine’s Dialogue Forum, accessed May 4, 2010, and *Ard al-Arab*, accessed May 4, 2010.

11 “Fatah Tuqirru Mujaddadan bi-l-Khilafat baina Fayyad wa-Abbas,” Palestine’s Dialogue Forum, accessed May 6, 2010.

12 “Indama Yatahawal al-Munadil ila Jasus,” Abu Mahjub, accessed May 19, 2010.

13 *ynet News* (Tel Aviv), June 14, 2010.

14 “Atfal Ghaza Yahrukun Suwar li-Salam Fayyad fi Lailat Tawaqquf Mahattat Kahraba Ghaza,” Palestine’s Dialogue Forum, accessed June 27, 2010; “Jama’a Tutliq ala Nafsiha Shuhada’a Ustul al-Hurriyya Tatabanna Maqtal Shurti Israil[i] fi-l-Khalil,” Muntadayat al-Buraq al-Islamiyya, accessed June 15, 2010.

the rejectionism, personality cults, and security services that marked Yasser Arafat's regime.¹⁵

Yet, online discussions indicate that Palestinians often regard Fayyad as a Western puppet in general and a collaborator with Washington and Jerusalem in particular.¹⁶ Some Palestinians believe Fayyad remains in office only to please Western donors. This suggests that the higher quality of life and political changes Fayyad has delivered to the Palestinians may be

less important to them than the perceived need for conflict with Israel.

ISLAMISM AMONG PALESTINIANS

While political reform lacks support in the Palestinian web environment, Islamism is alive and well with Hamas maintaining a particularly strong presence. Palestine's Dialogue Forum is a popular forum that draws high traffic from readers of Hamas's official media page, the Palestinian Center for Media. Hamas also maintains a strong presence on the "I'm the Muslim" Net-

15 Thomas Friedman, "Green Shoots in Palestine," *The New York Times*, Aug. 4, 2009.

16 Peraino, "Palestine's New Perspective."

FDD STUDY METHODOLOGY

FDD selected ConStrat, a Washington, D.C.-based web analysis company, to collect data for this study. ConStrat used advanced technology usually employed on behalf of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) to cull information from search engines, unstructured social media sites, YouTube, Twitter, social networks, wikis, and RSS feeds.

From May 3 through July 3, 2010, ConStrat viewed approximately 10,000 Palestinian social media entries and analyzed approximately 20 percent of them based on their relevancy. In the end, the company analyzed 1,788 statements contained within 1,114 unique posts across 996 threads written by 699 authors. When substantive discussion threads—positive or negative—matched our taxonomy on topics ranging from jihad to reform, we included them in our study. In short, the study surveyed the breadth of opinion on the Palestinian web in Arabic.

It was difficult to pinpoint the exact level of Internet usage among Palestinians. Freedom House estimates that only 4 percent of Palestinian houses have an Internet connection¹ while the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics estimates that in 2009, 28.5 per-

cent of Palestinian households had Internet access² though these statistics do not account for the widespread use of hundreds of Internet cafés in the Palestinian territories.³

However, while social media users represent a small and better educated segment of Palestinian society, online social networks provide important political insights because they grant their users anonymity and freedom of expression. This is particularly true with regard to the Palestinian online environment, which is remarkably open, unlike that of the majority of the Arab world as Israel provides the Palestinian territories with unfettered Internet access.⁴

FDD instructed ConStrat not to provide percentages for the sentiments and trends observed in this study. Indeed, we believed percentages would reinforce a disingenuous notion that ours was a statistical survey. The goal was simply to provide an accurate snapshot of what Palestinians were saying online during a nine-week period and share those results in an effort to prompt further study and exploration.

1 "Country Report: Palestine (Palestinian Authority and Israeli-Occupied Territories)," Freedom House, Washington, D.C., accessed Oct. 27, 2010.

2 "Access and Use of ICT by Households and Individuals by Year," Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, Ramallah, accessed Oct. 27, 2010.

3 *Time*, Oct. 29, 2008.

4 *BBC News*, Dec. 13, 2006.

work for Islamic Discussion, which hosts heated debates among jihadists. It also regularly posts press releases from Fatah's armed wing, the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, and the global Islamist group Hizb at-Tahrir. Hamas is also active on al-Jazeera Talk, which maintains a steady presence of Muslim Brotherhood supporters, as well as Salafists and al-Qaeda sympathizers.

Palestinians on these forums expressed dissatisfaction about the Hamas-Fatah conflict,¹⁷ but Hamas supporters only occasionally engaged their Fatah foes on Fatah forums. More often, they used the forums to reinforce their own opinions. Palestinian Internet users slammed Fatah for its continued reliance on the United States, Jordan, and Israel to maintain security in the West Bank.¹⁸ They also accused the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority of torture and murder, denigrated West Bank police as "Abbas's militias," and referred to the detainment of Hamas members as "kidnappings."¹⁹

Rather than seeking unity with their more secular foes, many online Hamas supporters occupied themselves with the challenge of reconciling Hamas's ideology with that of more radical users. While numerous Salafist sites (mojahden.net, atahadi.com, hanein.info, alrepat.com, alqimmah.net, and almedad.com) criticized Hamas, debates between Salafist sympathizers and Hamas supporters were more commonly found on larger, ideologically diverse forums such as aljazeerataalk.net and muslim.net.

During the monitoring period, political sub-

Photo will not display.

Palestinian prime minister Salam Fayyad (left), with Secretary of State Clinton, at the U.S. State Department, Washington, D.C., July 1, 2009, is widely revered in the West for his economic reforms, but many Palestinians view him as an American puppet.

forums on aljazeerataalk.net hosted heated debates on questions of Islamic piety between Salafists and users who sympathize with Hamas and its parent organization, the Muslim Brotherhood. From time to time, one poster would declare another *takfir* (an accusation whereby one Muslim accuses another of apostasy).

Salafists and Hamas, however, showed no disagreement on the topic of Israel. It should come as no surprise, then, that the resumption of Palestinian-Israeli peace talks prompted a flurry of discussion on pro-Hamas sites wherein users generally agreed that the move "does not reflect the will of the Palestinian people."²⁰

Online conversations reflecting Salafist²¹ influence addressed a range of topics, first and

17 See, for example, Maan News Agency (Bethlehem), July 7, 2007; *The Daily Star* (Beirut), Aug. 18, 2007.

18 *The Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 15, 2009.

19 See, for example, "Al'an Milishiyat Dayton Tashunn Hamlat I'tiqalat Sharisa Taalat Ru'asaa Baladiyyat wa-Qiyyadat Hamas," Palestine's Dialogue Forum, accessed May 25, 2010.

20 See, for example, "Taher Annun: Taqdiruna al-Amiq li-l-Dawr at-Turki bi-Itijah al-Qadiya al-Filistiniya," Palestine's Dialogue Forum, accessed May 5, 2010; "Dhikra Amaliyat Rishon Le-Zion al-Butuliya: Tabannaha al-Qassam ba'da 6 Sanawat," Palestine's Dialogue Forum, accessed May 7, 2010.

21 Some analysts make a distinction between adherents to Salafism and Salafi-jihadists, who use Salafism to justify violence in the name of this school of Islamic thought. For the purposes of this article, Salafists will describe both subscribers to this fundamentalist doctrine and perpetrators of violence on its behalf.

Photo will not display.

President Obama (center) meets with Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu (left) and Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas (right) in New York, September 22, 2009. Despite the president's recent push to bring an end to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Palestinian web users show a distinct lack of interest in peace and continue to consider Israel an enemy rather than a peace partner.

foremost the prospect of violence against Israel in religious terms. In the views of many Salafist users, jihad is a legitimate method of resistance to Israel and an obligation for all Muslims as Israeli control over what they regard as Muslim lands merits violence.

Other issues that attracted Salafists' attention include the alleged corruption of Fatah leaders, coupled with the notion that they served as agents of the West; descriptions of Israeli "occupation" as part of a broader theological battlefield, including conflicts in other Muslim countries (such as Iraq and Afghanistan); the practice of *takfir* (declaring one's Islamic opponent an apostate) on less religiously-committed Palestinians; and the implementation of Shari'a in an eventual Palestinian state.

One particularly revealing discussion surrounded al-Qaeda's popularity among Palestinians. Palestinian users on aljazeeraatalk.net wrote that they "respect" al-Qaeda but do not believe that Salafist ideology is popular among Palestinians. Others disagreed. One Palestinian forum member explicitly disavowed support for al-Qaeda, saying that he used to take

pride in the group but that its supporters on the forum showed him that they "surpass even Fatah in their hatred for Hamas," prompting two other users based in the Palestinian territories to express similar views.²²

There was also some evidence of friction between Salafists and Hamas. Many of the Salafi users on mojahden.net, atahadi.com, and almedad.com condemned Hamas for "waging war" against Salafists in Gaza, pointing to the bloody August 2009 clashes between the group and members of the Salafist faction Jund Ansar Allah (JAA) in the Gaza Strip town of Rafah.²³ Hamas supporters expressed anger that JAA had declared *takfir* on Hamas; JAA supporters denied that it had while

Salafists criticized Hamas for cracking down on JAA operatives in Gaza. Forums at mojahden.net, atahadi.com, and almedad.com also proved fertile ground for Salafist Palestinians to express their ideologies and condemn Hamas for being "un-Islamic" and forsaking the fight against Israel in the interest of staying in power. Salafist users on muslm.net openly referred to Hamas leaders as infidels.

Several posts suggested deeper Salafist penetration of Palestinian society. The Salafist site alfaloja.net, for example, re-posted reports from the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* that al-Qaeda operatives in Yemen had sent West Bank militants a guide detailing how to use a car engine to build a light aircraft that could be used to launch attacks against Israel.²⁴

22 "Ansar Hamas baina al-Aala li-bani Alman wa-l-Ada li-Ahl at-Tawhid," al-Jazeera Talk, accessed June 10, 2010.

23 Barak Mendelsohn, "Hamas and Its Discontents," *Foreign Policy*, Sept. 9, 2009.

A regular contributor on aljazeeraatalk.net denied these allegations but acknowledged the existence of ties between al-Qaeda and certain Palestinian groups.²⁵

Like the Salafists, Hamas supporters generally favored continued attacks against Israel. A handful of pro-Hamas users on aljazeeraatalk.net and paldf.net even called for attacks from the West Bank. One user stated that rocket attacks from Gaza were no longer necessary since Gaza had been “liberated” after Israel’s unilateral withdrawal from the territory in 2005,²⁶ but this was a minority opinion.

One lively debate on paldf.net illuminated divisions over Hamas’s strategy. Discussing the future of Hamas rule in Gaza, the group’s online supporters disagreed over the wisdom of direct confrontation with Israel but ultimately discussed how Hamas should bring rival factions into the fight against Israel instead of clashing with them.²⁷

In short, the Palestinian social media environment offers no indication that Hamas seeks peace with Israel. There were no scored posts on this topic on any of the pro-Hamas forums. Nor were there any posts attributed to pro-Hamas users on this topic on other web forums.

All in all, Palestinian Islamist activity online mirrors what many observers have already reported, namely, that Salafism has a growing number of adherents online and that rejectionism is the dominant position among Hamas users online, casting doubt on claims that the group privately wishes to negotiate peace with Jerusalem and Washington. Finally, Hamas remains entrenched in a civil war with Fatah and does not appear eager to end it, as evidenced by the repeated online attacks it has launched against the rival organization.²⁸

FATAH

Relevant posts scored over the course of nine weeks reveal Fatah to be a faction in disarray. Indeed, the organization has undergone something of an identity crisis since the collapse of the Oslo process in 2000 and 2001.²⁹ From a political perspective, Fatah lacks leadership. From an ideological perspective, it lacks direction. Palestinian web users indicated this repeatedly on Fatah’s two online forums: Voice of Palestine and Fatah Forum.

For example, the announcement that Mahmoud Abbas would meet with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) during his June 2010 visit to the United States prompted anti-Fatah users to post scathing criticisms of both AIPAC and the Palestinian Authority president.³⁰ Fatah supporters largely ignored the visit until reports surfaced of Abbas’s statement that he “does not deny the Jews’ right to the land of Israel” (translated by major Arab news outlets as “right to land in Palestine”),³¹ prompting discomfiture among Fatah’s online supporters. Fatah users posted divisive comments on the Voice of Palestine site, lamenting Fatah’s renunciation of armed resistance and even admitting that the movement is “in decline.”³²

Most Fatah supporters on the web embraced the notion that Israel was an enemy rather than a peace partner.

Fatah supporters also weighed in on a Palestinian attack on an Israeli patrol in the West Bank town of Hebron that killed one Israeli police officer and wounded three others. They re-

24 “Al-Qaeda Baathat Mua’kharan bi-Kurrasat Irshad li-Nashataiha fi Ghaza ... Ha’aretz Tazaama anna at-Tanzim Yadfau bi-Itijah Muwajaha baina Hamas wa-Israil al-Ithnain,” *al-Falaja*, accessed May 24, 2010.

25 “Ha’aretz: al-Qaeda fi-l-Yemen Tursil Mudarribin ila Ghaza,” *al-Jazeera Talk*, accessed June 1, 2010.

26 *BBC News*, Sept. 12, 2005.

27 “Ra’i fi Muqawamat Ghaza wa-Ru’ya li-l-Marhala al-Qadima,” Palestine’s Dialogue Forum, accessed June 19, 2010.

28 *The New York Times*, Mar. 10, 2009.

29 “Palestine: Salvaging Fatah,” International Crisis Group, Middle East Report 91, Nov. 12, 2009.

30 “Indama Nataqaha ar-Rais al-Filastini: Abbas Yu’akkid ala an li-l-Yahud Haqq fi Filastin,” *Aqsaa.com*, accessed June 15, 2010.

31 *Ha’aretz* (Tel Aviv), June 10, 2010.

32 “Kalam...fi...al-mamnua,” *Palvoice*, accessed June 13, 2010.

posted articles carrying the PA's condemnation of the attack even as Hamas supporters and other users accused the PA of "valuing Jews more than Palestinians."³³ Ironically, it was ultimately Fatah's al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades that claimed responsibility for the attack (along with a new group called Martyrs of the Freedom Flotilla), highlighting the deep divisions within Fatah itself.³⁴

Most users on Palestinian sites viewed violence as a legitimate alternative to negotiations.

On the issue of violence, Fatah supporters online fall into two camps of roughly even strength: those who support non-violent means of protest and those who yearn for a return to the "Second (al-Aqsa) *Intifada*" of 2000-05. Whether this correlates to the way

Fatah members actually view conflict with Israel will need to be verified.

Nonetheless, most Fatah supporters on the web embraced the notion that Israel was an enemy rather than a peace partner. One particularly popular post during the study period was a report that appeared on Fatah forums alleging that Israel seeks to "separate Gaza from the West Bank" and, thereby, "liquidate the Palestinian national project."³⁵ This, however, did not prevent these supporters from voicing loyalty to the Fatah leadership despite its engagement in negotiations with Israel.

THE PEACE PROCESS

During the observation period, despite positive developments from the Palestinian perspective, a noticeable majority of Palestinian social

media commentary on the peace negotiations was negative.

In his address to the Muslim world from Cairo on June 4, 2009, President Obama declared that the Palestinians' situation was "intolerable."³⁶ He has since pressed Israel to cease all development in the West Bank and placed an unprecedented emphasis on freezing construction in East Jerusalem. U.S.-Israel relations came under particular strain in March 2010 when Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited the White House. Amidst a disagreement over building in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, Obama reportedly humiliated the Israeli prime minister by walking out on the Israeli delegation to have dinner with his family.³⁷ While Netanyahu and Obama had a more cordial meeting in July,³⁸ Israelis continue to distrust the president. According to a March 2010 poll, 9 percent of Israelis said that Obama's administration is pro-Israel while 48 percent called it pro-Palestinian.³⁹ These sentiments likely hardened in July after the Obama administration upgraded the diplomatic status of the Palestinian Authority in Washington to that of a general delegation, which was largely viewed as a step toward Palestinian statehood.⁴⁰

Yet despite these advances for the Palestinians, they showed little optimism online about the U.S.-led peace process. The study analyzed sentiment on a variety of topics, including religious and political reasons for rejecting the peace process; rationales for refusing to deal with Israel; mistrust of Israel's motives; the perception that peace talks are futile; mistrust of the United States as a negotiator; anger at the PA for "selling out the resistance"; and an overall unwillingness to compromise on key issues such as borders, settlements, and the right of return—the standard Palestinian and Arab euphemism for the demographic destruction of Israel.

33 "Hukumat Fayyad tudin maqatl shurti Isra'ili," Muntadayat al-Qumma, accessed June 16, 2010.

34 "Al-Muqawama al-Filastiniyya taqtul dabitan kabiran fi Jaysh al-Ihtilal fi amaliyya naw'iyya bi-l-Khalil," Muntadayat al-Wadad, accessed June 15, 2010.

35 See, for example, "Fatah tuhathir min al-Mukhattat al-Israeli li-Tasfiyat al-Mashru al-Watani al-Filastini," Muntadayat Intifadat Filastin, accessed June 16, 2010.

36 Barack Obama, "The Cairo Speech," *The New York Times*, June 4, 2009.

37 *The Washington Post*, July 7, 2010.

38 Associated Press, July 7, 2010.

39 *The Jerusalem Post*, Mar. 26, 2010.

40 United Press International, July 23, 2010.

Users on pro-Hamas forums such as mahjoob.com and paldf.net asserted that the return to peace talks “does not reflect the will of the Palestinian people” and decried the recent U.S. move to transfer \$150 million to the PA as “bribery.”⁴¹ The website paldf.net, which is popular among supporters of Palestinian militant groups, served as a venue for Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine to post statements rejecting the resumption of negotiations.

Indeed, most users on a broad spectrum of Palestinian sites viewed violence as a legitimate alternative to negotiations and rejected Israel’s political and territorial claims. Users on forums such as arab-land.net and the radical blog gulooa.blogspot.com distributed editorials expressing negative sentiments about the peace process by Egyptian columnist Fahmy Howeid, as well as *al-Quds al-Arabi* editor Abdul Bari Atwan, who raised the specter of an “open *intifada*” in the West Bank.⁴² An article on the Islamist website islamtoday.net echoed these sentiments, noting that an impasse in the peace process could turn into an “armed uprising.”⁴³

Palestinian Internet users often dismissed potentially positive diplomatic steps. Abbas’s June 2010 visit to the U.S. prompted a flurry of negative responses, including pointedly derogatory comments surrounding his meeting with AIPAC.⁴⁴ And as also noted above, even on



Palestinian online discourse offers no indication that Hamas seeks peace with Israel. Hamas supporters generally favored continued attacks against Israel.

pro-Fatah sites including palvoice.com, Fatah members lamented their leaders’ renunciation of armed resistance.⁴⁵ One popular posting (reposted on the Arabic blog aggregator amin.org and the reform-leaning alhourriah.ps) asserted that Israel was incapable of “unilateral” peace due to a lack of political will and that the two-state solution was “on its deathbed”—meaning that the Palestinians needed to consider a one-state solution to the conflict.⁴⁶

CONCLUSION

This examination of the Palestinian Internet social media environment found the following trends:

Many Palestinians do not support the efforts to achieve peace. Despite the Obama administration’s recent push to bring an end to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and perhaps even

41 “Al-Awda li-l-Mufawadat laysat Qararan Filastini,” Palestine’s Dialogue Forum, accessed May 9, 2010.

42 “Mufawadat tahn al-Ma’,” Ard al-Arab, accessed May 4, 2010.

43 “Al-Muqata’a tughliq Masani Isra’iliyya,” *Islam Today*, accessed May 17, 2010.

44 United Press International, June 10, 2010.

45 See, for example, “Kalam...fi...al-mamnua,” Palvoice, accessed June 13, 2010.

46 “Isra’il 2010 ajiza an al-Harb wa-as-Salam wa-l-Ahadiyya Aidan,” Shabakat al-Internet li-l-I’lam al-Arabi, accessed May 26, 2010.

help the Palestinians declare a state, not to mention its online efforts through a State Department initiative to win Palestinian hearts and minds,⁴⁷ Palestinian web users show a distinct lack of interest in peace. The language of rejectionism remains prevalent, commentary on peace talks is overwhelmingly negative, and potentially positive diplomatic steps are generally ignored.

Palestinian Salafism is on the rise. There is a small but distinct Salafist influence in the Palestinian online environment. Whether this translates to growing popularity on the ground in either the West Bank or the Gaza Strip remains a subject of debate. Yet Washington cannot discount the potential for cooperation between

Salafists and Hamas.

Fatah, which currently represents Palestinians in the U.S.-led peace talks, is in disarray. Fatah's online supporters typically vilified Israel, and few expressed positive sentiments about peace. They break down into two factions of roughly equal strength: one that sup-

ports nonviolence, and one that seeks armed conflict and terrorism against Israel.

The Islamist Hamas shows little desire for a negotiated peace with Israel. While Hamas is not monolithic, nearly all of its supporters on the Internet continue to support violence against Israel. On this issue, Hamas showed no apparent disagreement with Salafists. On the contrary, Hamas's online supporters often seek

common ground with these radical groups.

The three-year conflict between Hamas and Fatah is not likely to end soon. The two sides regularly trade barbs online, and the study found little evidence of rapprochement. Indeed, Hamas members appeared to be more interested in reconciling with Salafists than with Fatah members. Social media suggests that the Palestinian internecine conflict stemming from Hamas's violent 2007 takeover of Gaza remains a challenge to the Obama administration's peace plan.

Palestinian reform factions are weak. These groups have little influence online, raising red flags about institution building and liberalization. The lack of positive sentiment, or even mentions of Palestinian political reform, is striking. This raises troubling questions about the Obama administration's lack of emphasis on Palestinian political institutions as well as concerns about the viability of a Palestinian state if one is to be created.

Apparently displeased with the findings of this study, Palestinian pollster Khalil Shikaki has reportedly dismissed "the idea of having a representative sample by looking at the Internet" as "absolutely ridiculous."⁴⁸ Yet it is precisely because Palestinian polling data (including Shikaki's own) has been so wildly inaccurate that the need to gauge Palestinian public opinion by alternative means has become so urgent. Indeed, while it remains unclear how accurate social media is as a bellwether of Palestinian political beliefs, the administration should consider the extent to which these findings represent the broader Palestinian population, perhaps through additional long-term studies, preferably before Washington suffers more humiliating setbacks in its efforts to promote Middle East peace.



The Palestinian conflict stemming from Hamas's takeover of Gaza remains a challenge to the Obama peace plan.

47 "Digital Outreach Team," U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C., Jan. 2009.

48 Jonathan Guyer, "Attitude Problem: What Social Media Can't Tell Us about Palestine," *Foreign Policy*, Oct. 28, 2010.

A French *Intifada*

by Nidra Poller

A process described by some as the Islamization of Europe, by others as the failure of Europeans to integrate Muslim immigrants, has reached a breaking point in France. One of the most troubling manifestations of this discord is the development of a particular type of violence that is more than the sum of its parts. A sampling of this year's news reports reads like a catalogue of stomping, stabbing, shooting, torching, and sacking; attacks on teachers, policemen, firemen, old ladies, and modest retirees; turf wars, tribal fights, murder over women, over attitude, over nothing; dead youths, murderous youths, bodies scattered across a national battlefield.

Is there a connection between the endless series of seemingly disparate criminal incidents and markers openly displayed in insurrectional riots and demonstrations—kaffiyeh face masks, Hezbollah flags, *intifada* slogans, Islamic chants? A general French tendency to withhold information and a deliberate decision to avoid ethnic and religious symbols leads to white noise coverage of criminality. Names, photos, and background information about perpetrators, suspects, and victims are usually suppressed, especially those that might create a negative image of Muslims.

Yet there is ample evidence that immigration has brought specifically Islamic antipathy to Jews, contempt for Western values, and other antisocial attitudes reinforced by religious zeal and aggravated by the clash between an authoritarian family structure and permissive French society. Many second and third generation, French-born Muslims, anxious to separate themselves from a “French” identity they reject, are no less vulnerable to these influences than recent immigrants.

A supposedly reassuring “it’s not Chicago” occasionally tacked on at the end of a report about a lawless neighborhood adds to the confusion. In fact, it is not Chicago but more like Algiers, Jenin, or Bamako.

GAZA ON THE SEINE

“We don’t want to import the Mideast conflict.” These soothing words were repeated by

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officials from Left to Right every time Muslim rage over supposed Zionist persecution of Palestinians was “avenged” by violence against Jews in France, notably the countless attacks against Jews tallied since the outbreak in September 2000 of the “al-Aqsa *intifada*.” Initially dismissed as “insults and bullying,” the worst wave of anti-Jewish aggression since World War II was subsequently attributed to the quirky import of a “foreign bug” that troubled harmonious relations between local Jewish and Muslim

communities. Meanwhile, the media were importing the conflict with all their might, pro-Palestinian nongovernmental organizations were agitating, and peace marches against the Iraq war blossomed into punitive actions against Jews.

Though ethnic and religious statistics are prohibited in France, it is estimated to have the largest populations of Muslims, anywhere from five to ten million, and Jews, around 550,000, in Western Europe. Over half of the Jewish population is Sephardic, mainly refugees from North Africa. The Muslim population, most of which arrived since the early 1970s, is primarily from the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa with large contingents from Turkey, smaller communities from the rest of the Muslim world, and a growing number of converts.

The ethnic or religious identities and underlying motives of individuals who attack Jews in France are no more mysterious than those of jihadists who strike elsewhere, from the smooth

World Trade Center terrorists to the bungling Times Square bomber, and tens of thousands of the same stripe. A French Muslim thug does not bash the head of a French Jew because he cannot vent his rage against an Israeli: His feet, fists, iron bar, and knife, in fact, slash the false distinction between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism.

In May 2004, tens of thousands of mostly Jewish marchers protesting terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians and assaults on Jews in France chanted “*Synagogues brûlées, République en danger* [torched synagogues, endangered republic].”¹ Today, when the situation of French Jews has jelled into an uneasy truce—with a slow but steady decrease in population, sustained immigration to Israel, and avoid-

ance when possible of heavily Muslim neighborhoods—the French republic is in danger as the anti-Jewish thuggery has been extended to the general population, the “dirty Frenchies” and “filthy whities.”

France’s *politique arabe* (pro-Arab policy) has been unwittingly transposed to the domestic scene. The twisted logic and adulterated ethics devised to blame Israel for failing to bring peace on earth has come back to haunt the French. A compassionate discourse that excuses Palestinian atrocities against Israeli civilians as a reaction to “injustice” also excuses French domestic criminality as payback for colonization, discrimination, exclusion, unemployment, and police harassment. Confusion between avowed genocidal intentions and elusive legitimate aspirations—a Palestinian state living side by side in peace with Israel—breeds confusion at home between insurrectional thugs and frustrated but law-abiding immigrants. The “disproportionate reaction” accusation played like the ace of spades against Israel turns into a joker when riot police are portrayed as Robocops oppressing a “Palestinized” immigrant population. Having expropriated the moral high ground by rough riding over the heads of Israeli soldiers, French authorities are disarmed in confrontations with homegrown *shabab* or youths.

So Palestinian terrorists are called “militants,” Gaza Flotilla jihadists are presented as “humanitarians,” and the young French criminals are “youths.” This deceptively generic term used to mask the identity of local Maghrebi and African thugs is a paradoxical translation of the Arabic *shabab*. Indeed, it is not rare to read of a “36-year-old adult youth” involved in a rumble or suspected of murder.

Have French youngsters become savages? Do they steal handbags from elderly women and kill a man who will not give them a cigarette? Are these the same youths who join peace marches, live ecologically, hate religion, and worship diversity? Are French youth running the drug traffic while studying for the baccalaureate exam? Do they break into schools to kill rival dealers or stab uppity teachers? Are the French youth who sit in cafes with their iPhones and sunbathe naked on beaches the same ones that gang up

A discourse that excuses Palestinian atrocities against Israeli civilians also excuses French domestic criminality as payback for colonization.

1 Pierre Birnbaum, “Le recul de l’État fort et la nouvelle mobilisation antisémite dans la France contemporaine,” *Pôle Sud*, Nov. 2004, pp. 15-29.

twenty to one on a man who looked twice at their girlfriends or complained when cut in front of in line at an amusement park? What about the youthful French boy couples strolling hand in hand on rue (street) Ste. Croix de la Bretonnerie in the Marais? Do they meet rivals for knife fights at Paris's north station? Hardly.

During the 2005 uprising, when rioting Muslim youths torched cars and public buildings in housing projects throughout the country and clashed with the security forces trying to restore law and order, Parisians believed they were safe inside invisible walls as fires burned on the other side of the ring road. "It's just the *banlieue* [working class suburb]," they said. A second round of discourse about the urgent need to improve housing, infrastructure, transportation, and job opportunities circumscribed the problem. Before the year was out, flames were rising in the center of the city and the *banlieue* problems spread like wildfire.²

NAKED EYE AND MEDIA EYES

Five years later, as France is being rocked by another, if more diffuse and elusive, wave of violence, the discourse is similarly sterile. Newspapers string out a litany of violent incidents in a repetition of stock phrases and opaque vocabulary. Honey-voiced newscasters warble little tunes of tribal violence as if turf wars and fatal stabbings in retaliation for a look, an attitude, or a woman were all in a day's work. Bu-



Jiro Mochizuki, Agence Shot

In May 2004, tens of thousands of mostly Jewish marchers in Paris protested terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians and the thousands of attacks against French Jews tallied since the September 2000 outbreak of the "Aqsa intifada."

colic place names redolent with memories of Impressionist boating parties are now the sites of bloody murder. Fatal stabbings in schools named after resistance heroes are attributed to the influence of video games and a hunger for consumer products stimulated by capitalism. A small sample paints the grim picture:

- January 14, 2010: Adrien, an 18-year-old from Sannois (Val d'Oise) is savagely murdered by a gang of youths armed with sticks, knives, golf clubs, and a Japanese saber. He tried to find refuge in a car repair shop, but the manager, who was ordered out, stood by helplessly as the youths beat and stabbed Adrien to death. Subsequent reports reveal that the murder was the last act in a day of fights between two groups. The victim's distraught mother berates the youths for making trouble and giving the neighborhood a bad name, yet blames their aggression on police harassment.³

² *TCS Daily*, Public Broadcasting Service, Sept. 20, 2005.

³ *Le Parisien*, Feb. 12, 2010.

Riot police are portrayed as Robocops oppressing a “Palestinized” immigrant population.

- January 23: A “26-year-old young man” stabbed to death is found in the street in the Orgemont project at Epinay-sur-Seine (Seine Saint-Denis). A suspect turned himself in, yet the circumstances have not been elucidated. That same day, four people are wounded by BB guns, in a fight in Tremblay en France (Seine Saint-Denis), again without elucidation.⁴

And a 16 year-old girl in Saint Gratien (Val d’Oise) is severely beaten by her two brothers and strict Muslim parents for chatting on the Internet; doctors fear she will lose an eye.⁵

- January 31: A gang fight involving a hundred youths, some armed with knives,

takes place in the Boissy-Saint-Léger RER commuter train station, apparently connected to a hip-hop concert.⁶

- February 6: A 17-year-old youth is stabbed to death near the Parc des Princes stadium in the sixteenth arrondissement of Paris.⁷

- February 7: Youths fight the police for two hours in Chanteloup-les-Vignes (Yvelines). The next day, two men “of African origin,” probably gangsters, are shot in the ninth arrondissement of Paris, and on February 20, a man is shot dead in broad daylight on rue des Pyrénées in the twentieth arrondissement.⁸

- February 21: In Conteville (Seine-Maritime), a 73-year-old man visiting a friend,

a retired scrap iron dealer, is killed by robbers who broke into the home.⁹

What happened next? Were the circumstances elucidated? The perpetrators apprehended? Convicted? We may never know. Convinced that the identity of culprits is withheld for ideological reasons, readers do the detective work with telltale clues and exasperating similarities. Youths, knives, the banlieue? Twenty against one? Drug wars? Turf wars? Gang fights? The puzzled citizen situates each incident somewhere on a line traced from the intimidating rowdiness observed in public to mass revolts seen on television:

- February 28: An African widow beloved by her neighbors is stabbed to death in a bank to the horror of helpless customers and personnel. The next day, a retired couple aged 76, are brutally murdered in their home in Pont-Saint-Maxence (Oise), just north of Paris.¹⁰

- March 1: A sixteen-year-old boy drowns in the Yerres river at Villeneuve-Saint-Georges (Val de Marne) trying to escape assailants who chased him as he came out of a hospital after treatment for injuries sustained in an earlier episode.¹¹

- March 10: Four masked youths armed with knives and a fake gun sneak through the handicapped entrance into an amphitheater at the University of Paris XIII-Villetaneuse (Seine Saint-Denis) and steal a total of nine cell phones and €40 from the students and professor.¹²

- April 3: Fifteen youths are kicked off the tramway in the center of Grenoble. Three young men and a woman get off at the same stop. The youths harass them,

4 Ibid., Jan. 23, 2010.

5 Ibid., Jan. 23, 2010.

6 *Le Figaro* (Paris), Jan. 31, 2010.

7 Ibid., Feb. 6, 2010.

8 Ibid., Feb. 20, 2010.

9 Ibid., Feb. 21, 2010.

10 *Le Figaro*, Feb. 28, 2010.

11 *Le Parisien*, Mar. 1, 2010.

12 *Le Figaro*, Mar. 10, 2010.

ask the woman for a cigarette; she says she does not have any more. They knock over one of the young men, stomp his head, bash him senseless, stab him, perforating his lung, and run, leaving the victim, a 24-year-old cartographer identified as Martin, hovering between life and death.¹³

- April 30: A man wearing a yarmulke was attacked in the center of Strasbourg by two Muslims who knocked him down with a heavy iron bar and stabbed him twice in the back.¹⁴

- July 14: Nantes: A 52-year-old handicapped man is beaten to death by four “African type” youths scrounging for cigarettes and a few euros. The police are looking for witnesses.¹⁵

- August 4: A 64-year-old man was kidnapped by three youths in front of his house, forced into a car, taken to a secluded place, beaten, and tortured until he told them where he hid his savings—a few thousand euros. The victim was hospitalized in serious condition, his face slashed, a piece of a finger chopped off.¹⁶



Jiro Mochizuki, Agence Shot

During the 2005 uprising, when rioting Muslim youths torched cars and public buildings in housing projects throughout the country and clashed with the security forces trying to restore law and order, Parisians believed they were safe inside invisible walls as fires burned on the other side of the ring road. Before the year was out, flames were rising in the center of the city.

LOW INTENSITY WARFARE

Wherever punk jihadists decide to stake out a territory—a street corner, a park bench, a place in line, or a housing project—they punish intruders with merciless violence.

A young couple living in the center of the southwestern city of Perpignan who dared to protest the ear-splitting noise of motorcycle rodeos under their windows in the middle of the night almost paid with their lives. Fifteen youths shouting, “We’re going to kill you,” broke into their building, raced up the stairs, and pounded on their door with such force that the adjoining wall started to collapse. They scattered and ran when the police approached.¹⁷

Youths from l’Essonne punished a family because one of the boys made a remark when

¹³ Ibid., Apr. 14, 2010.

¹⁴ *Les Dernières Nouvelles d’Alsace*, Apr. 30, 2010.

¹⁵ RTL.fr (Paris), July 14, 2010.

¹⁶ *Le Figaro*, Aug. 4, 2010.

¹⁷ Ibid., Aug. 3, 2010.



A Marseille blog celebrated French Independence Day by featuring a T-shirt emblazoned with an Algerian flag in the shape of France—similar to an image of a map of Israel covered with a Palestinian flag (right).

they pushed ahead of them in line at the Asterix theme park, thirty kilometers north of Paris. They called in reinforcements, caught up with the family in the parking lot, beat up the boys and hit their mother.¹⁸

July 13, the eve of French Independence Day, is traditionally celebrated with dancing in the streets. Youths shooting prohibited fire-cracker missiles caused at least forty-seven fires. A 63-year-old woman died when a missile, shot through an open window, set fire to her modest apartment. The second floor of a nineteenth arrondissement fire station, hit by missiles, went up in flames as people danced on the ground floor.¹⁹

A minor traffic accident on a highway outside Paris ended in bloody murder because the victim, a young family man named Muhammad, asked the woman responsible for the damage to sign an insurance declaration. “You trying to act French?” she objected, before calling for help from friends from les Mureaux, a nearby project. The youths, identified in one article as “black,” arrived in force, shouting, “We’re going to kill you in front of your mother,” and proceeded to bash the man’s head with unre-

strained savagery, killing him on the spot, in front of his family, as promised. Two of the killers were identified by name and Senegalese origin on a Senegalese website.²⁰

Several weeks later, an American journalist investigating the problems of minorities in French housing projects was assaulted by youths in les Mureaux. Described as a 50-year-old evangelical, he was taken to a nearby hospital, unconscious. He had been given a head bashing and robbed of equipment worth more than \$15,000. The circumstances have not yet been elucidated.²¹

ECHO CHAMBER

In a transposition of the Middle East peace process mentality, the failure of integration is blamed on France just as the failure to create a Palestinian state is blamed on Israel. The Palestinian cause is forgiven for sixty years of aggression; delinquent immigrants are acquitted of responsibility for their antisocial behavior and self-destructive strategies. Hamas attacks Israel for years on end; Israel finally retaliates and gets its nose rubbed in the rubble; housing projects are dilapidated by their own delinquent residents only to be displayed as proof of social injustice. International opinion looks the other way as Hamas imposes Shari‘a law in Gaza; the media close their eyes as thugs impose their law in the projects.

Banlieue-Gaza-on-the-Seine for the domestic insurgents, Banlieue-Gaza-open-air-prison for the compassionate choir. No matter how much is done or given, it is never enough; no matter how wild the behavior, it is always explained away. Here, there, and everywhere, ethical boundaries are erased and logic surrenders to magical thinking. When mothers offer their children to die as *shahids*—martyred murderers—

18 *Libération* (Paris), May 25, 2010.

19 *Paris Match*, July 22, 2010; *Libération*, July 14, 2010.

20 *RMC.fr* (Paris), June 30, 2010; *Xibar* (Senegal), July 6, 2010.

21 *Libération*, July 30, 2010.

the very horror of their vengeance is held as a measure of the degree of oppression they endure. In France, every form of brutality, including the murder of Ilan Halimi—a young French Jew kidnapped by a banlieue gang in January 2006 and tortured to death over a period of three weeks²²—is attributed to some form of “exclusion.”²³ The unashamed anti-Semitism of gang leader Youssouf Fofana, a rabid Muslim Jew hater, was used to mask the motives of some twenty gang members of varied origins who participated in the crime. Lawyers for the defense organized press conferences and wrote op-eds to deny banlieue anti-Semitism and portray their clients as misguided underprivileged youths.

The same reverse chronology that explained in the first week of the al-Aqsa *intifada* that Palestinians had gone from throwing stones to shooting guns because Israeli forces overreacted to the initial—justified—“revolt,” now explains that banlieue youth have started shooting at the police with automatic weapons because law enforcement has gone quasi-military.

Identification with the Palestinian “resistance” emboldens French-born delinquents. Punk jihadists who drink alcohol, wear sweat suits, hardly ever set foot in a mosque, and cannot read the Qur’an in classic Arabic establish their dominion as if it were a *waqf* (religious endowment).

No French outlet would touch the “Hamas on the Seine” report by photojournalist Jean-Paul Ney, published by the French-language, Israel-based Metula News Agency on May 31, 2010, describing enraged kaffiyeh-masked, pro-Palestinians chanting, “Zionist sellout media,” “Jews to the ovens,” “F—k France,” “Sarkozy the little Jew,” “Obama the Jew’s n__r,” repeatedly breaking police lines, determined to reach the Israeli embassy and vent their rage over the Gaza flotilla incident. Joined by anarchist “black-blocks,” the insurgents destroyed property, threw paving stones at the police, and wreaked

havoc for several hours at the Champs Elysées Circle. Ney distinctly heard orders broadcast to the riot police: “Don’t try to stop them.”²⁴

The Marseille Bondy Blog celebrated French Independence Day in its fashion by featuring a T-shirt emblazoned with an Algerian flag in the shape of France—spitting image of a map of Israel covered with a Palestinian flag. “Second or third generation immigrant youths from the Maghreb, Comores, etc.,” says a young woman identified as Sonia, “are trying to find themselves.” The T-shirt is the answer to their quest. “We really have a double culture; we are both [French and Algerian].”²⁵

French media automatically favor the other version of any clash involving Israel. Journalists can write with their eyes closed. Or simply swallow what they are fed from Agence France-Presse dispatches. The story of the clash in August 2010 on Israel’s border with Lebanon—when an Israeli officer, three Lebanese soldiers, and one Lebanese journalist were killed when Lebanese forces opened fire on Israel Defense Forces soldiers performing routine maintenance work within Israel—broke in France, of course, with the Lebanese narrative. The falsification was revealed within twenty-four hours and confirmed in full reliable detail,²⁶ but media alchemists turned the dirty facts into ambiguous gold.²⁷ Why believe Israeli sources, even when corroborated by U.N. troops on the scene?

Identification with the Palestinian “resistance” emboldens French-born delinquents.

HALL OF MIRRORS

Given that the Muhammad al-Dura hoax—the staged death scene and subsequent martyrization of the 12-year-old Gazan allegedly killed

22 *The New York Sun*, Feb. 22, 2006.

23 *The Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 23, 2006; Nidra Poller, “Paris: Prisoner of the Barbarians,” *Standpoint Magazine*, July/Aug. 2009; idem, “French Justice Goes Easy on the Gang of Barbarians,” *New English Review*, July 11, 2009.

24 Metula News Agency (Luxembourg), May 31, 2010.

25 Marseille Bondy Blog, July 14, 2010.

26 *Ha’aretz* (Tel Aviv), Aug. 4, 2010.

27 *Le Monde* (Paris), Aug. 4, 2010; *Le Figaro*, Aug. 3, 2010.

Photo will not display.

In July 2010, the scenic town of Grenoble was rocked by a tidal wave of violence when Muslim “youths” responded to the killing of a local criminal in a fire exchange with police by rioting, torching cars, and shooting at the security forces.

judging an incident that occurred in a distant foreign land. After a similar accident in Woippy, a banlieue of Metz, gendarmes were pelted with stones, fourteen vehicles including a bus were torched, telephone booths and a school were sacked. These are but a few of many incidents where youths in stolen cars or motorcycles,

in cold blood by Israeli soldiers on the second day of the “Aqsa intifada”²⁸—was produced by Charles Enderlin, long-time Jerusalem correspondent of the state-owned France 2 television channel, the French authorities understandably live in dread of a real Dura on their own soil, not least since the youths readily fabricate their own child martyrs and go on the rampage in revenge. The 2005 riots were triggered by the death of two minors who sought refuge in an electrical substation, allegedly pursued by the police, allegedly for no good reason.²⁹ In November 2007, several policemen were wounded by gunfire in a battle with some 200 youths in Villiers le Bel (Val d’Oise) after two youths without helmets sped down the street on a prohibited mini-cycle, crashed into a police car, and were killed.³⁰ There is no way of knowing if Abu and Adama Kamara, Ibrahim Sow, Maka Kante, and Samuel Lambalamba, sentenced in July 2010 to prison terms ranging from three to fifteen years, are innocent as they claim, or fall guys for fellow youths;³¹ it is as if the court were

running away from the police, crash and kill themselves.

Yet, no matter how far-fetched the version of the “aggrieved” party, it always takes precedence over the official version in French media. Any police investigation is, by the media’s definition, suspect. The police, media suggest, should not engage in hot pursuit. One sympathizer explained in front of TV cameras that the police knew the names of the joy riders in the stolen car and could have let them go home and then arrested them the next day. After all, who cares if the boys cause a fatal accident in the meantime?

The media offered a brief tour when the police raided a housing project in the Parisian banlieue of Sevrans (Seine Saint Denis) controlled by drug dealers. Graffiti arrows indicate “shops”; residents tell how they pass through checkpoints to access their buildings, and TV cameramen were lucky to escape with their footage. “Militants” responded to the raid with the now-familiar torching, sacking, and shooting at policemen. Government promises to enforce the law provoke an outcry from compassionate sociologists, left-wing magistrates and mayors, members of do-good associations who protest that “repression is not the solution.” Imposing undue restraint on the police has simply emboldened their adversaries. Over 5,000 were injured in the line of duty in 2009, and in January-Febru-

28 “Philippe Karsenty: ‘We Need to Expose the Muhammad al-Dura Hoax,’” *Middle East Quarterly*, Fall 2008, pp. 57-65; Nidra Poller, “Myth, Fact, and the Al-Dura Affair,” *Commentary*, Sept. 2005.

29 *The Guardian* (London), Nov. 6, 2005.

30 *The New York Times*, Nov. 28, 2007.

31 *Le Parisien*, July 3, 2010.

ary 2010, some 1,100.³² In recent incidents, police have been surrounded, pelted with paving stones, kicked, punched, hit on the head with hammers, humiliated, and treated like mugging victims, not agents of law enforcement.

International media, relying heavily on Agence France-Presse and Associated Press wire services, have shown little interest in France's delinquency problem. The November 2005 "*intifada*" was mistakenly equated with the Watts riots; the recent anti-*niqab* (full-face veil) law is attributed to intolerance. The grievances of minorities are taken at face value, and government efforts to enforce the law are denounced as concessions to far right extremism.

In fact, and contrary to what has been written about French society, there is no tradition of segregation or ghettos. People are constantly in motion; public transportation carries passengers from banlieue to city centers, and neighborhoods are mixed. The recent ghettoization of certain housing projects—always incomplete—is a function of their criminalization. When the *caïds* (criminal bosses) rule the roost, those who can, leave; those who cannot, submit. It's a small-time jihad.

THE GANGSTER AS VICTIM

The holdup of a gambling casino in Uriage on the night of July 15, 2010, would have been one more item on the long list of unresolved crimes if the police in hot pursuit had not been led deep into the gangsters' turf in Villeneuve en Isère, a housing project in the banlieue of Grenoble. The two gangsters wearing bullet-proof vests opened fire with automatic weapons. The police returned fire, killing one with a shot to the head. His accomplice escaped. All hell broke loose in the project. The "victim" this time was not a youngster on a motorcycle but rather a 27-year-old repeat offender Karim Boudouda, already convicted of three separate

incidents of armed robbery but still on the loose. Ninety cars were torched the first night, twenty the next night. Armored cars, commandoes, and riot police were brought in, but Boudouda's friends fired on the police while his mother announced her intention to sue the police. The owner of a bar, said to be Karim Boudouda's cousin, was arrested after an arms cache and shooting range were discovered on the premises. Several people were detained and released in connection with the search for Boudouda's accomplice, whose name and description were not made public. In the first week of September, the

alleged accomplice, repeat-offender Monsif Ghabbour, was finally located, arrested, and arraigned, then immediately released under supervision. The police are outraged, and the prosecutor has appealed the release. Some officers directly involved in the shootout were transferred to other regions or sent out to pasture in what looked like a shameful retreat. Heady with victory, Karim's men pursued them with personalized death threats.³³

Eleven days later in Saint Aignan, Luigi B. crashed through a barrier, dragging a gendarme on the hood of his car for 500 meters, then pretended to stop at a second barrier, suddenly sped up, heading straight for two gendarmes. One of them shot at the speeding car as it whizzed by. When Luigi's body was found ten kilometers further on, his *gens du voyage* community (nomads of various origins, some now sedentary) went on the rampage. Vandals sacked a police station, terrified a baker, chopped down a dozen trees, and attacked public buildings in half a dozen different localities in the following days. Sociologist Michel Wieviorka analyzed the two situations with typical French rhetoric: "The nomads don't expect anything from society; the

When the criminal bosses rule the roost, those who can, leave; those who cannot, submit.

32 *Le Figaro*, Mar. 30, 2010; *L'Express* (Paris), Aug. 13, 2010.

33 *Le Figaro*, July 19, Sept. 3, 2010.

banlieue's expectations are disappointed." He added, "It's territorial, not ethnic or religious."³⁴ No one in Saint Aignan expected to be shot in the head as was the Israeli officer in a Lebanese incident for cutting down a dozen trees on the Israeli side of the border.

The familiar pattern of retreat on the home front was matched with reversals in foreign lands. In August, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb threatened to punish "the treason-

ous apostates, the children and agents of Christian France... [and] Sarkozy—the enemy of Allah" for a bungled attempt to rescue a French hostage—beheaded one week later—in Mali.³⁵ Two French reporters have been hostages in

Afghanistan since December 2009. Lebanese villagers surrounded, disarmed, stoned, and threatened to kill members of a French U.N. contingent as if they were policemen in a French housing project.

Contrary to expectations, the government did not slip away for the August vacation, hoping heads would cool in Villeneuve en Isère by September. The president, flanked by Interior Minister Brice Hortefeux and Immigration Minister Eric Besson, stepped into the ring, announced a series of tough measures, and dared to link crime with immigration. Not all crime, not all immigrants. But he broke the taboo, simply by stating the obvious and followed with a promise of harsh measures for criminals who shoot at the police. Moreover, naturalized cop-killers will lose their citizenship. Tax officials will be sent into the projects to crack down on people living in luxury while on the dole. The drug market will be dismantled. Severe delinquency, polygamy, and female circumcision will also be grounds for withdrawal of nationality (this provision was subsequently withdrawn). Illegal Roma

camp will be dismantled, and illegal residents sent back to Romania, Bulgaria, etc.³⁶

Suddenly, the media came forth with in-depth reports on Villeneuve en Isère, developed thirty years ago as a model of social harmony with public and private housing nestled side by side in a beautifully landscaped setting outside the college town of Grenoble. What went wrong? The crisis, officials said, caused deterioration; middle-class property owners left. More to the point, it was revealed that Boudouda was a "lieutenant" in one of the crime families. The current crop of Maghrebi kingpins are more ruthless and savage than earlier generations of Grenoble gangsters—Italian Mafiosi followed by French-Italian neo-Mafiosi.³⁷ Their operations are all the more brutal for being poorly planned and executed. They settle misunderstandings with sequestration, torture, or bursts of automatic gunfire.

XENOPHOBIA, "ISLAMOPHOBIA," OR DHIMMITUDE?

The government's straight talk has shaken France to the timbers. President Sarkozy was accused of cynically fishing for right-leaning-populist Front National voters, replaying the disgraceful Vichy past collaboration, separating the French-French from the foreign-French (akin to death-camp selections) and, trying to draw attention away from his administration's perfidious scandals.³⁸ In the rush to condemn the government for saying the unspeakable, critics have blithely stampeded over the distinction between a misguided 12-year-old bicycle thief and a 27-year-old repeat-offender who shoots at policemen with an automatic weapon.

Not a day goes by without a barrage of statements condemning the president. Former

Every law enforcement effort entails the danger of igniting a generalized insurrection.

34 *Le Point* (Paris), July 19, 2010 ; France 5 TV, July 20, 2010.

35 Reuters, Aug. 16, 2010; *Le Parisien*, Aug. 17, 2010.

36 Nicolas Sarkozy, Grenoble, July 30, 2010.

37 *Le Figaro*, Aug. 5, 2010.

38 See, for example, *The Herald Scotland* (Glasgow), July 25, 2010.

Socialist prime minister Michel Rocard—remembered for declaring in the early 1980s that “France cannot take in all the world’s misery”³⁹—stuck the Nazi label on President Sarkozy and accused him of fomenting civil war. Every opposition leader big or small took up the keyboard or microphone to vilify the president in the most emphatic terms. No Holocaust metaphor is left unturned. Deporting illegal Romas is equated with roundups of Jews in the 1940s. The rhetoric has come full circle: “immigrants” (meaning Arab-Muslim and sub-Saharan Africans) are today’s Jews when in fact the people who are now persecuting Jews belong to that lawless class loosely defined as “immigrants.”

The media are giving wall-to-wall coverage to the president’s most severe critics while limiting the defense of strict law enforcement to officials, giving the impression that the government stands alone—the 2 percent increase in approval ratings for the president and Prime Minister François Fillon notwithstanding. Dominique de Villepin, the president’s arch-rival within the governing Union for a Popular Movement party, accused the president of “transgression.”⁴⁰ With his customary grandiloquence, Villepin declared that Sarkozy has stained the French flag with shame.⁴¹

Can the truth about the Maghrebi gangsters of Villeneuve en Isère be extrapolated to other banlieues, other crimes, other nights of flame and destruction? Are law abiding citizens, Muslims included, supposed to grin and bear it? If this criminality is not strictly delinquent but is rather allied with a wider assault on Western values and way of life, French society must look it in the face. Thugs, the lumpenproletariat, and juvenile delinquents are easily enrolled as foot soldiers in totalitarian enterprises. These not-so-French, lawless youths play their role in a



Jiro Mochizuki, Agence Shot

Is there a connection between markers openly displayed in insurrectional riots and demonstrations—kaffiyeh face masks, Hezbollah flags, intifada slogans, Islamic chants—and the tidal wave of violence that has engulfed France over the past year?

conflict that radiates outward from a flash point in the Middle East.

While disillusioned advocates of law and order think that none of the tough measures announced will ever be applied, defenders of the downtrodden swear that every criminal case involving immigrants is deliberately highlighted to foment hostility and justify repression. Such accusations may seem plausible as long as the issues are debated in the abstract. But concrete realities are stubborn.

Thirty-five-year-old Lies Hebbaj came to public attention in April 2010 when he called a press conference in Nantes to contest a traffic ticket issued to his wife for driving with obstructed vision in a niqab.⁴² He has since been

39 Associated Press, Nov. 15, 2002.

40 *Le Figaro*, Aug. 24, 2010.

41 France 3 TV, Aug. 25, 2010.

42 *The Daily Telegraph*, June 3, 2010.

charged with welfare fraud, financial irregularities, violation of labor law, and rape and assault on a wife he repudiated in 2007. It is alleged that Hebbaj, who has four niqab-clad wives and sixteen children, has control of annual receipts of more than €300,000 in welfare payments, a third of which is fraudulently granted to his polygamous wives declared as single mothers. Should

The Islamic factor in both domestic strife and international conflicts is denied.

he be divested of the French nationality he acquired by marrying a French woman?⁴³

Two veiled women lost in yards of black fabric appeared on television to complain that Hebbaj—their husband and companion respectively, and the father of

their children—is a scapegoat. Sarkozy's critics say the Hebbaj case was pulled out of a hat to serve the government's nefarious projects. But it is Hebbaj who came to public attention with a controversial press conference. Why, when there is ample evidence of polygamy and welfare fraud, did he feel invulnerable? Why do the bandits of Villeneuve en Isère think they are more powerful than the police?

They feel invulnerable because they are not apprehended or punished and, furthermore, they cannot be criticized or identified without raising a hue and cry. Hundreds of punk jihadists screaming "F__k France" can go amok but no one has the right to say they belong to a specific group or current. No one is even allowed to speculate on what they might have in common with other lawbreakers—unless one portrays them as hapless victims of injustice.

CONCLUSION

Does the French government have the ways and means or will to impose law and order? Every law enforcement effort entails the danger of igniting a generalized insurrection on an over-

whelming scale. It is easy to scold President Sarkozy as did *The New York Times*,⁴⁴ parroting the French leftists, or on the other hand, to mock the president with a long list of unfulfilled law and order promises. But it would be wiser to ask why authorities in this western European nation with so much to lose keep mollifying antagonistic elements in the vain hope of avoiding a confrontation. And how is this any different from the free world hiding under the cover of peace processes while Iran moves inexorably to the point of no return?

The Islamic factor in both domestic strife and international conflicts is denied. Genocidal intentions inscribed in the charters of Hamas and the Palestine Liberation Organization, Muslim Brotherhood documents, mosque sermons, statements by Arab and Muslim leaders, as well as the Qur'an and the Hadith are ignored. Criminal acts and jihadist actions are treated as miscellaneous aberrations. Coherent evidence is smashed into a thousand pieces and thrown to the winds, and thinkers who try to put the puzzle together are slapped down.

There are no images of the brutal attacks cited here, or the hundreds of others committed day in and day out. France's video surveillance network is underdeveloped, in part because of opposition from socialist mayors and civil libertarians. But one can find a mirror image of the savage gestures, primitive weapons, and murderous rage of those youths in video footage from the latest Middle East reality show—the Gaza flotilla. The free world's Everyman is a deliberately unprepared soldier rappelling to the decks of the Mavi Marmara.

French radio reported that Nicolas Sarkozy urged Benjamin Netanyahu to exercise restraint after the August 2010 sneak attack from Lebanon. Even if this is false, it remains plausible, and would show that, for all his tough talk, the president has not yet grasped the connection between his weakness against the insurgency in France and misguided peacemaking in the Middle East.



43 *Le Figaro*, May 4, June 10, 2010.

44 "Xenophobia: Casting out the Un-French," *International Herald Tribune*, Aug. 5, 2010.

What Waziristan Means for Afghanistan

by Andrew M. Roe

The Afghan conflict has refocused world attention on Waziristan. Once one of the British Empire's most volatile territories, the remote small province in north-western Pakistan is now home to Taliban insurgents, al-Qaeda fighters, rogue elements within the Pakistani military, and Western jihadists, who use it as a base to rest, heal, rearm, train, and plan before they launch again across the porous border into Afghanistan. It is also the area where Osama bin Laden and many of his top lieutenants are probably hiding and a regular target for U.S. air strikes against key Taliban personnel. Pakistani military operations destroyed insurgent forces and caused mass civilian dislocation, yet efforts to produce a lasting peace deal with the local tribesmen and the Taliban have proved futile. Waziristan remains a dangerous and unpredictable region with the potential to unhinge President Hamid Karzai's fragile regime in Afghanistan, threaten the Pakistani government, and pose a major challenge to regional stability.

The pertinent lessons from Britain's experience in the region can help policymakers understand and address present-day challenges in the same geographical area, not least since the British faced the same issues and had several of the same internal arguments. To be sure, there are significant differences separating the British experience in Waziristan from that which now confronts the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which in turn set restrictions to what can be derived from the past. As Captain John Girling, a south Waziristan scout veteran, recalled in 2009: "Up to ten years ago there were [contemporary] similarities, but since the coming of the Taliban, I can't see any similarities."¹

However, despite the passage of time and the change in technological and geopolitical circumstances, some of the parallels between the British experience of Waziristan and NATO's remain pertinent and provide valuable insights to today's political and military strategists.

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1 Frank Ellis, "Arts and Books," *The Salisbury Review*, Sept. 2010.

THE BRITISH SYSTEM OF CONTROL

During the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the British colonial administration was responsible for the complex task of maintaining law and order in Waziristan. After decades of unwanted and costly experimentation, the British decided that hands-off “containment” was the best policy. Control, as in the Indian states, was neither necessary, desirable, nor practicable. With limited resources, control was exercised by the distribution of allowances to sympathetic *maliks* (tribal representatives or elders) and by the employment of locally recruited *kassadar* (tribal policemen) and indigenous forces, known as scouts or the Irregular Frontier Corps.² Each proved invaluable in maintaining order and relieving regular troops of the expensive work of garrisoning frontier outposts. In the event of any situation escalating out of control, the army of India was the fallback force on the frontier. This multilayered structure brought effective governance to the fractious inhabitants via a sliding scale of violence: first enticements, rewards, and threats; next tribal *kassadars*, then the lightly-armed scouts; only in extremis, when outbreaks were too excessive to be controlled by the scouts, would the political authorities call on the army to conduct a punitive expedition in order to administer punishment. Working with the forces in society and grounding policy in regional realities offered the only hope of controlling the unpredictable and confrontational tribesmen.

Despite this deft approach, based on organizations that were relatively optimal to the demands of the region and sympathetic to local conditions, the constant threat of tribal unrest remained. In

British control was exercised through allowances to tribal elders and employment of indigenous forces.

1936, a compelling leader and frontier personality, known as the Fakir of Ipi, began a political career that tested the British administrative and military apparatus from the time he instigated a rebellion in Waziristan until Britain’s departure in 1947.³ Even though he possessed no formal military training, the fakir provided a charismatic figurehead to the rebellion and maintained his position through dogged determination, strength of personality, and an elevated religious position. As a rebel leader he was uncompromising and his hatred of the British celebrated. Such was his belief in local Muslim grievances and desire for an independent Pashtunistan that he possessed the nerve and courage to face considerable danger and privation. The more the fakir eluded government forces and guided the insurrection, the more his divine status was confirmed. Despite the employment of more than 40,000 British and Indian troops to locate his whereabouts in Waziristan, the fakir continued to evade capture and frustrate his pursuers. He died of natural causes in 1960, having never faced a magistrate’s bench.

Despite injecting large numbers of military reinforcements into tribal territory in 1936–37 in pursuit of the fakir, the British never sought full control in the latter years of the colonial period. Military operations were finite in duration and localized in their employment. Against a fiercely independent and fanatical foe, any enduring occupation of tribal territory by foreigners was hotly contested. Political primacy remained paramount, and routine control occurred via the locally recruited scouts and *kassadars*. This approach was based on a light touch, commitment, and continuity but was underpinned by an early and firm response if the tribes stepped out of line. As a rule, the rights and customs of the tribesmen were respected; nothing was ever done to interfere with their religious beliefs and customs. Only a deep-seated knowledge of the region, gained through regular contact and an enduring desire to learn, helped point to the conditions necessary to help maintain tribal control.

2 W. I. Moberly, *Raj and Post-Raj* (Edinburgh: Pentland Press, 1985), p. 69.

3 Alan Warren, *Waziristan, the Fakir of Ipi, and the Indian Army* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

WAZIRISTAN HAS CHANGED LITTLE

There are many aspects of Waziristan that remain the same. Predictably, the topography has altered little since the British departed in 1947, and the mountainous terrain still influences tribal culture and linkages.⁴ Likewise, the region is still inhabited by a complex mixture of independent tribes that have changed little over the years. For the majority of tribesmen, life is still tedious, and opportunities for excitement and travel are rare. Moreover, the inaccessible terrain continues to make the region an impregnable base in which to hide, train, and launch attacks. Insurgent and fugitive forces have little difficulty in finding long-term sanctuary in the region; it is almost impossible to distinguish militants from peaceful tribesmen. Equally, the terrain helps to mitigate technological advances and frustrates regular forces. Accurate or timely intelligence is rarely available. The climate remains extreme, and the region still suffers from elevated levels of poverty and underdevelopment.⁵ Unemployment, illiteracy, and infant mortality remain high. Access to medical facilities in many remote regions is almost nonexistent. It remains an area in desperate need of social and economic development. Likewise, the tribes remain particularly susceptible to blood feuds and religious extremists. As with their ancestors, the tribesmen continue to resist outside influence or control, regardless of its legitimacy, and regard any foreign presence as a personal affront to their independence. The Hindu and the Westerner are equally foreign to the tribesmen. *Pashtunwali*—the tribal code of honor—still usurps Islamic Shari‘a (Islamic law), and internal politics still govern tribal behavior.

These similarities notwithstanding, there are a number of notable differences that have occurred over recent years. Perhaps the most dis-



From 1936 to 1947, the Fakir of Ipi conducted a sustained guerrilla campaign in Waziristan that tested the British administrative and military apparatus in the province.

turbing is the number of *maliks* who have been intimidated or killed by the local Taliban. In a sustained process of creeping “Talibanization” across Waziristan, the militants have employed a reign of terror against tribal *maliks* and alleged government sympathizers. Such targeted violence has generated new tensions that have further added to the region’s volatility and unpredictability. This is not without precedent. As one tribesman warned the British commander in the province, Mountstuart Elphinstone, in 1809: “We are content with discord; we are content with alarms; we are content with blood ... we will never be content with a master.”⁶ Nonetheless, many local leaders have been replaced by radicalized Taliban substitutes. Several have established tacit control over large areas, imposing a strict interpretation of Islam. Such leaders provide a recognized chain of

4 Hugh R.C. Pettigrew, *Frontier Scouts* (Selsey: privately printed, 1964), p. 100.

5 Barnett R. Rubin and Abubakar Siddique, “Resolving the Pakistan-Afghanistan Stalemate,” Special Report 176 (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, Oct. 2006), p. 13.

6 Stephen Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the Fall of the Taliban* (New York: Da Capo, 2002), p. 134.



Waziristan is yet again in the eye of the storm, serving as a springboard for Taliban and al-Qaeda operations in Afghanistan. It is also the area where Osama bin Laden and many of his top lieutenants are probably hiding.

command and a clear hierarchy. They also provide basic, if limited, training and engender tribal discipline. However, in overriding the traditional tribal hierarchy, the Taliban have unconsciously damaged long-established Pashtun civil society and reinforced ethnic suspicion. Fortunately, the damage is repairable and the foundations of society remain strong. It is not surprising, therefore, that Christian Tripodi, a lecturer at the U.K. Joint Services Command and Staff College, cautions that the difficulties experienced by Pakistan's political and military initiatives to control the federally administrated tribal areas indicate that the tribes are just as complex to handle today as they ever were in colonial times "even for those sharing the same religious and cultural affiliation."⁷

Significant parallels exist between the pursuit of the Fakir of Ipi and that of Osama bin Laden.

These have not gone unnoticed, and the fakir's celebrated exploits have experienced a superficial renaissance in recent years. Several newspaper articles have suggested that bin Laden can draw lessons from the fakir's insurgency and the inability of the British to kill or capture him.⁸ Others point to the practical frustrations of trying to capture a high profile outlaw in tribal territory. Or as one 2007 article cautioned:

For nearly a decade, the British army chased him [the Fakir of Ipi] and his followers through the remote reaches of Waziristan and the North-West Frontier Province—the same ground where allied troops have spent the past five years searching fruitlessly for bin Laden, and where the remnants of Afghanistan's Taliban fled to lick their wounds and recover their strength. The region was then, as it is today, a powder keg of fractious tribes and fundamentalist firebrands, and Britain's experience with trying to capture Khan mirrors the frustrating hunt for bin Laden.⁹

Despite well-developed political and military machinery, the British government consistently failed to kill or capture the fakir or fully negate his influence. Bombing raids by the Royal Air Force and several division-strength operations proved futile. The fakir's superior local intelligence, mobility, and ability to blend in with the indigenous tribesmen routinely thwarted British efforts despite the most troop-intensive British counter-insurgency of the twentieth century. Similarly, coalition forces, despite employing advanced technology, have failed to kill or capture bin Laden or eradicate al-Qaeda from the Pashtun tribal areas astride the border.¹⁰ Yet far from being frustrated by this similarity, coalition forces can draw some comfort from one aspect of this important paral-

7 Christian Tripodi, "Cultural Understanding: Its Utility and Influence: The British Experience on the North-West Frontier, 1918-1939," *British Army Review*, Spring 2008, p. 26.

8 T. Harding, "How the British Empire Failed to Tame the Terrorist Fakir of Ipi," *The Daily Telegraph* (London), Nov. 15, 2001; *Newsweek*, May 30, 2005.

9 *Time*, Apr. 19, 2007.

10 Pervez Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire* (New York: The Free Press, 2006), p. 220.

lel. Both leaders experienced a high point in their popularity followed by a gradual decrease in their influence. In the case of the fakir, he lost most of his influence with India's independence and became little more than an irritant to the Pakistani government. Likewise, bin Laden's authority has diminished considerably in recent years. No longer the real impetus behind al-Qaeda, he remains the notional or spiritual head but has largely been eclipsed by his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who has emerged as the organization's strategist and driving force, supported by a network of independent and autonomous leaders.¹¹

At the same time, this hydra-like insurgency, based on a highly decentralized and geographically localized approach, also highlights the difficulties of countering a distributed insurgency under local control. Delegating responsibility to a changing structure of loyal lieutenants, who have a profound interest in the continuation of hostile activities because their stature and *raison d'être* often depend on their militant activity, is particularly difficult to counter. They can exhaust and overstretch occupation forces and frustrate the penetration of the state. Decapitating any of the current leadership will therefore do little more than buy time. As recent history proves, there are always plenty of ambitious individuals in the wings ready to take on the challenge of leadership. Tackling the cause of the violence and not the symptoms is the key to lasting success.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CULTURAL ACUITY

Failure to understand cultural norms and practices or to dismiss their significance can lead to extreme danger and adversely affect campaign authority. In March 2006, Canadian soldiers conducting a routine meeting with tribal leaders in the Shah Wali Kot district in southern Afghanistan were assaulted by an axe-wielding tribesman who seriously wounded an officer. Members of the patrol had assumed that they would be rela-

tively safe from assault while conducting the meeting "primarily because of the supposed protection and application of *pashtunwali*."¹² Immediately following the event, the resident Canadian unit undertook a highly focused information operations campaign, exploiting the *pashtunwali* tenet of hospitality (*melmastia*) to discredit both the attacker and the village in which the meeting occurred. At the tactical level, this approach experienced some success with the village losing honor with many of the tribesmen in the region. However, the incident exposed two important aspects of the tribal code:

First, the question must be asked as to whether or not the villagers saw the soldiers as legitimate guests, or as unwanted visitors? ... If guests, then the provision of

pashtunwali should have applied and our [the Canadian army's] resultant actions can be seen as appropriate. If the soldiers and their leaders were not invited, then there is certainly scope to view the attack as justifiable in the mind of the attacker and his fellow insurgents.

Second, in using the principles and practices of *pashtunwali* to bring discredit to the village involved, one has to ask whether or not our actions reinforced the legitimate government of Afghanistan or eroded its authority in that particular district? Certainly there was nothing wrong with a response to the attack that would be understood by local villagers, as well as demonstrating that we understood elements of their cultural makeup. However, in reinforcing the legitimacy of the *jirga* [assembly or parliament of tribal representatives] and the code itself, we were not reinforcing the short-term perspective with regard to the authority of President Karzai in that one particular region of Kandahar province.¹³

Expecting a strong centrist or Western-style administration in a conservative tribal region is unreasonable.

12 Richard Tod Strickland, "The Way of the Pashtun: Pashtunwali," *Canadian Army Journal*, Fall 2007, p. 44.

13 Ibid, p. 53.

11 "Profile: Ayman al-Zawahiri," *BBC News*, Sept. 27, 2004.

As the British experienced in the colonial period, cultural acuity must extend beyond those engaged in everyday contact with the tribesmen. Since policy is often determined by those in distant capitals, politicians and senior military commanders must also understand regional culture, customs, ethnicity, and religion. This is equally true of nongovernmental organizations, such

as private military companies and aid organizations. Failure to understand these complex dynamics can have a damaging effect on campaign consent.¹⁴ Likewise, policymakers must be tolerant of indigenous assumptions, methods of behavior, and everyday life choices. These will un-

doubtedly pose moral dilemmas for foreign and regional governments. Western values, free markets, and standards of government are often alien to indigenous populations. Expecting either a strong centrist or Western-style administration to take hold in a conservative tribal region with no recent history of strong central government is unreasonable.

Cultural understanding between governmental and nongovernmental organizations is just as important and will help to reduce friction. It will also assist in building effective working relationships and negate procedural barriers. Linked to cultural understanding is the ability to communicate. As one commentator on the frontier noted, "The gain in personal influence, besides other advantages, which an ability to converse directly with the people gives an Englishman among Pathans is so obvious that I need not dilate on it."¹⁵ The same is equally true today. However, due to the difficulty of learning Pashtu, few Western politicians or military commanders possess

the ability to converse with the tribesmen without the use of an interpreter.

Cultural acuity remains an important but insufficiently resourced goal. Regular rotations of military commanders and political reshuffles continue to thwart an in-depth understanding of cultural norms and standards on the frontier. Unsurprisingly, this has resulted in some Western policymakers disregarding or downplaying the primacy of cultural values in their efforts to shape policy along the Afghan-Pakistani border. In contrast, the Taliban and al-Qaeda cleverly exploit them for "recruitment, shelter, and social mobilization."¹⁶ The key to success is translating cultural understanding into effective frontier policy, enabling NATO better to achieve its goals. However, to do this effectively requires a lifetime of specialized study and long periods of unbroken service. Creating an organization similar to the Civil Service of Pakistan in southern Afghanistan may be one initiative to help address the deficiency of cultural awareness and regional knowledge along the border.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BORDER CONTROL

The Afghan-Pakistani border, the Durand Line, is 1,640 miles long. It follows arbitrary geographical features and represents the historical limits of British authority in 1893. With little consideration for tribal or ethnic boundaries, the border divided the Pathan tribes between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Since its establishment, the artificial border has been viewed with disdain and is largely ignored by politicians and tribesmen on both sides of the divide. In practical terms, the border is not enforced and, arguably, not enforceable. In countless places, the line of demarcation remains contested. In others, it dissects villages and even individual homes between two opposing governments. Tribesmen from both sides of the border continue to cross freely, often

**If the Taliban
and Pashtun
nationalism
merge,
"we've had it."
—Pakistani
ambassador**

14 Montgomery McFate, "Does Culture Matter? The Military Utility of Understanding Adversary Culture," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 38 (2005): 42-8.

15 Septimus S. Thorburn, *Bannu, Our Afghan Frontier* (Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), p. 166.

16 Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason, "No Sign until the Burst of Fire," *International Security*, Spring 2008, p. 64.

using hidden mountain tracks. A significant number of tribesmen have family ties on both sides.

The Soviets, like the British, tried to exert greater control along the border in the 1980s, but their efforts proved futile. Due to growing frustrations, they resorted to draconian measures, including mining trade routes throughout the area.¹⁷ This failed to bring an end to cross-border movement and the supply of vital aid. After the Soviet withdrawal, the security of the border was largely ignored, and both sides only saw fit to hold key entry and exit points. However, as a result of growing coalition pressure, this policy has changed. Increasing efforts are now being made to secure the border through a combination of manned crossing points, improved surveillance, and focused patrolling. Pakistani projects are also underway to “fence off” sections of the border and to restrict movement in and out of Pakistan, primarily through the use of antipersonnel mines. In the long term, this initiative aims to contain the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan although in the short to medium term, it is expected to fuel more fighting on Pakistani soil.¹⁸

Restricted access and antipersonnel mines will only go so far. *Atlantic Monthly* correspondent and author Robert Kaplan points to one reason why: “Only Pathans could make walking through a minefield a test of manhood.”¹⁹ To overcome such realities, both governments should formally recognize the international border and place historical bitterness and mistrust behind them. They will also have to view the border as a joint problem, requiring joint solu-



Photo courtesy of the Green Howards Museum, Richmond, N. Yorkshire, England

A British battalion patrols in Waziristan, 1938. Military operations were finite in duration and localized in their employment. Against a fiercely independent and fanatical foe, any enduring occupation of tribal territory by foreigners was hotly contested.

tions. Likewise, both armies must patrol their side of the border effectively and work together to monitor militant activity and provide early warning of cross-border movement. They should also combine the use of information operations to influence the local tribesmen.

Indigenous forces, like the paramilitary Frontier Corps, are best placed to undertake the difficult task of controlling the frontier.²⁰ Should regular forces be required, these must consist of Pashtun units—mixed battalions, as the British experienced, will have little success. Outsiders will not be tolerated in tribal territory. This will prove particularly challenging for the Pakistanis. Ethnic Punjabis dominate the army, and their presence in tribal territory will be a constant affront to the tribesmen. Moreover, efforts to control the border must not challenge the autonomy and freedom of the tribesmen. Communication, economic development, and cultural ties must not be sev-

17 Sean M. Maloney, *Enduring the Freedom* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2005), p. 294.

18 Usman Ansari, “Cobras over the Frontier,” *Air Forces Monthly*, Apr. 2008, p. 66.

19 Robert D. Kaplan, *Soldiers of God: With Islamic Warriors in Afghanistan and Pakistan* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), p. 22.

20 Robert F. Baumann, “Russian-Soviet Unconventional Wars in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Afghanistan,” *Leavenworth Papers*, no. 20, Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Leavenworth, Kans., 1993, p. 167.

ered. Achieving an effective balance will be difficult. In 1975, Wali Khan, the National Awami Party leader, was asked if he was “a Muslim, a Pakistani, or a Pashtun first?” His reply highlighted the complexity of the border problem. Khan responded by saying that he was “a six-thousand-year-old Pashtun, a thousand-year-old Muslim and a twenty-seven year old Pakistani.”²¹

The coalition presence in Afghanistan continues to provide a visible target and rallying point for the extremists. As the British experience proved, the presence of Western forces in tribal territory is

a constant affront to the tribesmen and provides a welcome opportunity to test their manhood and courage against a recognized foe. To overcome this, the coalition should give thought to reducing its footprint in the provinces along the Afghan-Pakistani border and make better use of locally re-

cruited forces, for example, the nascent Afghan border police. Despite ethnic tensions and desertions, the Afghan National Army has the skill and weaponry to maintain stability along its side of the border. However, it lacks specialist technology, so intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and communication assistance will be required in the short term. It should also conduct operations on terms that the tribesmen accept and understand. This will undoubtedly require compromise. The same shortfalls are equally true of the Pakistani army, which, in addition, can also rely on the highly skilled militias of the Frontier Corps.²² Should Western coalition forces be required in tribal territory on the Afghan side of the border, they should only deploy for a finite period of time against a recognized target. Only in extremis should coalition forces cross the border into Pakistan. Advanced technology and

long-range weapons should be used where possible to negate the need for inserting troops on the ground.

LESSONS OF HISTORY

The past provides a useful blueprint for adaptation, and Waziristan provides good proof of this. Certain combined measures worked to settle, suppress, and pacify the region during the colonial period. For example, the establishment of a robust network of roads, medical missions, the payment of allowances, and the employment of political officers, indigenous scouts, and tribal police all helped to control the region within recognized limitations. Predictably, this was not lost on the Pakistanis, and the established methods of British tribal control remained largely in place until late 2001.²³

Growing U.S. political pressure resulted in President Musharraf resorting to greater military action, including the use of helicopter gunships and artillery, to quash the upsurge of violence emanating from tribal territory. Unfortunately, the Pakistani army was an organization structured and trained for a conventional fight against India, Pakistan’s arch-rival, and ill-prepared for guerrilla warfare on the frontier. The army’s ham-fisted approach to the unique problems of the frontier irritated and alienated the indigenous tribesmen. The ensuing breakdown in relations was entirely predictable.

A return to the British approach to tribal management has merit for the entire Pashtun tribal belt. A small number of politicians and military commanders have drawn valuable lessons from the British historical experience. Gen. Sir David Richards, commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan from May 2006 to February 2007, for example, pointed to the contemporary utility of establishing influence through the “lavish use of money”:

Our modern scruples might not permit it, but I think you could buy off 90 percent of the opposition tomorrow in the way our grandfa-

21 Selig S. Harrison, “Pashtunistan: The Challenge to Pakistan and Afghanistan,” Real Instituto Elcano, Madrid, Apr. 2, 2008, p. 3.

22 Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire*, p. 271.

23 Ibid., pp. 201-4; Maloney, *Enduring the Freedom*, p. 294.

thers would have done. Instead, today we seek influence through reconstruction and development—but that is in danger of not keeping pace with people’s expectations. Nor does such an approach chime with the feudal nature of a society ... Our colonial forebears understood the way feudal societies worked; for the most part, we don’t.²⁴

Richards went on to highlight another important historical parallel:

we always worked very hard on achieving and maintaining consent: Countless hours were spent talking to tribal elders and other influential people. We had to justify ourselves to them, explain what we were trying to achieve, and work to retain their support. That is an abiding lesson from our own historical experience, which we relearned and applied pretty aggressively.²⁵

However, at the psychological level, the notion of a colonial model of control will be unacceptable to the tribesmen unless re-branded within a recognized, ethnic framework.²⁶ This is best achieved by electing empowered, provincial governors and providing them with clear jurisdiction. Selected individuals could be tasked with overseeing regional security and reconstruction. However, proficiency will be based on education, experience, and personality; selecting the right individual will be the key. Moreover, in addition to decentralized control, multiple lines of economic and social development will be central to controlling the region in the long term. These need to be approved by tribal leaders and have the consent of the tribesmen and their families. They must also reflect population densities. For example, the lines of development in sparsely populated rural areas must be different from those in the densely populated urban areas. One size will not fit all.

Pan-regional initiatives should focus on strengthening traditional tribal structures and on

bringing rapid improvements to the lives of the tribesmen. Health programs and food aid are also essential and would go some way to addressing allegations of regional discrimination. Even a small amount of the US\$80 million a month “coalition support fund,” paid to reimburse Pakistan’s military for the cost of their counterinsurgency operations, would help to redress the perceived imbalance.²⁷ But the reality is that social and economic development will take a long time, and patience is essential. Moreover, aid must be administered by the tribesmen themselves, no matter how haphazardly they do it. Outsiders operating in tribal territory would polarize the tribesmen and further add to the volatility of the region.

Failure to address the challenges of the frontier region could be disastrous for both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

A WIDER REGIONAL SOLUTION

The disturbing growth of al-Qaeda and the Taliban in the isolated Pashtun tribal belt astride the Afghan-Pakistani border is a major cause for concern. A growing alignment of the Pashtun nationalist movement and radical, militant leadership could lead to the unification of approximately forty million tribesmen on both sides of the Durand Line.²⁸ In theory, this could result in the breakup of Afghanistan and Pakistan, both fragile multiethnic states, and allow the emergence of a new radicalized state: Pakhtunistan. Fortunately, two prominent fault lines exist in this hypothesis. First, many of the tribesmen dislike the extremists and would not throw in their lot with religious fanatics and suicide bombers. The growing fric-

24 Richard Cobbold, “RUSI Interview with General David Richards,” *Journal of the Royal Artillery*, Autumn 2007, p. 57.

25 Ibid, p. 56.

26 Rory Stewart and Sherard Cowper-Coles, “Are We Failing in Afghanistan?” *British Army Review*, Spring 2008, p. 10.

27 The U.S. provided approximately \$10.5 billion in aid to Pakistan from 2002-07. Just over \$5.5 billion was earmarked by Islamabad for the tribal territory, but only 4 percent was used on nonmilitary projects.

28 *New World Encyclopedia*, Nov. 27, 2008, s.v. Pashtun people.

tion between the Taliban and the tribal leadership (both *malik* and mullah) is evidence of this growing rift.²⁹ Second, the notion of a unified Pashtunistan has always been predominantly symbolic. Trying to unite the fiercely independent and autonomous tribes into a cohesive whole would be difficult. This could only occur under extreme duress or under the inspiration of

a charismatic leader. However, the signs are increasingly apparent that this might be possible. As the Pakistani ambassador, Mahmud Ali Durrani, cautioned in March 2007, "I hope the Taliban and Pashtun nationalism don't merge. If that happens, we've had

it, and we're on the verge of that."³⁰

Unlike the challenges faced by the British in the first half of the twentieth century, this is no longer simply a regional dilemma. Instead, the tribal complexities demand an international approach, based on shared security objectives. Political efforts must be made to succeed in driving an irreparable wedge between the moderate or reconcilable Taliban and extremist and irreconcilable Taliban associated with al-Qaeda. Provincial autonomy should also be considered. It worked well for the British and could help reinforce the long-term survival of Pakistan in its current form. Likewise, both governments must address the long-standing conflicts over the frontier region. In short, the border tribesmen must be a key part of the solution and not just the target audience.

CONCLUSION

If the past is prologue, the British experience of Waziristan points to a difficult and frustrating road ahead. A violence-truce-violence cycle can

be expected along the border with cease-fires both fragile and short-lived. For the most part, government forces will not encounter direct military confrontation. Organized resistance will consist of sniping, ambushing, and the use of mines, homemade explosive devices, roadside bombs, and suicide bombers. Insurgents will not employ the rules of conventional warfare, and tactical errors will never go unpunished. Militant tribesmen will display remarkable levels of ingenuity, physical endurance, and tenacity; opportunities for decisive effect will be fleeting and unconventional. Initiative will be required at all levels. Government reprisals will struggle to achieve surprise, and tribesmen will regularly withdraw to isolated caves or remote valleys to seek sanctuary where it will be problematic to distinguish between friend and foe. The danger is that military operations will run at a tempo and a momentum that misleads commanders into thinking that they are succeeding. Only a holistic, joint, and measured approach, employing all the elements of national power, will offer the greatest opportunity for pacifying the region and gaining consent. This must be consistent, sensitive, agile, and coherent.

In the short term, perhaps the best that can be achieved is containment; a safe, democratic, and prosperous area may be too much for which to hope. Political objectives must be realistic and born of pragmatism. However, failure to address the long-term challenges of the region with a firm and consistent policy could be disastrous for both Afghanistan and Pakistan. The stakes are high, and it would be wise to heed Lord Curzon, a former viceroy: "No man who has ever read the pages of Indian history will ever prophesy about the frontier."³¹ When governments are short of ideas, and the "Talibanization" of the frontier is gaining momentum, the historical British approach to Waziristan offers a number of valuable insights and practical measures worthy of consideration.



29 Abdulkader H. Sinno, *Organizations at War in Afghanistan and Beyond* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2008), pp. 237-45.

30 Harrison, "Pashtunistan: The Challenge to Pakistan and Afghanistan," p. 5.

31 George N. Curzon, *Speeches as Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1898-1905* (London: Macmillan, 1906), p. 43.

Turkey's Ambassadors vs. Erdoğan

by Damla Aras

In June 2010, the deepening rift between Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) unexpectedly came to the public eye when seventy-two retired ambassadors and consul-generals issued a written statement protesting Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's lack of respect in dubbing them "*mon chers*" and criticizing the government's foreign policy.¹ Why did the prime minister publicly snub his diplomats? By way of answering this question, this article reviews the ongoing rift between Erdoğan and his diplomats before carrying an English translation of the ambassadors' statement and interviews with two retired senior diplomats.

BACKGROUND

Two main reasons come to mind. To begin, there is the perceived class difference between the diplomats and the right-wing political parties (such as nationalist and Islamic movements), which have their roots in and represent mostly the rural areas and the urban working class, and which view the diplomats as an elitist group that looks down on the common citizen. The term *mon cher* implies that they are snobbish, Western-influenced status seekers who are disconnected from the traditions and values of the Turkish nation.² A vivid illustration of this mindset was afforded in May 2006 when Erdoğan scolded Turkey's ambassador to Berlin, Mehmetali İrtemçelik, for preventing a local Turkish woman from using a photo with a headscarf in her passport though the ambassador was merely enforcing the official regulations.³

While there are some intellectuals and diplo-

mats who disagree with Erdoğan's perception of the ambassadors,⁴ others subscribe to his argument, including diplomats who did not sign the statement for those reasons.⁵ One senior ambassador asserts that although tarring all diplomats with the same brush is wrong, some diplomats despise the grassroots and are uneasy seeing "commoners" like Erdoğan in power. To this end, in January 2010, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu took a group of diplomats to the city of Mardin in southeastern Anatolia to allow them to mingle freely with the masses and get a first-hand sense of their "ordinary" compatriots.⁶

1 *Hürriyet* (Istanbul), June 18, 2010.

2 Lale Sariibrahimoğlu, "Şu monşerler meselesi," *Taraf* (Istanbul), Feb. 4, 2009; Aziz Üstel, "Buzlu Viski İç Geçer 'Monşer' çiğim!" *Stratejik Boyut* (Ankara), June 11, 2010; Emre Aköz, "Monşerliğin lüzumu yok," *Sabah* (Istanbul), June 23, 2010; Talip Küçükcan, "Monşer değil büyükelçi," *Star Gazetesi* (Istanbul), Jan. 25, 2010.

3 *Radikal* (Istanbul), May 27, 2006.

4 Sedat Ergin, "2002 öncesinde izlenen diplomasi onursuz muydu?" *Hürriyet*, June 8, 2010; Mehmet Tezkan, "Dışişlerini kapatalım elçileri kovalım," *Milliyet* (Istanbul), Aug. 15, 2010.

5 Sariibrahimoğlu, "Şu monşerler meselesi"; Üstel, "Buzlu Viski İç Geçer 'Monşer' çiğim!"; Aköz, "Monşerliğin lüzumu yok."

6 Küçükcan, "Monşer değil büyükelçi."

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The second source of tension between Erdoğan and his diplomats is ideological. Several retired and serving ambassadors are wary of the AKP government since its leadership comes from the Islamic political movement. Specifically, the old school, brought up on the modernist, secularist principles on which Mustafa Kemal Atatürk predicated the modern Turkish state—established on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire—considers the government's policies a reflection of the AKP's ideological precepts rather than of Turkey's national interests. They argue that the government has deviated from Turkey's tradi-

Erdoğan views Ottoman history as the admired past of a great empire that once shaped the world order.

tional, Western-orientated foreign policy based on the alliance with the United States, its membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the prospect of European Union membership. So far the AKP has commenced EU membership negotiations, contributed to

NATO forces in Afghanistan, and has generally been on good terms with the Obama administration; its previously good relationship with Israel, though, has been significantly damaged as Erdoğan has openly cultivated closer ties with some of the region's other states and organizations, notably Iran, Syria, and Hamas.

Some of the retired diplomats who have been highly critical of Erdoğan's foreign policies hold top positions in the opposition political parties, such as the Kemalist Republican Populist Party. According to a senior ambassador, it was these individuals and other like-minded ambassadors that Erdoğan was actually targeting when he used the term *mon chers*. Thus, for example, the December 2009 resignation of Turkey's ambassador to Washington, Nabi Şensoy, during Erdoğan's visit to the U.S. capital, was officially attributed to a dispute over protocol. In fact, behind the resignation lay the ambassador's subscription to the ideas of the conservative camp within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, his being bypassed by the AKP's own foreign policy team, and his disagreement

with the government's Middle Eastern policy.⁷

Indeed, the AKP's policy toward the Middle East has been a rupture point between the two parties since for secularists it defines Turkey's core orientation and continued subscription to the democratic legacy bequeathed by its founding father. While they concede that Turkey has significant interests in the region, they are dedicated to Atatürk's vision of transforming Turkey into a part of Western civilization and, therefore, place great emphasis on ties with the Euro-Atlantic community. By contrast, Erdoğan views Ottoman history as the admired past of a great empire that once shaped the world order, as in the era of Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-66). In his opinion, Turkey's (supposedly) unsuccessful foreign policy stems from *mon chers*' passivity inspired by an overly pro-Western orientation and their inability to appreciate the Ottoman past, which prevent them from understanding the government's strategies. According to him, the AKP has initiated a strong and honorable diplomacy that reflects the Turkish nation's true identity and the country's historical and geopolitical realities.⁸ For instance, when retired diplomats criticized Erdoğan for his attack on President Shimon Peres during the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2009 over the Israeli operation in Gaza, he angrily retorted, "I came from politics; I don't know about the ways *mon chers* behave. And I don't want to know."⁹ He later dismissed their criticism as demonstrating the improper attitude of "the obsolete *mon chers*" as opposed to his righteous stance in Davos.¹⁰

DEMOCRATIZATION OR CIVILIAN DOMINANCE?

The tension between the AKP and the retired diplomats is but one aspect of the wider

7 Abdullah Bozkurt, "Conduct Unbecoming a Gentleman Ambassador," *Today's Zaman* (Istanbul), Dec. 12, 2009; *Today's Zaman*, Dec. 11, 2009.

8 Ergin, "2002 öncesinde izlenen diplomasi onursuz muydu?"

9 NTV (Istanbul), Jan. 31, 2009.

10 *Cumhuriyet* (Istanbul), June 2, 2009.

polarization in Turkish state institutions and public opinion at large, reflecting concerns about the AKP's ulterior motives. According to some, AKP initiatives aim at a "civilian dominance" under the guise of democratization and at transforming Turkey into a state governed in accordance with Islamic values, if not Shari'a law.¹¹ Yet some liberals regard them as important improvements for Turkish democracy and view objections to them as simple anti-government prejudice.¹²

For instance, the government reforms on the organization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in July 2010 include several improvements, such as the creation of new departments, area specialization, and foreign language education. The new law stipulates that the diplomats will represent not only the Turkish Republic and its president but also the government. It also allows appointment of non-ministry individuals as ambassadors and the recruitment of graduates from several fields, including theology.¹³ According to a senior diplomat, these modifications will give all bright graduates a chance to enter the ministry and will break the elitist and status-related approach of the old school. However, others maintain that these changes may facilitate the entrance of the AKP's own cadres into the foreign ministry (e.g., through political appointments and the recruitment of theology graduates) and tighten its grip over the foreign policymaking process.

Similar reservations and debates revolve around other key state organizations. The AKP has dominated the Turkish parliament with 341 out of 550 seats since the 2007 elections, which enabled the election of a prominent AKP figure, Abdullah Gül, as president. This exacerbated the secularists' fears, who argued that his election endangered one of the fundamental principles of democratic governance, namely the separation of



Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founding father of modern Turkey, sought to extricate the country from its imperial past and transform it into an integral part of Western civilization.

powers, and that the constitutional reforms—approved in a referendum in September 2010¹⁴—would strengthen the president's authority. In June 2010, several members of this camp applauded the constitutional court's rejection of the AKP's proposed changes in the election of members of the legal system, including the constitutional court itself, the supreme council of judges, and public prosecutors, which they believed would consolidate the executive's control over the judiciary.¹⁵ The new constitutional package also foresees a more transparent and accountable military, which is considered by both the AKP and liberals a sine qua non for democratization. On the other hand, many regard this change as an attempt to weaken the military, the bastion of Kemalist principles and thus impregnable to the Islamists.¹⁶

11 See, for example, the debate between academic and columnist Nuray Mert and Mustafa Karaalioglu, editor of *Star* newspaper, Basın Odası program, NTV, Jan. 19, 2010.

12 Ismet Berkan, "Balyoz ve askeri atamadaki sıkıntı," *Radikal*, Aug. 7, 2010.

13 *Gazete Port* (Istanbul), June 8, 2006; *Bürokrat Haber*, June 9, 2010; *Odatv* (Istanbul), June 10, 2010.

14 *Milliyet*, Sept. 13, 2010.

15 Mehmet Tezkan, "Anayasa mahkemesi demokrasiyi korudu," *Milliyet*, July 7, 2010.

16 *Hürriyet*, July 9, 2010.

THE AMBASSADORS' STATEMENT

Prime Minister Erdoğan has recently made a habit of using foreign words in his speeches. It started with the English words "one minute" at Davos. Then he recently began to fancy the term "mon cher." This term means "my dear, my friend" in French. In Turkish slang, however, the word pejoratively means "mother's darling." Yet next to the military and police, the diplomatic service at any level is the most hazardous civil service. Which of our diplomatic representatives, who serve permanently or temporarily in conflict zones in the most dangerous parts of the world—who represent our country, provide humanitarian aid, maintain political contacts, and furnish administrative, technical and communicative support to the diplomats at any rank, level and age, young and old—deserve this jeering?

Our long standing diplomatic tradition obliges us "not to shirk away from any danger" and to hold our heads high without being defeated by anyone in the international community. The attitude of the Turkish ambassador [who demonstrated self-sacrifice, devotion, and dignity] in Ömer Seyfettin's "Robe with Pink Pearls" is one of the stories of our collective tradition, which our ambassadors are proud of having. Nor is

"Foreign policy is not about displaying cavalier attitudes and ignoring past achievements."

there any elitism amongst our diplomats. Many of our diplomats who have risen to the highest positions in the ministry needed scholarships in order to pursue their higher education. Among them are foreign ministry undersecretaries.

Old stories and novels attest to the use of such terms as "mon cher" during the Ottoman period. One cannot resist asking: "Like the foreign policy axis that the government has been forging, does it dignify the prime minister to take a fancy for neo-Ottomanist vocabulary as well?" We would like to remind him that the

Turkish Republic's foreign policy and diplomacy were rebuilt on strong foundations as a consequence of lessons learnt from the actions of some Ottoman diplomats who served the interests of those foreign powers they fancied, which had become an Achilles heel of the empire in its final years.

The big foreign policy gains of our republic have been achieved thanks to the Turkish diplomats of the republican era. Turkish diplomats have been loyal practitioners of the "peace at home, peace in the world" principle, which Atatürk stipulated for our foreign policy, and they have been loyal to the key principles of our state.

In-house training is conducted diligently [at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs]. Important promotions are also made on the basis of demanding examinations. Nepotism has never come into play during these exams, which is why Turkish diplomats are remembered with admiration. Their achievements were confirmed by the establishment of the Balkan (1934) and Saadabad (1937) pacts, which aimed at building a security and cooperation zone around our country; the signing of the Montreux agreement (1936); the resolution of the Hatay problem (1939); the saving of the country from the disaster of a new war by staying out of the Second World War; Turkey's participation in NATO; the ongoing negotiations for membership in the European Common Market and the EU for the last fifty years; and the various stages of the negotiations within the U.N. framework, beginning with the London and Zurich agreement (1959), to resolve the Cyprus issue in favor of our national interests.

Foreign policy is not about displaying cavalier attitudes and ignoring past achievements with statements like "those before us didn't do anything. The honorable period has started with us." [Erdoğan, TRT Haber TV, June 6, 2010] Foreign policy is a long-term, serious endeavor. It is a serious mission which requires knowledge, accumulation of knowledge, vision, and levelheaded analytical skills. Foreign policy is about making levelheaded decisions and taking into account the intricacies of a chess game as well as the past in its strategic depth while at the same time calculating the future.

As a matter of fact, Turkish diplomats saved Jews from Nazi concentration camps at the cost of their own lives during the Second World War. By the same token, the wives and the children of our diplomats lived in the eye of the storm. Our Consul General Selahattin Ülkümen in Rhodes lost his wife in a Nazi aerial bombardment whilst saving the Jews on the island. Our ambassador to Madrid Zeki Kuneralp's wife, Necla Kuneralp; our charge d'affaires to Lisbon Yurtsev Mıhçıoğlu's wife, Cahide Mıhçıoğlu; administrative attaché to Lisbon Erkut Akbay's wife, Nadide Akbay; secretary to the Turkish Embassy in Tehran Şadiye Yönder's husband, Işık Yönder; ambassador to The Hague Özdemir Benler's son, Ahmet Benler; and administrative attaché to Athens Galip Özmen's daughter, Neslihan Özmen, were martyred by Armenian terrorists. It is clear that the honorable prime minister is ill informed, not only about our difficulties but also the difficulties endured by our families as a result of our profession.

Turkish diplomats have continued to do their jobs with courage and levelheadedness at the cost of their lives in Cyprus, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Somalia. It must be noted that courage and dynamism in foreign policy do not mean adventurism. Those who claim to know history well should always remember the misfortunes wrought on our country by such cheap promises as "to perform prayers together in Jerusalem." Making our innocent people pay for the cost of such cheap bravery [i.e., the Gaza flotilla incident which ended with the killing of nine Turks by Israeli soldiers] is an additional reason for sadness. The republic's foreign ministry corps has never acted as the hands, arms, and eyes of other countries or circles. It has been proud of its high self-esteem engendered by the long-stand-

Photo will not display.

Turkey's prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (left) stormed out of a debate on the Middle East after a clash over Gaza with Israel's president Shimon Peres at the World Economic Forum in Davos, January 2009. Retired diplomats criticized Erdoğan for his attack. He dismissed their criticism calling them "the obsolete mon chers."

ing accumulation of the nation's history and morality and its existence in this land freely for centuries.

Until now we assumed that it was only Armenian terrorism that targets Turkish diplomats. During the past year, we have had difficulties explaining the behavior of our honorable prime minister, who has been verbally attacking his own country's diplomats on every available opportunity. Foreign policy cannot be conducted through the misuse of a few foreign words, scornful statements against diplomats and commoditized initiatives—which are in contradiction with each other—for the sake of short-term expediency. Should [our foreign policy continue to be] conducted in this fashion, there will be a heavy cost. The sad part is that the cost will not only be paid by those who have adopted a thoughtless, shallow approach, but also by our entire nation. We would like to end this statement with a short rhyme inspired by one of our late ambassadors, which demonstrates our sadness: "No fairness is left in human beings/ We were considered martyrs when it suited them/ And mon chers when it didn't/ In this disloyal world."

AN AMBASSADORIAL LENS ON ERDOĞAN



Faruk Loğoğlu

Ambassador Loğoğlu

After thirty-five years in the foreign service, Faruk Loğoğlu retired in 2006. He worked as special adviser to the foreign minister (1990-93), ambassador to Copenhagen (1993-96), and ambassador to Baku (1996-98). He became deputy undersecretary for multilateral political affairs in 1998. Until 2001, he served as undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry and then worked as ambassador to Washington until 2006. Loğoğlu served as president of the Eurasian Strategic Studies Center think tank (2006-08) and was the deputy chairman of the Turkish National Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (2006-10). He holds a Ph.D. in political science from Princeton University. He was interviewed by Damla Aras on July 13, 2010 by telephone and e-mail.—The Editors

Middle East Quarterly: Why did you issue the public statement?

Faruk Loğoğlu: The declaration was a necessary and long overdue response to the barrage of scorn heaped by Prime Minister Erdoğan on retired diplomats and the art of diplomacy. Its immediate purpose was to inform and enlighten the public about the background, training, work, sacrifices, and dangers in the life of a career Turkish diplomat. At the same time, the statement also provided a chance to comment on the sad state of Turkish foreign policy.

MEQ: What in your view informs Erdoğan's attitude?

Loğoğlu: Why Erdoğan keeps scoffing at retired diplomats is a moot point. He abhors criticism. Most former diplomats are critical of his policies, including his conduct of Turkey's foreign relations. Diplomats exercise self-control even under the most provocative conditions, always think twice before speaking, and act in a measured and guarded fashion. Politicians do not like these qualities and ridicule them as lacking courage and backbone. In the end, because diplomats are closer to the truth than their detractors, they become the subject of scorn.

MEQ: But hasn't the Ministry of Foreign Affairs become an elitist group, alienated from the grassroots?

Loğoğlu: The characterization of diplomats as a closed caste, detached from the rest of Turkish society, is neither true nor justified. Turkish diplomats come from a representative spectrum of the community in social, economic, and cultural terms. They are, however, a select group because their career requires the highest standards of education, culture, historical

knowledge, and familiarity with Turkish society. The entrance examinations are rigorous, and only the best are accepted. Many come from modest backgrounds and are self-made individuals. Given their chronically low salaries, most Turkish diplomats never become rich, and, after retirement, live ordinary lives. If, however, their education, career, and experiences make them different from the average politician, that should be taken as a fact of life, not as a pretext for denigration.

MEQ: Is Turkey in the midst of an orientation shift as some argue?

Loğoğlu: There is certainly a paradigm shift in Turkish foreign policy away from its traditional moorings in the Euro-Atlantic community and toward new directions, mostly the Muslim world. This change is a consequence of the fundamental shift of Turkish polity as a whole—away from a secular democracy toward a regime that will continue to resemble democracy in some formal aspects, but one with progressively non-secular underpinnings. The space of Islam and religious precepts, rules, and norms is growing at the expense of other spaces and societal points of reference. There is thus a coherent and consistent mindset and outlook driving Turkish foreign policy today.

MEQ: Would you care to elaborate?

Loğoğlu: Should the current political dynamics and trends persist, Turkey will be a very different country in both domestic and external terms. Seeking partnerships and joining or creating new schemes, Turkey will probably abandon its EU accession drive altogether. It will be a power not just from, but also, of the Middle East region. Its ties with NATO may come under increasing questioning. In short, Turkey's place may no longer be in the Euro-Atlantic community, but elsewhere. The meaning of such an eventuality may differ in accordance with one's outlook. Yet it is certain that Turkey will no longer be the secular democracy it has been since its foundation, a society with a commitment to progressive civilization.



Ümit Pamir

Ambassador Pamir

Retired in 2007, Ümit Pamir was ambassador to Athens during the Kardak crisis in 1996; foreign policy adviser to Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit when Abdullah Öcalan was captured in 1999; Turkey's representative to the U.N. at the time of the 9/11 attacks, the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, and at the Burgenstock negotiations on the Annan plan to resolve the Cyprus dispute. He was among the "twelve wise men" who reshaped NATO's new "strategic concept" in 2009. He was interviewed by Damla Aras on July 15, 2010, by telephone and e-mail.

—The Editors

Middle East Quarterly: What do you think of Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's foreign policy strategies?

Ümit Pamir: There are some realistic components in his policies though not all are so well-rounded. It is true that Turkey follows a practical foreign policy; that it is an important player in its region; that it needs to use its soft power; and that it should use its cultural and historical bonds with the surrounding region. However, these issues

must be approached from a realistic perspective. It would be a mistake to claim that “we are not only a regional but also a global power” as Davutoğlu does in his book, *Strategic Depth* [*Stratejik Derinlik* (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2009)].

MEQ: Why that?

Pamir: Turkey simply doesn’t have the capacity to act as a global power. It can analyze issues from a global perspective, but to claim the role of a global power is a different matter altogether. The current policy gives the impression that Turkey is not trying to become a regional power but rather a global one. It is true that a new world order is being established, and it is sensible to seek a regional power position. But claiming a role to influence the global checks and balances is beyond Turkey’s capacity, and it is an unattainable goal.

MEQ: Could you give an example?

Believing that Iran will not harm Turkey because of brotherhood is not a realistic strategy.

Pamir: A good example of this approach is the Gaza flotilla crisis between Turkey and Israel in May 2010. Israel is the occupying state in Gaza, and, therefore, it has to be consulted and negotiated with.¹ An operation or action cannot be initiated without consul-

tations with this country. Israel made a big mistake by attacking a civilian ship in international waters. Yet this does not mean that Turkey could take any initiative without thinking about the consequences.

MEQ: It was a civilian initiative. What could the AKP do?

1 Israel’s occupation of the Gaza Strip ended in May 1994 with its withdrawal from the strip (apart from various Israeli settlements), leaving the area under the control of Yasser Arafat’s newly established Palestinian Authority. In August 2005, Israel unilaterally evacuated its remaining 8,000 citizens in the strip. —Eds.

Pamir: Turkey gave the impression that it sided with Hamas, which had hurt Israel. If Turkey wants to become a soft power and use such power, it must act as a mediator rather than a champion of an ideological stance. For instance, the peace initiative that Turkey started between Israel and Syria as a facilitator was wasted since Israel declared that it didn’t want Turkey in this role anymore. Even the Gazans ultimately asked the Egyptians to resolve their problem. If Turkey wants to act as a facilitator and a mediator, it must take the middle ground vis-à-vis the two sides, regardless of its affinities. But Turkey sided with Hamas, which raised questions about its policy direction and ideological stance.

MEQ: Could you give another example?

Pamir: Take the Armenian question. It is undoubtedly positive to state that “we are going to resolve our problems with our neighbors.” [Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Samanyoluhaber.com*, July 14, 2010] But this statement is not enough on its own since the other parties should reciprocate this intention. By signing the October 2009 accord on the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations, Turkey offended Azerbaijan, whose dispute with Armenia on Nagorno Karabakh remains unresolved. Ankara initiated this process on the basis of a promise by third parties, especially the United States, that Armenia would be persuaded to withdraw from Karabakh. But in foreign policy, states cannot act on mere promises, especially when dealing with a superpower. There must be a detailed action plan. When that plan materializes, then the other state—in this case, Turkey—would take the necessary steps: in this context, signing the accord and taking it to parliament for approval.

MEQ: What is your take on Turkish-Iranian relations?

Pamir: Turkey cannot improve its relations with Iran on the basis of pure friendship. Iran’s transformation into a nuclear power will create a serious problem for Turkey. Though the two countries have lived as neighbors for a long time and

do share a broadly common history, they have always been competitors. Believing that Iran will not harm Turkey because of brotherhood is not a realistic strategy. In international relations, capabilities are as important as intentions, hence no one can be sure of what the future will bring. In short, Turkey's use of soft power is important, but it has to be based on a realistic vision and on foresight.

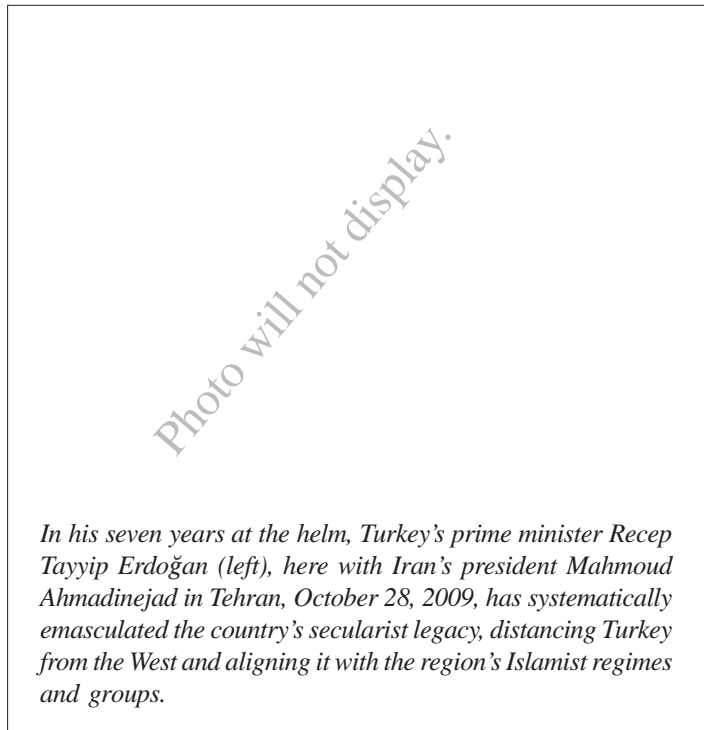
MEQ: And has it?

Pamir: The impression among many people is that Turkey used to have its own clear-cut national interests. These objectives, such as Cyprus and the Armenian issue, were explicitly clear to everyone.

Other states might agree or disagree with them, but they recognized Turkey's vital interests. The question that many people are asking now is: Has Turkey changed the definition of its national interests? They wonder whether Turkey is redefining these interests in accordance with religious motives. At times I suspect that myself. For instance, Turkey came to the forefront because of the government's stance toward Hamas whereas we haven't done much about the problems in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan despite our kinship and historical ties with them. Is this not a contradiction?

MEQ: Following on the previous question, should Turkey consider, for instance, the Palestinian problem as part of Turkey's national interest?

Pamir: The Palestinian problem is part of Turkey's international agenda but not part of its national interest. On this international issue, Turkey sides with the Palestinians and their just cause. In the event of the signing of an agreement between the two sides, east Jerusalem will



probably become the capital of the Palestinian entity and west Jerusalem will remain in Israel. However, Davutoğlu's address to Arab ministers during the Turkish-Arab Business Forum meeting in Istanbul in June 2010 when he asserted that "soon al-Quds will be the capital [of Palestine] and we will go there together and pray at the al-Aqsa Mosque" [*Milliyet*, Aug. 30, 2010] implies that all of Jerusalem will belong to the Palestinians. This is not a realistic approach, and it is reminiscent of the crusaders' struggle to save Jerusalem from the hands of the [Muslim] infidels and make it a Christian capital. It is a similarly disjointed policy if the intention is to save Jerusalem from the Jews and make it a Muslim capital.

As for Erdoğan's statements [in April 2010, he declared that Istanbul's destiny was inextricably linked to Jerusalem and Gaza, and in June he stated that Gaza's destiny couldn't be thought of as distinct from that of Istanbul, making the same analogy between Ramallah and Ankara, and Bethlehem and Konya], especially on Jerusalem, it is an international problem but

Erdoğan's contradictions raise questions about the role of religion in Turkish foreign policy.

not a national issue for Turkey. Istanbul is an important city within the borders of Turkey and it cannot be compared to Jerusalem. The consequences of using foreign policy issues to boost domestic political support and votes can be dire.

MEQ: How do the EU's policies toward Turkey affect its foreign policy?

Pamir: The EU's policies contributed to the shift of Turkish foreign policy toward the Middle East. However, this shouldn't mean turning one's back on the EU. The response to the EU must be, "Do

not keep us hanging on by putting several conditions that you do not ask of other candidate countries." It is necessary to settle all these scores with the EU, to frankly state that a "privileged partnership" is unacceptable, and that the EU must apply the same entrance requirements to Turkey as to other countries. It is necessary to get the message across to the EU that Turkey wants to enter this club, but additional requirements specifically for Turkey indicate that the EU may have ulterior motives such as re-modeling Turkey, which is something that Turkey cannot accept.

Particularly in the field of foreign policy, Turkey has to explain to the EU that its strategic position is different from that of the rest of its members. Indeed, Turkey's borders with regions such as the Caucasus and the Middle East are an advantage for the EU as it can contribute to EU policies significantly. But in other respects, to close the doors to the EU would be a mistake.

MEQ: But Turkey has seen real improvement in its relationship with the EU during the AKP era, such as the opening of membership talks in 2004.

Pamir: True enough, but the government's efforts toward EU membership have significantly slowed down since 2005. Furthermore, rather than discuss the points of disagreement in the

accession partnership document, it seems that the government has initiated the reforms that suit its own interests and ignored any other issues.

MEQ: What is your view on drawing parallels between the Ottomans and the AKP, neo-Ottomanism?

Pamir: At times, the AKP's foreign policy is reminiscent of that of the Ottoman Empire. Its foreign policy impulses give the impression that they are predicated on ideology. For instance, the AKP rightfully argued that Hamas was elected through democratic elections and that it should be, therefore, recognized by other states. But if it were to follow this line to its logical conclusion, the AKP should have commented on the rigging of the Iranian elections in June 2009. Similarly, Erdoğan participated in the Srebrenica memorial in July 2010 and rightfully declared that the massacre had become a dark stain on the Balkans, Europe, and the entire world. Yet in November 2009, he invited to Turkey the Sudanese president, Omar al-Bashir, who is accused of committing genocide. These contradictions inevitably raise questions about the role of religion in Turkish foreign policymaking.

MEQ: Do you think the AKP started a new era in Turkish foreign policy?

Pamir: In the last decade there has been a considerable increase in the social, economic, and cultural standards of Turkey, which led to the realization that it could act as a regional power. The AKP contributed to the awakening of this consciousness. It used soft power in the Israeli-Syrian conflict, in Lebanon, and among various factions in Iraq. Yet none of these developments mean that Turkish foreign policy has become multidimensional under the AKP. It has been multidimensional since the Atatürk era. For example, in the 1930s, Turkey established good relations with the United Kingdom and France even though it fought against them during World War I and the Turkish war of independence. Similarly, Turkey established good relations with the West in general as well as

with Iran. It signed the Saadabad pact with its Middle Eastern neighbors in the 1930s and established the Baghdad pact with them in the 1950s. Being aware of its unique yet sensitive geopolitical position, Turkey has always tried to establish a security zone around it. It has been close to the Arabs, too. There are some historical facts that no one can deny, such as the Arabs' collaboration with the British Empire against the Ottoman Empire, as in the case of Hussein ibn Ali, the sharif of Mecca. Nevertheless, despite the protests of some circles, Turkey entered the Organization of the Islamic Con-

ference in the 1970s. Similarly, Turkey disagreed with Israel on the Palestinian issue right from the beginning. It has been defending the Palestinians' rights and cooperating with them for years. The only difference that the AKP has brought to this policy was to define this issue as Turkey's national interest. In the final analysis, Turkey is a country with a deep-rooted history and traditions. And the AKP years will be remembered as a limited period within this long history.



CIA Rainmaker Causes Pakistan Floods

On August 6, 2010, a Pakistani website released a report titled "Pakistan Flood: HAARP Used in Pakistan? – Urgent," accusing the CIA and its alleged use of the High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program (HAARP), the Alaska-based U.S. Air Force program, to artificially cause the flooding.

We have investigated this matter and concluded that HAARP is being used in Pakistan; and of course how can we ignore India's Baglihar and Kabul's Sarobi dams' contribution in this perfect plan!

This Flood Disaster is More Manmade than Natural. The choice of starting point was perfect ... all the flood is going ... downstream, i.e. Khyber [Hills] to Karachi [Sea] ... It is designed to submerge all of Pakistan and produce the worst crises and chaos ever ... They know they can't win a war with nuclear-armed Pakistan—it would be mutual destruction, so they have other ways to do it!

Andrei Areshev, a renowned Russian scholar and the deputy head of the Strategic Culture Foundation, warns that the current devastating fires raging throughout Russia could have been triggered by American weather weapons—what is now becoming the infamous HAARP Technology.

It isn't just conspiracy theorists who are concerned about HAARP. The European Union called the project a global concern and passed a resolution calling for more information on its health and environmental risks. Despite those concerns, officials at HAARP insist the project is no more sinister than a radio science research facility.

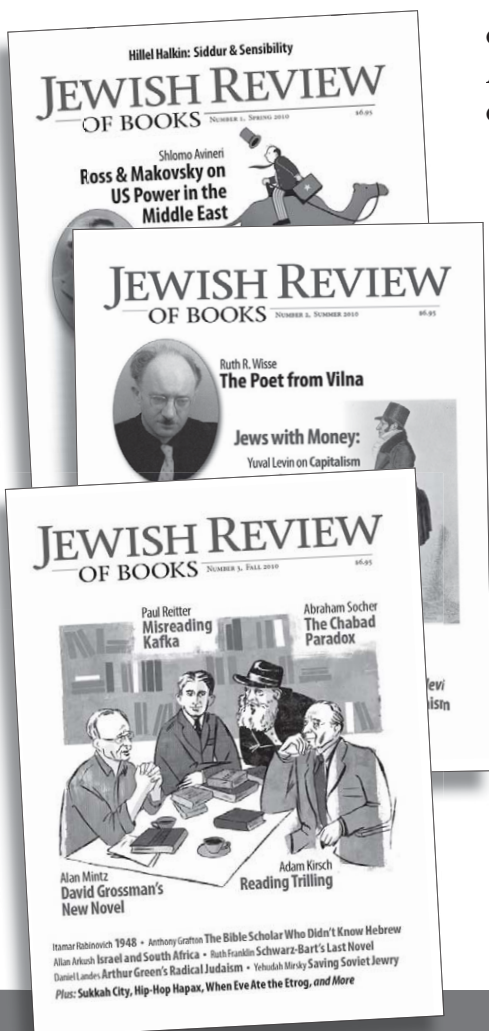
HAARP (High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program) is a little-known yet critically important U.S. military defense program which has generated quite a bit of controversy over the years in certain circles. Though denied by HAARP officials, some respected researchers allege that secret electromagnetic warfare capabilities of HAARP are designed to forward the U.S. military's stated goal of achieving full-spectrum dominance by the year 2020. Others go so far as to claim that HAARP can and has been used for weather modification, to cause earthquakes and tsunamis, to disrupt global communications systems, and more.

Pakalert Press, Aug. 6, 2010

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Alexander Downer, ‘Proud of the Role We Played in Saddam’s Overthrow’

Alexander Downer was Australia’s minister for foreign affairs from March 1996 to November 2007, the longest serving in Australian history. In July 2008, he was appointed by U.N. secretary-general Ban Ki-moon as the world body’s special envoy to Cyprus. Born in 1951, Downer received a bachelor’s degree in politics and economics from the University of New Castle-on-Tyne in the United Kingdom. He entered the Australian diplomatic service in 1976, serving in his government’s delegation to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and at the Australian embassy to Belgium and Luxembourg before becoming the senior foreign affairs representative in South Australia. In 1982 and 1983, he was a political adviser to Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser and, after the election of March 1983, to Andrew Peacock, the federal leader of the opposition. In 1984, he entered parliament as the representative for Mayo, a seat he has since held without interruption until his resignation from parliament in July 2008, following the electoral defeat of the Liberal government, headed by John Howard, the previous year. Daniel Pipes interviewed him in Adelaide on August 18, 2010.

RESOLVING THE CYPRUS CONFLICT

Middle East Quarterly: Serving as the United Nations secretary-general’s special adviser on Cyprus¹ is a seemingly thankless task, trying to negotiate a settlement for one of the world’s most intractable conflicts. What induced you to accept this position?

Alexander Downer: I thought it was an interesting challenge. Both President Dimitris Christofias of Cyprus and Mehmet Ali Talat, the Turkish Cypriot leader, struck me as being very committed to finding a solution, and I thought it

would be good to provide some help if I possibly could. Cyprus is strategically very important, and there are all sorts of political implications that should flow from an agreement between the Turkish and the Greek Cypriots to achieve a federation and, therefore, the country’s reunification.

So it’s an interesting and massively difficult job. If it weren’t so difficult, the problem would have been solved many years ago. You’ve got to assess whether the policy, which in this case is set by the U.N. Security Council, is realistic, and on balance, I think it is realistic. It’s a problem that can be solved.

MEQ: So you have a grain of optimism?

Downer: Yes, I am cautiously optimistic. I think it can be done. Many of the world’s disputes are not diplomatic but rather political. And if you want to try to solve some of these global problems,

¹ News release, U.N. News and Media Division, New York, July 17, 2008.

**There is an Australian
consensus on Israel's right to
exist within secure borders.**

your first lesson has to be in the politics of the place. You have to understand what drives the leaders, which is usually the voters, and what drives the voters; why they think the way they do; why there is so little trust between protagonists, and how trust can be built; what is tolerable or intolerable for leaders within their communities; and what sort of compromises could be sold by the leaderships to their constituents. You've got to understand all of that in order to have any chance of making a valuable contribution to solving these problems.

All too often the international community tries to solve disputes through diplomatic means. This is the American approach, the European approach, and the Russian approach—and they all expect that somehow things will fall into place. It won't work like that. You've got to think about the people, the voters in the area of contention and how they think; and once you understand this, you can start—not from the top down but from the bottom up, thinking about how you can put together solutions. That's what we tried to do in Cyprus.

MEQ: You've been in this role since 2008. Have you seen a change in the stances, public and private, in Turkish diplomacy as the Justice and Development Party [AKP] becomes more and more overtly Islamist? Has this been reflected in the Cyprus situation?

Downer: Not really. I think the Turkish government has several clear reasons to see the Cyprus problem solved, none of which have anything to do with religion. They have to grapple with the burden of the Turkish Cypriot economy, which they have to subsidize to the tune of some \$700 million a year. They have a large number of Turkish troops in Cyprus for which they have to pay, and they have some problems in the European Court of Human Rights.

And Turkey can never become a member of the European Union as long as Cyprus is divided because the Republic of Cyprus [the Greek part of Cyprus] is part of the European Union, and so

is Greece. Each of the EU's twenty-seven members has a veto over a new membership, and Greece

and the Greek Cypriots will always veto Turkish membership so long as the Cyprus problem remains unresolved.

RIGHTS OF RETURN

MEQ: You mentioned the European Court of Human Rights. A recent ECHR decision finds that Greek Cypriot reparation claims can be properly adjudicated by a Turkish court and that it would be wrong to rectify the situation by allowing Greek Cypriots to return to their homes and expelling Turkish Cypriots who currently live in the area.² Is this a constructive development?

Downer: It's obviously an important decision, which had a big impact on the thinking of the two sides and the negotiations between them. From our point of view in the United Nations, both sides have to accept the court's decisions as it is a legitimately established court. Both Turkey and the Greek Cypriots are members of the European convention on human rights from which the court ensued, so they have no choice but to accept its decision.

MEQ: A recent position paper presented to the Netanyahu government referenced that ECHR decision as a potential model for dealing with the issue of a Palestinian "return."³ Do you agree?

Downer: What you need to look at in terms of rights of return is a precedent in international law, and you can look at Cyprus and decisions by the European Court of Human Rights. You can also look at what happened in the Balkans—in Bosnia,

² *Demopoulos v. Turkey*, European Court of Human Rights, Strasbourg, France, Mar. 1, 2010.

³ *Ynet* (Tel Aviv), Aug. 8, 2010.

between Croatia and Serbia, and so on, as well as what happened in Eastern Europe and to some extent in Russia since the end of the Soviet Union and the collapse of communism. There is a whole body of legislation that is important in terms of establishing how a right of return works. Then there is the big question of property rights: Do the original owners have all the rights, and do present users have any rights? For those of us who live under the Anglo-Saxon system of law, there is the whole concept of common law and the extent to which that should be applied in terms of remedies to people in these situations.

The concept of a right of return has great political potency. You go into the refugee camps in Lebanon or in Gaza, and this notion of a right of return is politically very alive, and you can't ignore that. On the other hand, if you want to take a legalistic approach, there is a body of law that could best be summarized as complex, and what the European Court of Human Rights has alluded to is that the passage of time can be an important factor—not in terms of property ownership but in terms of a right of return versus compensation.

These are all complex legal issues, but the legal component is only part of it. You can't ignore the politics of these questions. I don't know how easy it would be to walk into one of the refugee camps in Lebanon and try to explain complex concepts of common law property rights and the rights of property users under this law to its residents.

AUSTRALIAN-ISRAELI RELATIONS

MEQ: As we are just before the Australian national elections, do you perceive a basic bipartisanship on Israel and related issues continuing regardless of which faction wins?

Downer: There have been some differences be-



Alexander Downer

tween the Howard [Liberal] government [1996-2007] and the Rudd [Labor] cabinet [2007-June 2010], but they haven't been very substantial. For example, the Howard government was very insistent that the International Court of Justice [ICJ] was not the right place to go to consider the issue of the Israeli security barrier; and when there was a resolution at the U.N. General Assembly calling for the implementation of the IJC's advisory opinion, the government voted against it, and it was one of only six governments to do so. The Labor party at that time said, as did Kevin Rudd himself, that Australia's position would be better off if we abstained.

Now, under Labor, Australia is running for a seat on the Security Council in 2012-14 whereas the Liberals say that they would withdraw this candidacy as it wouldn't be worthwhile to compromise Australia's international integrity for a two-year seat on the Security Council. So, yes, there probably would be some difference.

MEQ: I didn't mean to imply there would be no difference, but I was assuming there is a basic bipartisanship on Israel? Would you agree with that?

Photo will not display.

Families displaced by the Turkish invasion of northern Cyprus stand outside their makeshift tents, October 27, 1974. According to a recent decision by the European Court of Human Rights, it would be wrong to allow the hundreds of thousands of Greek Cypriots and their descendants, made refugees by Turkey's invasion, to return to their homes and expel Turkish Cypriots who currently live in the area.

Downer: Yes.

MEQ: And that will presumably continue?

Downer: Yes. There is a consensus on some very simple propositions, and Israel's right to exist within secure borders is absolutely accepted across the Australian political spectrum. There would be no political party in Australia that would oppose a two-state solution in the Middle East, not even the minor parties. When you get into some of the details there are differences, but not fundamental differences.

IRAN'S NUCLEAR AMBITIONS

MEQ: Are sanctions and other nonviolent steps sufficient to prevent the Islamic Republic of Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, or might military force be required?

Downer: I hope that the latest round of sanctions that are being passed now by the Security Council will have the desired effect. But time will tell, and we'll just have to wait and see.

MEQ: Do you think that Tehran might deploy nuclear weapons?

Downer: Their ambition is to have the capability to develop nuclear weapons should they ever feel there was a need for them. That's not to say they think the circumstances are there now. But, obviously, if Iran ever got nuclear

weapons, it would be a game changer.

MEQ: Which do you think is worse: a nuclear armed regime in Tehran or the consequences of military strike on Iran?

Downer: I hope the sanctions are successful.

RESISTING ISLAMIST RADICALISM

MEQ: In 2007 you denied a Saudi request to fund a mosque here in Adelaide, citing concerns about potential Wahhabi influence and those who might frequent the mosque. Would you explain your reasoning?

Downer: I am an Australian democrat, and I am all in favor of people practicing whatever religion they wish to practice. But I am not in favor of extremism, and some of our agencies drew my

Preventing the establishment of a mosque that could be a center of extremism was important.

attention to concerns they had about the people behind the proposal to establish this mosque, that this could be turned into a center of extremism. So we advised the Saudis of that, and the project didn't proceed.

MEQ: Did this decision have any further consequences?

Downer: No.

MEQ: Was this unique in your experience?

Downer: Yes, this was the only occasion when this happened. I know that the Saudis wish to fund mosques, and that's fine, but we don't want here what we've seen in some other countries—the use of certain mosques as centers of extremism.

We are very happy to have mosques everywhere in Australia. There are 340,000 Muslims in Australia, and they've got a right to go to a mosque. I have no problem with people establishing mosques, and I have no problem with the Saudi government providing some support for those mosques; it is a friendly government of ours.

But on the other hand, if accidentally and not deliberately, they find themselves funding a mosque that is being established by extremists, then that is something that we reasonably could be expected to resist. It is similar to the situation where the German government recently shut down the so-called 9/11 mosque in Hamburg.⁴

I might have closed it down the next day, on 9/12. People always say that I am a black-and-white person, and I am sure there were areas of grey there. But for me, preventing the establishment of a mosque that could be a center of extremism was important, and I have had no prob-

lems with what we have done.

MEQ: Do you consider the Howard government's creation of schools of "Islamic Excellence" to be a success?

Downer: Seems to have been. One of the things that surprised people about the Howard government was that we provided a lot of government funding for nongovernment schools—Christian schools but also Muslim schools. I don't have a problem with there being Muslim schools, just as I went to a Christian school myself, and there are Jewish schools as well. That's not a problem. The problem is extremism.

MEQ: In seeking to find moderate Muslims, you supported Houssam Abiad for a seat in parliament. However, as recently as March 2008, he described the founding of Israel as "a triumph of racism" and accused Jerusalem of "ethnic cleansing."⁵ How do you respond to criticism that you made an error in this instance?

Downer: If he did say those things, I made an error. I certainly wasn't aware at the time that he had said those things, and it has been drawn to my attention more recently. He has got a very good CV; he has been a very successful Australian. Not surprisingly, when he came to see me to seek my support, he didn't draw that to my attention.

IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

MEQ: Australia has over 2,300 troops in Afghanistan and about 80 or so in Iraq. Do you endorse their continued presence?

Downer: Sure, I do. I am very proud of the role we

⁴ The Taiba mosque in Hamburg, frequented by some of the 9/11 attackers, was shut down on August 9, 2010, and the cultural association that ran it was banned on the grounds that it was again being used as a recruitment and meeting point for Islamist jihadists. *The Guardian* (London), Aug. 9, 2010.—Eds.

⁵ *The Australian* (Sydney), June 5, 2010.

**It is unreal to think that
you could establish in
Afghanistan the sort of
society as in Australia.**

played in Saddam's overthrow, and I will not take one step back on that issue to the day I die. Iraq is difficult and complicated and has always been since its creation in 1921, so I expect it to continue to be difficult. But we are better off without Saddam Hussein and his regime. The war against terror would have been a good deal more difficult if Saddam had remained and complicated matters in all sorts of ways that he did.

As for Afghanistan, getting rid of the Taliban regime was definitely the right thing to do. People have their own theories about how the war in Afghanistan could be better fought. Everybody agrees about the need for a very effective hearts-and-minds campaign, that there should be substantial aid programs, and that more needs to be done to stop the trafficking of narcotics. I often make the point that the Afghan army and police must be properly resourced, that soldiers and police should be properly paid, which is not the case at the moment. But it's going to be a long, hard struggle.

For those people who think that it would be better just to give up, I say, "Before you go out and tell your local politician that the answer is to give up, make sure you've thought through what the consequences of a withdrawal from Afghanistan would be." And I am not one of those who think that you should set a timetable for withdrawal, telling your enemies in advance when you are going to leave. It's like going into World War II and saying, "We will fight until January 1945, but after that we are not going to fight anymore." Hitler would have just said, "Well, I'll hang on until January 1945, take a hell of a battering, but if I can survive beyond January 1945, I win."

I would always make withdrawal conditions-based, not time-based, and this certainly needs to be the case in Afghanistan. It will take a long time: You've got very low levels of literacy; about half of the effective GDP [gross domestic product] in the country is from narcotics; you've got

a government whose reach doesn't extend much beyond Kabul; you've got widespread corruption with people

changing sides on the basis of money. It's tough, but the alternative of handing Afghanistan back to the Taliban would be disastrous for the Afghan people. If you don't learn the lessons of history, you're doomed to repeat them.

MEQ: You wrote in 2009 that the coalition's goal in Afghanistan "should be to allow the Afghan people to run their own country as they see fit but to do so in a way that is not threatening to the outside world. The idea that some sort of idealized democracy can be established of the kind we have here in Australia is just unrealistic."⁶ How would you respond to the criticism that you have abandoned the field to those who would shut down schools for girls and swathe women in burqas?

Downer: I am obviously not in favor of those things happening, and I certainly wouldn't want the sort of extremism that was exercised by elements of the Taliban before the end of 2001 to return. There's a balance here. In international relations you have to deal with reality. It is unreal to think that you could establish in Afghanistan the sort of society as in Australia or the United States. That's not going to happen. There are traditions and values that they have, that we don't particularly share, some of which we look down upon. I am obviously much in favor of equality, including gender equality in education and the workplace, so I would hope that will never regress to that extent. But it's not going to work as a democracy like in our countries. Not in my lifetime.



⁶ Alexander Downer, "The Afghan Dilemma," *The Advertiser* (Adelaide, Aus.), Oct. 25, 2009.

Saad Hariri's Moment of Truth

by Hilal Khashan

Recent developments in Lebanon have shown that the preconditions for restoring its sovereignty have not yet materialized. The demise of the “Cedar Revolution” and the fragmentation of the “March 14 Coalition” have set the country back to the era of Syrian domination. The crisis associated with the assassination of former prime minister Rafiq Hariri and the formation of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) afford yet another stark demonstration that the country remains a victim of regional encroachment and that the loyalties of its leaders remain as sectarian as ever.

TRAGEDY AND HOPE

The assassination of Hariri in a powerful explosion on February 14, 2005, shocked and saddened many Lebanese, especially Sunnis, who experienced a sense of deep personal loss. Outside Lebanon, Arab and world leaders expressed exasperation at the untimely death of a self-made towering political figure. Beirut's Martyrs' Square, where Hariri was buried outside the adjacent al-Amin mosque, became a rallying spot for the former prime minister's mourners and others who wanted to voice their dismay at Syria's 29-year-old military presence in Lebanon. The daily rallies, mostly by supporters of the Future Trend, the Lebanese Forces, and the

Phalangist Party, soon gave rise to what became known as the Cedar Revolution. Domestic pressure ensued for the implementation of U.N. Security Council resolution 1559 of September 2004, which, among other things, called for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Lebanon.¹ Coupled with widespread accusations of Damascus's role in the assassination—mainly emanating from Syrian president Bashar al-Assad's distrust of Hariri's Saudi and Western connections and Hariri's displeasure with the Syrian push to give then-president Emile Lahoud another term in office—the politically inexperienced Assad panicked.

SYRIA MAKES AN UNCEREMONIOUS EXIT

The pro-Syrian Lebanese government of Omar Karami promptly submitted its resignation²

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1 “The Situation in the Middle East,” UNSC resolution 1559, Sept. 2, 2004.

2 *CNN News*, Feb. 28, 2005.

Hezbollah condemned the U.N. Special Tribunal as a Zionist conspiracy.

and was replaced on April 19, 2005, by an interim national unity government tasked with overseeing national elections within a month. Three weeks after Hariri's assassination, Assad succumbed to the pressures coming from Lebanon and the West and announced his intention to withdraw the 16,000 Syrian troops from Lebanon by the end of April.

On March 8, Hezbollah orchestrated a pro-Syrian rally in downtown Beirut that attracted about 700,000 supporters, and the broad anti-Syrian coalition responded six days later with a million-plus-strong rally in the same area. These major shows of force yielded two polar political formations, the anti-Syrian majority "March 14 Coalition" and the pro-Syrian "March 8 Coalition." As the former group took the initiative and pursued a pugnacious anti-Syrian stance, its rival contented itself with maintaining a low profile while at the same time recounting "Syrian sacrifices in Lebanon."³ Anti-Assad Sunnis and Maronites lashed out in anger at hapless Syrian laborers in the country. Many of them became "victims of crimes, including beatings, robberies, the setting on fire of tents where they live[d], and even killings."⁴

Leaders of the March 14 Coalition, especially the Lebanese Druze leader, Walid Jumblatt, and Saad Hariri, Rafiq Hariri's son, mounted a scathing defamation campaign against the Syrian regime in general and President Assad in particular. Naming Assad "the Damascus tyrant," Jumblatt said: "This boy is controlling people's lives in Damascus and killing free people in Lebanon. ... If the tribunal is hampered, we will all be a Nawaf [a Druze who assassinated former Syrian president Adib Shishakli in 1964]."⁵ In one of his numerous attacks on the Syrian regime, Hariri accused Assad of smuggling Islamic extremists into

Lebanon "in order to spread chaos and commit terrorist acts that target army officers and civil-

ians."⁶ Addressing the Syrian people, Hariri said, "Your truthfulness and brotherly love for us contrast the regime's cunning tactics and deception."⁷ He described Qasr al-Muhajerin (Assad's presidential palace) as Qasr al-Mutajerin (merchandisers' palace).⁸

SPECIAL TRIBUNAL FOR LEBANON

The Hariri assassination generated a political upheaval that jolted the Sunni community and seriously undermined the 1989 Ta'if agreement, which had ended Lebanon's 15-year civil war. Since perpetrators of political crimes in Lebanon had rarely been brought to justice owing to the country's weak and inefficient judicial and law enforcement systems, the Karami cabinet succumbed to heavy public pressure, led by the Hariri family, and agreed to involve the United Nations in investigating those who planned, financed, and executed the assassination. A U.N. fact-finding mission arrived in Lebanon for background inquiries, and on April 7, 2005, the Security Council formed the United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission (UNIIC) to probe the assassination of the former prime minister.⁹

U.N. investigator Detlev Mehli's preliminary report in October 2005 provided evidence that implicated ranking Syrian and Lebanese officials in the assassination.¹⁰ Two months later, his follow-up report shed additional light on the

3 Voice of America, Mar. 8, 2005.

4 Agence France-Presse, Mar. 14, 2008.

5 *Ya Lubnan* (Beirut), Dec. 28, 2006.

6 *The Daily Star* (Beirut), Sept. 29, 2008.

7 *Al-Riyadh*, Aug. 18, 2006.

8 Ibid.

9 "Report of the International Independent Investigation Commission Established Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1595 (2005): Chronology of Events, Mid-2004-September 2005," (Mehlis report), United Nations, New York, p. ii.

10 *BBC News*, Oct. 21, 2005.

possible perpetrators of the crime, based on interrogation of new witnesses, investigation of the explosion scene, intercepted telephone conversations, and Lebanese Internal Security Forces records.¹¹ Immediately after the publication of the second report, the Lebanese government requested U.N. assistance in establishing “a tribunal of an international character to prosecute the alleged perpetrators.”¹² On May 30, 2007, the Security Council passed Resolution 1757 to set up a Special Tribunal for Lebanon under the mandatory chapter VII¹³ after the divided Lebanese government had failed to sign the agreement and statute for the tribunal. Syrian leaders considered the STL a violation of the country’s sovereignty, and Hezbollah condemned it as a Zionist conspiracy.¹⁴

THE ASCENDANCY OF IRAN AND ITS ARAB PROXIES

Meanwhile, the U.S.-led wars in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003) rid Hezbollah’s creator and onetime patron—the Islamic Republic of Iran—of its two sworn enemies, the Taliban in the east and Saddam Hussein in the west. The ensuing quagmire in both countries effectively ended Iran’s containment, allowing Tehran to wield paramount power in Iraq, especially among the ruling Shiite majority, and to establish an important foothold in Afghanistan, particularly in non-Pashtun areas. The indecisive outcome of the 2006 summer war between Israel and Hezbollah further boosted

Photo will not display.

The assassination of former prime minister Rafiq Hariri generated a mass protest movement, which led to the establishment of an international tribunal of investigation and to the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon after three decades of occupation. Here protestors march in Martyrs Square with posters of Hariri, Beirut, March 14, 2005.

Iran’s bid for regional preeminence as evidenced by its continuing pursuit of a controversial nuclear program in defiance of U.N. Security Council resolutions and intensifying international sanctions.

Hezbollah’s influence has likewise surged in the aftermath of the 2006 war. During the war, it accused the then-Lebanese prime minister Fouad Siniora of collusion with Israel, and in November 2006, all five Shiite members of Siniora’s cabinet submitted their resignation in protest of his intention to sign the U.N. draft plan for the creation of the STL. In December, Hezbollah and its allies in the Shiite Amal move-

11 *Ya Lubnan*, Dec. 20, 2005.

12 “Handbook on the Special Tribunal for Lebanon,” International Center for Transitional Justice, New York and Beirut, Apr. 10, 2008, p. 9.

13 “The Situation in the Middle East,” UNSC resolution 1757, May 30, 2007.

14 *Al-Qabas* (Kuwait), Sept. 30, 2010.

Given its location, Syria is vital for maintaining the Iranian lifeline to Hezbollah.

ment, together with former president Michel Aoun's National Patriotic Trend, organized a prolonged protest in downtown Beirut and camped outside Siniora's office for several weeks. In May 2008, Hezbollah invaded west Beirut and Jumblatt's stronghold on the Shuf Mountain, forcing the government to rescind its decision to ban Hezbollah's landline communication network and to fire the Shiite chief of Beirut's international airport.

In the Palestinian territories, Damascus and Tehran have used their weighty influence with Hamas to derail all attempts at achieving Palestinian reconciliation, complicating PLO-Israeli peace negotiations, and giving the Iranian-Syrian alliance an additional bargaining chip in Middle East politics.

Iran's regional gains have also threatened the stability of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Geographic proximity, the presence of large numbers of Iranian immigrants on the Arab side of the gulf, and the seeming inability of the GCC countries to adequately incorporate their Shiite populations into the political system and the fabric of society offered Iran a unique opportunity to collaborate with these communities at the expense of their Sunni counterparts.

In Kuwait, sectarian tensions have mounted following the rise of Sunni fundamentalism with Shiites having second thoughts about the ability of the ruling family to ensure their security and personal safety. Saudi Shiites are still essentially quietist though they are unlikely to remain impervious to the winds of change that are blowing in neighboring countries, including a Huthi insurgency in Yemen.

Indeed, the Saudis, who for years dreaded a Shiite awakening coming from the east and north, have recently found themselves contending with yet another threat from the south. During the summer of 2009, the Saudi armed forces were drawn into a difficult military confrontation with the Iranian-supported Huthis, who occupied a string of Saudi border locations. Coupled with the undying al-Qaeda domestic

threat and the kingdom's unresolved succession issue, Saudi Arabia's ruling elite has been confronted with problems on all fronts.

SYRIA RETURNS WITH A VENGEANCE

Against this backdrop of heightened regional tensions, Assad made a bid to reclaim his country's regional standing, repairing relations with Saudi Arabia—severely damaged following the Hariri assassination—by supporting Riyadh in its fight against the Huthis and quietly rectifying the imbalance of Syria's power relationship with Iran. He calculated that just as Syria's weakened position vis-à-vis Iran stemmed from a string of inopportune developments (especially the Syrian exodus from Lebanon), so Tehran's growing isolation increased its need for pan-Arab Damascus in order to legitimize its regional encroachments. Moreover, given its key location, Syria was vital for maintaining the Iranian lifeline to Hezbollah.

Bashar's strategy sought to emulate the role played by his late father after the outbreak of the Iraq-Iran war in 1980. Then, Hafez al-Assad had convinced the nervous GCC states that he would use his good offices with Tehran to preserve their territorial integrity and prevent the war from spilling over to their territory. Nearly thirty years later, mindful of the Iranian penetration of Iraq and losing faith in the U.S. ability to protect them, the Saudis rediscovered the merits of the Assad regime.

The Saudi ambassador to Damascus confirmed the restoration of the two countries' relations following King Abdullah's visit to Damascus in October 2009, stating that "the steady communication and special relationship between the custodian of the holy shrines and President Assad are exemplary for other Arab leaders to emulate." The ambassador added that the "fruits of the two countries' distinguished relations ... are reflecting positively, especially in Iraq and Lebanon."

Walid Jumblatt, whose father was murdered in 1977 by Syria's Lebanese proxies, quickly grasped the implications of the nascent Syrian-Saudi entente. He defected from the Hariri-led March 14 Coalition shortly after the 2009 parliamentary elections, stopped criticizing the Syrian regime and its Lebanese allies, and even issued "an unambiguous apology to Syria" on al-Jazeera satellite TV station.

Recanting his vitriolic criticism of Assad, Jumblatt explained that the foul-mouthed words he had used to describe the Syrian president had been wrong because they had been made at the spur of the moment during the difficult days following the Hariri assassination.¹⁵ He followed this by adopting Hezbollah's position regarding an international inquiry into the assassination: "I wish the STL has not existed, and it is better for justice to expose the false witnesses."¹⁶

Jumblatt's apology to Syria and the about-face of his political course sent a sobering but unmistakable message to Hariri who had failed to form a cabinet until Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah interceded on his behalf with Assad. It was only after Hariri received an official invitation to visit Damascus, five months after his March 14 Coalition had won a clear parliamentary majority, that the opposition agreed to join his cabinet in November 2009. Even then, the Saudis continued to put pressure on Hariri to accommodate the Syrian demands, claiming that there were clear limits to their influence and that both Riyadh and Beirut must accept a greater role for Damascus in the affairs of its smaller neighbor.¹⁷

These limits manifested themselves in both Lebanon and Iraq. Although the Saudis had supported the coalitions of Saad Hariri and former



Saad Hariri, the slain leader's son and current prime minister of Lebanon, has been forced to backtrack from his earlier accusations of Syria's President Assad as the driving force behind the assassination in an attempt to prevent the country's slide into civil war.

Iraqi prime minister Iyad Allawi, neither of them managed to form a cabinet on the basis of the parliamentary majority they obtained at the polls. In Allawi's words: "It is illogical to expect the efforts of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria to succeed in removing the hurdles in front of the formation of the Iraqi cabinet."¹⁸

The Saudis also reminded Hariri that King Abdullah's July 2010 arrival in Beirut aboard the same plane as Syrian president Assad was intended to underscore Riyadh's acquiescence in Damascus's superior role in Lebanon.¹⁹ In an interview with the Saudi-owned *al-Sharq al-Awsat* daily, Hariri apologized to Syria for having charged it with murdering his father. "Accusing Damascus of the assassination was a mistake," he said. "The false witnesses misled the investigation, and they have caused harm to

¹⁵ *Al-Diyar* (Beirut), Dec. 13, 2009.

¹⁶ *Al-Khaleej* (UAE), Sept. 27, 2010.

¹⁷ Ariel Farrar-Wellman, Robert Frasco, "Saudi Arabia-Iran Relations," *IranTracker*, American Enterprise Institute, Washington, D.C., July 20, 2010.

¹⁸ *Al-Iraq News* (Baghdad), Aug. 1, 2010.

¹⁹ *Al-Quds al-Arabi* (London), July 31, 2010.



Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah, right, meets with Syrian president Bashar al-Assad at al-Shaab palace in Damascus, October 7, 2009. Against the backdrop of heightened regional tensions, Assad made a bid to reclaim his country's regional standing by repairing relations with Saudi Arabia—severely damaged following the Hariri assassination.

Syria and Lebanon. [They] ... ruined the relationship between the two countries and politicized the assassination."²⁰ Hariri's concessions, painful as they were, did not seem to satisfy Assad, who wanted nothing short of the prime minister's unconditional capitulation.

Accordingly, in October 2010, a Syrian court issued arrest warrants for thirty-three individuals, mostly members of Hariri's political and administrative team, for having allegedly misled the Mehlis investigation. Brig. Gen. Jamil al-Sayyed, former chief of the Lebanese General Security and one of Syria's foremost men in Lebanon, who had filed the lawsuit underlying the warrants, went so far as to challenge Hariri "to take a lie detector test to find out if he stood behind the witnesses who gave false testimony" that had led to Sayyed's imprisonment for four years.²¹ Given his close ties with Assad, who

gave him a personal welcome whenever he visited Damascus, it is inconceivable that Sayyed would dare attack Hariri without a green light from the Syrian president.

Indeed, Damascus's concerns about STL indictments seem to have all but disappeared, feeling as it does that the Hariri assassination case has been substantially downsized. This has in turn left Hezbollah's leader Hassan Nasrallah worried that Assad might let him "face the tsunami of the special tribunal for Lebanon on his own."²² Muhammad Raad, a Hezbollah parliamentary deputy, articulated the organization's concern when he bluntly told Lebanese president Michel Suleiman, "We do not have

officers who can spend four years in jail; we do not have anybody who can spend four seconds in jail."²³

It is in this context that one should assess Assad's insistence that Hariri denounce the STL. It is important for Bashar to continue to convince the Iranians that he is able to extract concessions from the Saudis and their allies in Iraq and Lebanon, for otherwise he might lose his self-assigned position of regional conciliator. Likewise, in keeping with his new role of appeasing Damascus and Hezbollah, Jumblatt volunteered to claim that "there [was] no need for a tribunal that leads to bloodshed."²⁴

Hariri has already gone a long way in making concessions, and he is unlikely to start defying his Saudi patrons. After all, Iraq and the Persian Gulf mean far more to King Abdullah than indicting Hariri's assassins. The essential

20 *Asharq al-Awsat* (London), Sept. 6, 2010.

21 LCCC (Lebanese-Canadian Coordinating Council) *English Daily News Bulletin*, Sept. 18, 2010.

22 *Asharq al-Awsat*, July 25, 2010.

23 *Al-Akhbar* (Beirut), July 26, 2010.

24 *Al-Nahar* (Beirut), Oct. 4, 2010.

**Those who think that
engaging Syria and ending
its isolation will induce it
to leave Lebanon are
dead wrong.**

building blocks are in place for settling the STL stand-off between Hariri on the one hand and Damascus and Hezbollah on the other. Given the confessional nature of Lebanese

politics, everything there must be resolved on the basis of consensus, which means accommodation. The ongoing activity for laying the crisis to rest thus centers on finding a formula that will satisfy Hezbollah while allowing the Future Trend and Hariri to save face.

To find the winning formula, the regional powers are trying to square the circle with regard to the main stumbling blocks: 1) the STL and the forthcoming indictments; 2) the Syrian arrest warrants; and 3) the charges of false witnesses. The emerging compromise seems to consist of a Syrian cancellation of the arrest warrants, coupled with Hezbollah dropping the false witnesses charges, and Hariri criticizing the weakening of Hezbollah as a “resistance movement” by the U.N. report.

The prime minister will most probably avoid a personal denunciation of the indictments but will not authorize government officials to cooperate with the STL, thus effectively making the indictments worthless. As Jumblatt has recently suggested, Hariri might content himself with finding the truth about his father’s assassins without bringing them to justice. Meanwhile, Hezbollah can continue to denounce the STL and claim that it amounted to nothing more than a U.S.-Israeli conspiracy. This will allow all parties in Lebanon to interpret the indictments when published in accordance with their interests without reigniting the civil strife.

**LOSING THE BATTLE
FOR SOVEREIGNTY**

French president Nicolas Sarkozy has stated that the key to Lebanon’s sovereignty

remains in Syria’s willingness to exchange diplomatic missions with its neighbor. When in 2009 Damascus finally agreed to open an embassy in the Lebanese capital,

Sarkozy often boasted that this achievement was of “his own making, and that his policies have succeeded.”²⁵

Sarkozy and his Western, like-minded politicians, who think that engaging Syria and ending its isolation provide sufficient incentives to induce it to leave Lebanon, are dead wrong. Damascus appears to have a constitutional fixation on its smaller neighbor. Eager to claim a regional power status for their country, Syrian leaders have long considered Lebanon an integral and legitimate part of their patrimony.

For their part, the Saudis are anxious to contain the region’s Sunni-Shiite divisions and seem willing to compromise Lebanon’s sovereignty to this end, considering the country “a tug-of-war needed to resolve regional crises of more import to them.”²⁶ By the same token, Lebanon’s geostrategic position provides an ideal arena for its near and distant neighbors to extend their regional influence and to challenge the West and Israel while taking advantage of this soft state. The Lebanese never miss an opportunity to complain that their neighbors do not leave them alone. But the fact that Lebanon’s sectarian leaders do not know how to play politics without having a foreign sponsor attests to the sad truth that the roots of the country’s lack of sovereignty are primarily internal and are imbedded in its anachronistic, confessional political system.



25 *Al-Hayat* (London), Oct. 6, 2010.

26 *Al-Safir* (Beirut), Oct. 5, 2010.

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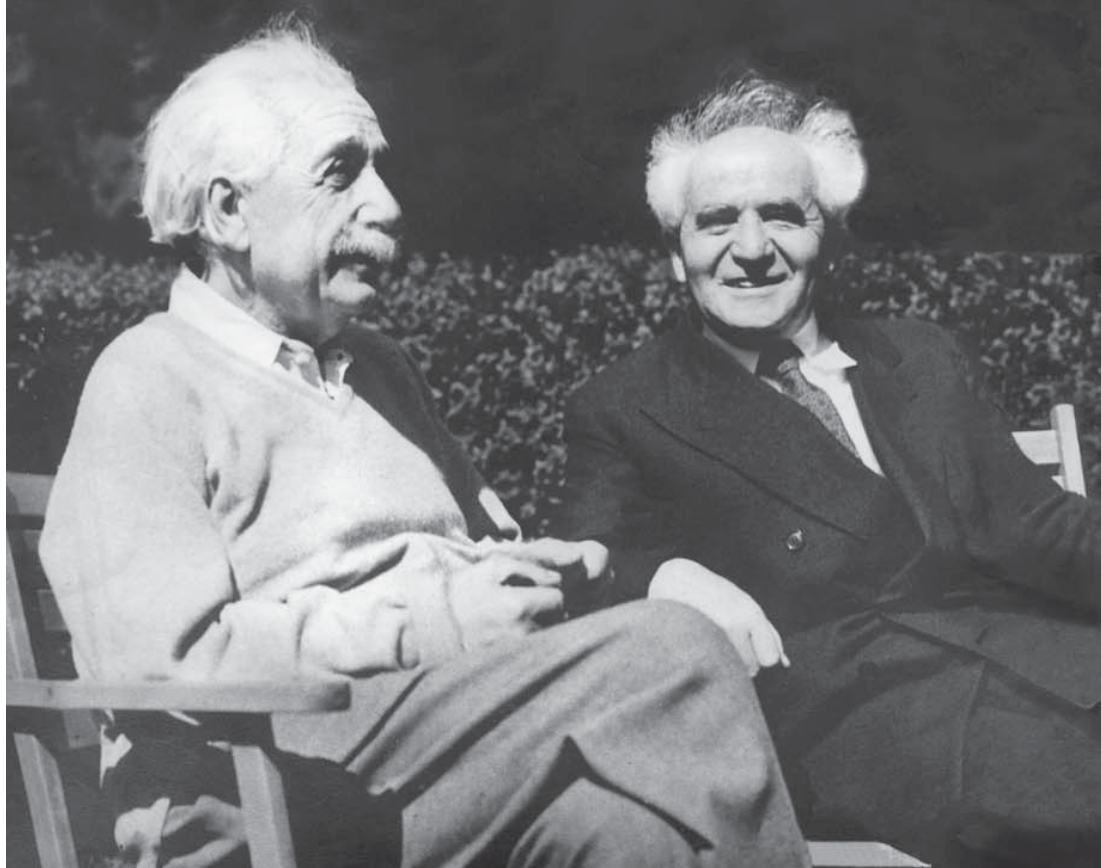
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Khamene'i's Balancing Act

by Ali Alfoneh

Seventeen months after the fraudulent June 12, 2009 presidential election, which threw the Islamic Republic into its worst political crisis since the 1979 revolution, and five months into the latest round of international sanctions against Iran,¹ Ayatollah Ali Khamene'i is desperate to demonstrate that he is the legitimate supreme authority in Iran.

THE CONQUERING AYATOLLAH?

The ayatollah's October 19, 2010 visit to the holy city of Qom, Iran's equivalent of Vatican City, illustrates the point. Traditionally, the Islamic Republic's official propaganda has depicted the Iranian head of state as a religious scholar or a Platonic philosopher king. Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the republic's founding father, for example, spoke modestly of himself as a "theological student" (*talabeh*).² But not so Khamene'i, whose visit to Qom was staged as a triumphant general's march into a conquered city, which recently mourned the passing of dissident Grand Ayatollah Hossein-Ali Montazeri.³ Qom was conquered by a man who wears the Basij militia's signature Palestinian scarf over his clerical robe, signifying greater affinity with ideological military organizations such as the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and the Basij than with traditional theological centers of learning, which have never recognized his academic qualifications. Even the

sycophants described the visit as "a divine war game" and a "rehearsal of the welcoming of the Imam of the Era [the Shiite messiah whose emergence starts Apocalypse] by the pious."⁴

Addressing the masses in Qom, Khamene'i did not speak the language of a theologian but that of a military commander. He called Qom a city of holy struggle (*jihad*)—a reference to Khomeini's June 5, 1963 speech in Qom that marked his revolt against the shah's regime—and warned the public against "the enemy" twenty-seven times in a speech that lasted only forty-two minutes and four seconds.⁵ Khamene'i also stressed that the "sedition of 2009 [i.e., the post-election crisis] vaccinated the people against the political and social microbes"⁶ and assured the audience that the international sanc-

1 U.N. News Service (New York), June 9, 2010.

2 Mohammad Pour-Gholami: "Man Yek Talebeh-am, Tashrifat Ra Kam Konid," Markaz-e Asnad-e Enghelab-e Eslami website (Tehran), Feb. 10, 2010.

3 *Kaleme* (Tehran), Dec. 21, 2009; see also "An Ayatollah Condemns an Unjust Ruler," *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2010, pp. 73-6.

4 *Hawzeh News* (Qom), Oct. 18, 2010.

5 "Bayanat dar Didar-e Omoumi Ba Mardom-e Qom," Daftar-e Hefz va Nashr-e Asar-e Hazrat-e Ayatollah al-Ozma Khamene'i website (Tehran), Oct. 19, 2010.

6 "Bayanat dar Ejtema-e Bozorg-e Mardom-e Qom," Daftar-e Hefz va Nashr-e Asar-e Hazrat-e Ayatollah al-Ozma Khamene'i website, Oct. 19, 2010.

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**Khamene'i has managed
to contain the opposition
and is preparing the
suppression of the public.**

tions would, "God's willing, not have a significant effect upon the life of the people."⁷

Khamene'i's crude language and reference to "microbes" was meant to intimidate his political opponents and demonstrate his self confidence, which may not be entirely baseless. By severely restricting the physical movement of the reformist Green Movement's leaders⁸ and imprisoning their lieutenants,⁹ Khamene'i has successfully managed to contain the opposition. Having repressed the freedom seekers, Khamene'i is carefully preparing the suppression of the impoverished public that demands bread as the sanctions take their toll on Iran's economy.¹⁰

Appearances, however, are often deceptive, and the cracks in the facade of Khamene'i's Potomkin village keep growing. The very instruments of force that have enabled him to suppress the domestic opposition and contain protests against the effects of international sanctions may pose the greatest challenges to his rule. Excessive reliance on the use of force, alienation of the so called reformist camp, which earlier constituted half of the Islamic Republic's political elites, and especially his overreliance on President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, have left the supreme leader at the mercy of former and current members of the IRGC and the Basij, who in turn have become power brokers in their own right and no longer consider themselves subservient to Khamene'i.

**KHAMENE'I VS.
AHMADINEJAD**

The troubled relationship between Khamene'i and Ahmadinejad, a former member of the IRGC, is a case in point. During

Khamene'i's visit to Qom, both vied to dominate the Iranian press. On the day of the supreme leader's much celebrated visit,

Ahmadinejad attempted to overshadow his superior by depositing \$81 into the bank accounts of 1.8 million households in the three provinces of North, South, and Razavi Khorasan.¹¹ Although the government had long promised a reform of public subsidies, by announcing the promised cash transfer on the day of Khamene'i's visit, Ahmadinejad won an important publicity coup.

Interestingly, Ahmadinejad also hosted Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez—on his ninth visit to Iran—on the day of Khamene'i's visit to Qom.¹² The Iranian Foreign Ministry even announced that Ahmadinejad and Chavez would meet Khamene'i in Qom.¹³ The announced meeting never materialized, possibly because of Khamene'i's realistic fear that the presidents would steal the stage in the holy city. Speculations about Iran's purchase of Russian-made S-300 air defense systems, in which the Chavez government acted as middleman,¹⁴ would also have caused additional embarrassment to Khamene'i, who had often stressed the Islamic Republic's self-sufficiency in military industries.¹⁵

Four days into the Qom visit, the ayatollah faced another challenge: Ahmadinejad's chief of staff, Esfandiar Rahim-Mashaie. Addressing the Farabi International Seminar on October 23, 2010, Mashaie stressed that he had nothing against translation of Western literature for humanities curricula at Iranian universities.¹⁶ This statement was in direct contradiction to a position take by Khamene'i, who in a major

7 Ibid.

8 *BBC Persian* (London), Aug. 31, 2010.

9 *Kaleme*, Sept. 26, 2010.

10 Iranian Student News Agency (ISNA, Tehran), Oct. 12, 2010.

11 Borna News Agency (Tehran), Oct. 19, 2010.

12 Mehr News Agency (Tehran), Oct. 16, 2010.

13 *Asr-e Iran* (Tehran), Oct. 19, 2010.

14 Ali Vadae, "Bara-ye S-300-ha Hagh-e Dalali Napardazim," *Mardomsalari* (Tehran), Oct. 19, 2010.

15 *Kayhan* (Tehran), Feb. 23, 2010.

16 *Tehran-e Emrooz* (Tehran), Oct. 24, 2010.

speech accused the humanities of laying the intellectual foundations for the post-election crisis in Iran and demanded a purge of Western literature.¹⁷ There is a long history of enmity between Khamene'i and Mashaei. Upon his contested reelection in 2009, Ahmadinejad appointed his old comrade Mashaei, who is also his daughter-in-law's father, first vice president.¹⁸ Due to Mashaei's history of making controversial statements, such as "the era of sovereignty of religion is over,"¹⁹ and "the people of Israel are our friends,"²⁰ Khamene'i wrote a handwritten note to Ahmadinejad demanding Mashaei's dismissal.²¹ The president ignored Khamene'i's order for an entire week and, in the end, appointed Mashaei his chief of staff.²² It is against this background that Mashaei's recent statements must be seen.

Ahmadinejad's attacks against Khamene'i's ideological agenda continued on the fifth day of the Qom visit. Addressing the "soft warfare" seminar at Tehran University, the president spoke of "Iranian Islam,"²³ an issue that had previously been addressed by Mashaei.²⁴ In the

Khamene'i's excessive reliance on the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps in shoring up the regime has allowed former and current commanders to become power brokers in their own right and to consider themselves no longer subservient to the country's supreme leader.

Iranian political context, Ahmadinejad and Mashaei's discourse is a nationalist rhetoric that challenges the internationalist aspirations of the Islamic Republic, which call for mobilization and unification of the entire *umma* (worldwide Islamic community) without regard to modern, political borders.

The struggle for power and prestige between Khamene'i and Ahmadinejad illustrates how dangerous it is for the supreme leader to rely solely on one elite group while alienating the reformist camp, which might have maintained the balance among Iran's ruling elites.

KHAMENE'I SEEKS EQUILIBRIUM

Khamene'i is aware of the problems he faces, and most of his moves betray his anxiety to restore the balance within the regime. While remaining silent himself, Khamene'i has systematically supported the parliament and the judiciary—headed by brothers Ali and Sadeh Larijani—in their attacks against the

17 "Didar-e Jam-i Az Asatid Va Aza-ye Heyat-e Elmi, Nokhbegan Va Rouasa-ye Daneshgah-ha Va Marakez-e Tahghighati," Paygah-e Ettelae-resani-ye Daftar-e Magham-e Rahbari website (Tehran), Aug. 30, 2009.

18 Mehr News Agency, July 18, 2009.

19 Alef News Agency (Tehran), July 19, 2008.

20 Ibid.

21 "Nameh-ye Rahbar-e Moazam-e Enghelab Be Reis-Jomhour Dar Mored-e Agha-ye Mashaei," Daftar-e Hefz Va Nashr-e Asar-e Hazrat-e Ayatollah Al-Ozma Khamene'i website, July 18, 2009.

22 "Esfandiar Rahim-Mashaei Moshaver va Reis-Daftar-e Reis-Jomhour Shoad," Paygah-e Ettelae-e-Resani-ye Dowlat website (Tehran), July 25, 2009; see, also, Reza Molavi and K. Luisa Gandolfo, "Who Rules Iran?" *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2010, pp. 61-8.

23 Fars News Agency (Tehran), Oct. 25, 2010.

24 Aftab News Agency (Tehran), Aug. 4, 2010.



Should the Revolutionary Guards, the engine of Iran's nuclear and missile program, begin to feel the full weight of the sanctions with the government unable to compensate it with its long-held financial and economic privileges, Ahmadinejad may end up being universally seen as the culprit of Iran's defiant policies.

Ahmadinejad government. Parliamentary resistance to Ahmadinejad's economic reform scheme—manifested in a prolonged approval process for the national budget—as well as criticism by parliament of the Ahmadinejad government's haphazard law enforcement, notably its refusal to allow judicial investigation into alleged governmental mismanagement, led to the establishment of a working group for conflict resolution between the parliament and the government. However, expectations for the group's ultimate success remain modest. In the words of Abbas-Ali Kadkhodayi, a Guardian Council member, "We must only pray for the enactment of the law. We can't do anything else, because we have no other legal obligations."²⁵

Khamene'i's actions against Ahmadinejad, however, include more than prayers. The Office of the Supreme Leader has also mobilized

Friday prayer leaders to slander the president on a wide range of issues, including Ahmadinejad's call for relaxation of the Islamic *hijab* (headscarf) requirements for women,²⁶ his failure to enact the laws passed by parliament,²⁷ and his interviews during his last trip to attend the United Nations General Assembly.²⁸ Most importantly, Khamene'i himself has recently broken his silence by criticizing the Ahmadinejad government's poor performance in securing social justice and in establishing parallel policy-making institutions.²⁹

In another attack against Ahmadinejad, the November 1, 2010 issue of *Payam-e Enghelab*,³⁰ a monthly IRGC publication issued by the Office of the Representative of the Supreme Leader to the Revolutionary Guards, criticized Ahmadinejad's month-old statements about the executive branch being superior to the legislative power, backed up the parliament's complains about the cabinet not enacting laws passed by the parliament, and slammed Ahmadinejad's use of "Persianism" rather than "Islamism" as the ideological discourse of the government.

Khamene'i's balancing act, however, seems somewhat halfhearted. One example is Khamene'i's

²⁵ *Hamshahri* (Tehran), Aug. 28, 2010.

²⁶ Tabnak News Agency (Tehran), June 19, 2010.

²⁷ *Khabar Online* (Tehran), Aug. 14, 2010.

²⁸ *Alborz News* (Tehran), Aug. 14, 2010.

²⁹ "Didar-e Reis-Jomhour Va Heiat-e Dowlat Ba Rahbar-e Moazam-e Enghelab-e Eslami," *Daftar-e Hefz Va Nashr-e Asar-e Hazrat-e Ayatollah Al-Ozma Khamene'i* website, Aug. 30, 2010.

³⁰ *BBC Persian*, Nov. 1, 2010.

The Office of the Supreme Leader has mobilized Friday prayer leaders to slander the president on a range of issues.

IMPACT OF SANCTIONS

position in the struggle between the government and former president Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani for control of Azad University, Iran's largest institution of higher learning. During the presidential elections, Rafsanjani used the university to provide funding for Ahmadinejad's presidential rivals Mir-Hossein Mousavi, Mehdi Karrubi, and Mohsen Rezai with local branches of the university used as de facto election headquarters for anti-Ahmadinejad candidates.³¹ From a purely opportunistic point of view, Khamene'i should have taken the side of Rafsanjani, whose power and prestige had been in free fall for some time; yet he chose to support Ahmadinejad's attempt to nationalize Azad University.³² Khamene'i's vindictiveness toward Rafsanjani prevented him from making the rational, pragmatic move to counterbalance Ahmadinejad.

On the whole, Khamene'i's balancing act does not seem to work as Ahmadinejad's civilian critics are disunited and weak, and the Revolutionary Guards, which are handsomely rewarded for their support of the regime in general and Ahmadinejad in particular, have little incentive to oppose the president.³³

It is too early to assess the impact of the international sanctions regime on Iran, but inter-factional disputes among different elite groups keep growing as the sanctions bite deeper into the Iranian economy. While Ahmadinejad, his cabinet ministers, and the government's allies stubbornly insist that Iran's economy has not been affected by the sanctions, Khamene'i is increasingly talking about the necessity to prepare for the sanctions' adverse effects on Iranian society and economy.³⁴

Although Ahmadinejad's hard stance on the nuclear issue may reflect the pressure exerted on him by the Revolutionary Guards, the engine of Iran's nuclear program, and possibly by Khamene'i, he may well end up being universally seen as the culprit of Iran's unwise policies, the attendant sanctions, and diplomatic isolation. This scenario is especially likely when the IRGC begins to feel the full weight of the sanctions with the government unable to compensate it with its long-held financial and economic privileges. Khamene'i could have avoided this looming crisis had he not disturbed the delicate balance between the country's elite groups by predicating his power base on the IRGC, the Basij, and former IRGC commanders such as Ahmadinejad. Alas, political foresight is a quality that all too often eludes supreme leaders.

31 Al-Arabya News Channel (Dubai), Oct. 17, 2010.

32 Fars News Agency, Oct. 11, 2010.

33 Ali Alfoneh, "The Revolutionary Guards' Looting of Iran's Economy," *Middle East Outlook*, June 2010.

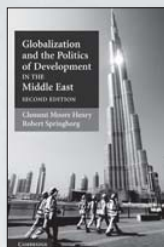
34 "Bayanat dar Ejtema-e Bozorg-e Mardom Qom."

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The United States Department of State in a 2010 report singled out Kuwait, along with 12 other countries, for failing to do enough to prevent human trafficking. The report noted that migrants enter Kuwait voluntarily but "upon arrival some are subjected to conditions of forced labor by their sponsors and labor agents, including through such practices as nonpayment of wages, threats, physical or sexual abuse, and restrictions on movement, such as the withholding of passports."

The New York Times, Aug. 1, 2010

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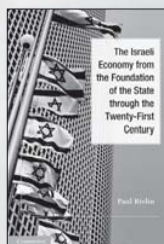
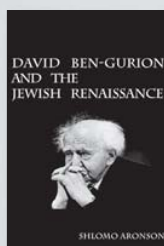
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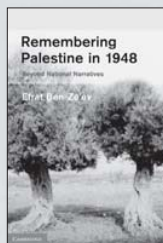
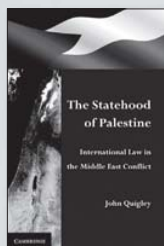
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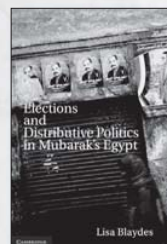
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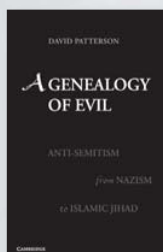
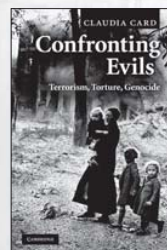
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Morocco's Berbers and Israel

by Bruce Maddy-Weitzman

In recent years, small groups of Moroccan Berber activists, particularly younger people, have challenged the enforced silence regarding Israel, expressing an interest in both the state of Israel and Jewish history, including the Holocaust. They even linked this interest to the alleged historic connections between Jews and Berbers in ancient times, including the initial resistance to Arab conquerors by the Kahina, a supposedly Jewish-Berber queen, and the multilayered, more recent relations existing until the mass departure of Jews for Israel in the 1950s and 1960s from Berber villages and towns.

How has this extraordinary phenomenon come to pass, and what are its possible consequences? In the past, Berber activists maintained a strict separation between their struggle for political and social rights and the Arab-Israeli conflict even if there were those who quietly admired Israel's achievements. By contrast, some members of the present generation of activists and intellectuals view Israel as a partner in adversity—a vibrant, anti-pan-Arab force mirroring their own opposition to Arab-Islamic hegemony and the subjugation of the Berber language and culture—which could help, however tacitly, in their struggle for official recognition and against Morocco's burgeoning Islamist movement.

ISLAMIST CURRENTS AND PUBLIC OPINION

Notwithstanding Morocco's benign and positive image in the West, polling data in re-

cent years shows considerable support for Islamist and anti-Western positions. While only a small percentage of Moroccans expressed support for al-Qaeda's attacks on U.S. civilians, and 64 percent held a favorable view of the American people, most Moroccans believed that the United States was seeking to weaken Islam and spread Christianity in the region, with 72 percent supporting al-Qaeda's goal to force U.S. withdrawal from Muslim countries. Almost the same number of people believed that the United States or Israel, rather than al-Qaeda, was responsible for the 9/11 attacks, and large majorities approved of attacks on U.S. troops in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Persian Gulf.

Bruce Maddy-Weitzman is the Marcia Israel Senior Research Fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University. His book *The Berber Identity Movement and the Challenge to North African States* will be published by the University of Texas Press in 2011.



The Berber flag represents the pre-Islamic indigenous peoples of North Africa west of the Nile Valley. In pre-Islamic times, there were Christian, Jewish, and polytheist Berbers. Most present-day Berbers are Muslims.

In addition, 76 percent of Moroccans favored the imposition of strict Shari'a or Islamic law; 64 percent supported keeping Western values out of Islamic countries; and 61 percent stated that being Muslim was their most important identity as opposed to only 25 percent who declared their Moroccan identity most important. Eight-five percent of people stated that their primary reaction when watching a movie about the Holocaust was resentment over the sympathy that it generated for Israel and Jews at the expense of Palestinians and Arabs; over 50 percent believed that Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons would be a positive development for the region while only a small percentage thought that the outcome would be negative.¹

This Islamist current, embodied by both the Justice and Development Party (PJD), which accepts the supremacy of the Moroccan monarchy as enshrined in the country's constitution and holds 14 percent of the seats

in parliament, as well as the officially banned but grudgingly tolerated Justice and Charity movement, seeks the Islamization of society and, ultimately, of the state.

THE BERBER MOVEMENT AND THE JEWS

The other side of the ideological divide is comprised of a variety of political parties and civic groups, some with explicitly Western-liberal orientations, others less so. One of them is the Amazigh (literally "free men") or Berber culture movement, which advocates the recognition of the Berber underpinnings of Moroccan culture and calls for remedial steps, including constitutional change, particularly with regard to recognizing their language, Tamazight, as an official state language. An estimated 40-45 percent of Morocco's 32 million-strong population speak one of the three main Berber dialects; in Algeria, the estimated numbers are 20-25 percent; in Libya, 8-9 percent; in Tunisia, 1-5 percent.

The Berber component of Moroccan identity has already been given official recognition by the state as it seeks to address at least some of the movement's symbolic and material grievances in order to maintain a balance of forces within the Moroccan political fabric. Islamists and pan-Arabists have repeatedly clashed with Berber activists in recent months, mainly through polemical exchanges in a variety of media outlets. The specifics have varied, but they have had a common theme: Jews and Israel.

From the Islamist and pan-Arab perspective, this should come as no surprise. Hostility to Zionism, which all too often has morphed into anti-Semitism and Holocaust belittlement and even denial, has long been instrumental for many opposition groups and Arab regimes seeking to mobilize public opinion.

The Berber engagement in the debate, by contrast, is far less self-evident given their past evasion of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Initial indications of these changing attitudes were af-

¹ "Muslims Believe US Seeks to Undermine Islam," WorldPublicOpinion.org, Apr. 24, 2007. Data drawn from a 2007 survey published by worldpublicopinion.org and the University of Maryland/Zogby International 2010 Arab public opinion poll.

forded by the 2007 announcements of plans to create two complementary Berber-Jewish friendship associations in the Souss region of southwestern Morocco, the region where, according to tradition, Jews first settled after the destruction of the First Temple in 586 BCE. Their purpose, said one of the founders, was to promote the various aspects of Morocco's cultural heritage—Berber, Jewish, African, and Arab; disseminate the culture of coexistence and respect of the “other” while rejecting violence and intolerance toward others; give real standing to the Berber and Hebrew languages inside Morocco, in order to make it a homeland for all, and to build bridges with Moroccan Jews, both inside the country (approximately 3,000) and overseas, particularly “Amazigh Jews in various countries.”²

Although support for contacts with Israel was not explicitly expressed, the announcements immediately provoked sharp reactions from a number of Moroccan associations supporting the Palestinian cause and opposing U.S. actions in Iraq. They also prompted a heated debate on Iran's Arabic-language al-Alam television channel between the veteran militant Berber activist Ahmed Adghirni and an Algerian writer hostile to both Israel and North African Jews, whom he claimed were utterly foreign to the region and eager collaborators with French colonialism.³

One year later, another Berber-Jewish friendship association, “Memoire Collective,” was founded, this time in Morocco's northern coastal city of al-Hoceima. Led by Muhammad Moha, the association's declared focus was

Photo will not display.

The younger generation of activists has increasingly linked the struggle against the subjugation of Berber culture and language with a wider effort to promote the various aspects of Morocco's cultural heritage—Berber, Jewish, African, and Arab.

the need to struggle against anti-Semitism in Morocco as part of the larger need to promote individual rights, tolerance, and democracy. Moha was prompted to create the association in response to attacks by leftist, pan-Arab, and Islamist groups when his daughter and another Moroccan teenager participated in an international youth seminar at Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Museum. The association's creation drew further harsh responses, including the intimidation of the family of the other teenager who had joined Moha's daughter in Jerusalem. Moha was demonstratively expelled from the leftist group to which he had belonged, al-Nahj al-Dimuqrati (Democratic Path), for “crossing all of the party's red lines in contributing to the normalization [of relations] with Israel” while *al-Tajdid*, the newspaper of the Islamist PJD, even accused Moha of receiving €300,000 from Israel in order to set up the organization and called for acts of violence against him.⁴

² *Magharebia.com*, Sept. 14, 2007.

³ Al-Alam TV (Tehran), July 21, 2007, trans. Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), Washington, D.C.

⁴ *TelQuel*, Mar. 3, 2008; “The Past Two Months Were Hell,” *Jungle Word*, Apr. 3, 2008.



Boubker Outaadit, a Berber activist for more than fifteen years, who has been involved in the formation of one of the Berber-Jewish friendship associations, was interviewed by a Moroccan weekly news magazine against the backdrop of the Israeli, Moroccan, and Amazigh flags.

BERBERIST VIEWS ON ISRAEL

Israel's military operation against Hamas forces in Gaza in the winter of 2008-09 sparked another round of polemics and mutual invective between Morocco's Islamists and Berber movement figures. A commentator in *al-Tajdid* castigated Amazigh associations for not joining in the series of demonstrations held in solidarity with the Palestinians, wondering what was behind their failure to condemn Israel. One of the Berber movement's leading intellectuals, Ahmed Asid, replied caustically that no one had the right to question their identification and solidarity with the Palestinians, yet with the Islamist and pan-Arab currents in Morocco having a complete monopoly on orga-

nizing the demonstrations, the Berbers had no choice but to avoid them, not least since the protests had contained both anti-Jewish as well as ethnic Arab themes, which the Berber movement completely rejected.⁵

In November 2009, Yad Vashem became a more explicit site for Berber activism against the prevailing pan-Arab and Islamist currents in their own society and in the region when an 18-member delegation of the movement's educators and advocates participated in a week-long educational seminar there. One of their declared purposes was to begin incorporating the study of the Holocaust and its lessons into the Moroccan school curriculum, a subject that has been almost entirely neglected.⁶ Beyond that, though, it was clear that the visit was designed to openly challenge the conventional taboos regarding contact with Israel.

The matter quickly became public knowledge and provoked a number of articles in the Moroccan press, many of them negative. But space was also given to delegation members to defend themselves, an indication of Morocco's increasingly pluralist and competitive press. One of them, Boubker Outaadit, a Berber activist for more than fifteen years, who had been involved in the formation of one of the Berber-Jewish friendship associations, was interviewed by a Moroccan weekly news magazine against the backdrop of the Israeli, Moroccan, and Amazigh flags, a picture that was worth a thousand words. Defending the educational and humanitarian value of the seminar, he declared the participants' readiness to answer those critics who "traded in foreign problems ... such as the Palestinian issue," which could not be classified as a Moroccan national problem. The Arab-Israeli conflict, he declared,

5 Hassan Bouikhf, in *al-Tajdid* (Rabat), Jan. 15, 2009; Ahmed Asid, in *Bayan al-Yawm* (Casablanca), Jan. 23, 2009, quoted in "Berbers, Where Do You Stand on Palestine," MEMRI, Special Dispatch no. 2262, Feb. 26, 2009.

6 Arièle Nahmias, "Moroccan Educators at Yad Vashem," International School for Holocaust Studies, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, Jan. 2010.

A Berber delegation to Yad Vashem was designed to challenge the taboos regarding contact with Israel.

could have been settled sixty years earlier had the Arab side not rejected the right of the Jewish people to return to their land and defend it.⁷ Another, Abdellah Benhssi, justified the delegation's visit in terms of furthering the promotion of tolerance and universal brotherhood and the rejection of fanaticism and racism, universal values which, he said, both the Amazigh and Israeli cultural systems shared.⁸ In a lengthy and trenchant analysis, the Moroccan scholar Muhammad Elmedlaoui, who actually deplored what he viewed as the Yad Vashem visit's use of the Holocaust for political purposes, nonetheless characterized the anti-Amazigh diatribes emanating from certain Moroccan urban nationalist circles as constituting an updated version of the older, unfair branding of Berbers as collaborators with French colonialism. These attacks, he said, were essentially an alibi being used to promote a certain cultural vision for the country.⁹

ANTI-SEMITISM REARS ITS UGLY HEAD

Recent months have been marked by a number of incidents that further sharpened the contours of the debate. On March 17-20, a high-profile conference designed to promote the memory and heritage of Moroccan Jewry as part of the larger Moroccan fabric was held in the southern coastal town of Essaouira. One participant was Andrei Azoulay, one of Moroccan Jewry's most prominent figures, an Essaouiran native son and long-time financial adviser to both the late King Hassan and his son, King Muhammad VI. Currently the president of the Anna Lindh Foundation, Azoulay,

a self-defined "Arab Jew," has been active for decades in promoting Palestinian rights within the context of overall

Arab-Israeli peace.¹⁰ Ten days later, members of the local branch of the Moroccan Association for the Defense of Human Rights (AMDH) organized anti-Israel demonstrations that included a brazen, verbal attack on Azoulay, chanting "*Hada Ar, Hada Ar, Khwi l'Blad Ya Mustashar*" (Shame, shame. Leave the country, counselor). This was not the first time that the king's adviser had been charged with disloyalty to Morocco: Some months earlier, during the visit of former Israeli foreign minister Tzipi Livni to the Tangier MedDays 2009 conference, Khalid Soufyani, a lawyer and self-promoting president of the National Association for the Resistance in Iraq and Palestine, had declared that Azoulay had to choose between being Moroccan and being "Zionist."

Similar slogans were voiced against a local Israeli-Moroccan businessman, Noam Nir, who responded with a letter of complaint to AMDH, which was ignored.¹¹ Following an additional confrontation in late July, Nir filed a defamation suit against three AMDH officials, accusing the organization of anti-Semitism, particularly in light of the attacks against Azoulay. Further demonstrations were held outside of Nir's restaurant, in which he was accused of espionage and personally threatened, and another round of press attacks on him ensued. AMDH vigorously denied the anti-Semitism charge. However, as is often the case, anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism are easily conflated in the Moroccan discourse, a fact that an AMDH official himself acknowledged to an American journalist. For example, Soufyani has led a number of anti-Israeli protests in which demonstrators chanted

7 *Maghrib al-Yawm* (Casablanca), Nov. 27, 2009.

8 *Al-Watan al-An* (Casablanca), Oct. 25, 2010.

9 Muhammad Elmedlaoui, "Al-Karru Ba'da al-Farru Fi al-Masalat ath-Thaqafa al-Amazighiyya fi al-Maghrib," *Ahewar.com*, Oct. 27, 2010.

10 See interview with Azoulay, *al-Mushahid al-Maghribi* (Casablanca), Nov. 12-25, 2010.

11 AHN Global News Agency (Washington, D.C.), Aug. 26, 2010.

Israel, Zionism, and the status of Moroccan Jewry are useful as mobilizing tools for the Islamists.

“Khaybar Khaybar Ya Yahud, Jaysh Muhammad Sa-ya’ud’ (Khaybar, Khaybar, O Jews, Muhammad’s army will return), referring to the

Qur’an’s account of Muhammad’s destruction of the Jewish community of Khaybar. And in late May 2010, Soufyani headed up a new organization in Morocco, made up of a cross-section of Islamists and pan-Arabists, which rejected all forms of normalization with Israel and reportedly circulated a black list of some twenty-five Moroccans who supported normalization.

The authorities and the Moroccan Jewish leadership adopted a low profile regarding the affair. But Berber activists in the area, some of whom had participated in the visit to Yad Vashem, came to Nir’s defense, organizing a small solidarity demonstration in Essaouira and publishing articles in support of his actions and in condemnation of AMDH and its parent political party, the left-of-center Socialist Union of Popular Forces. The Simon Wiesenthal Center also voiced its concern, calling on the governor of Essaouira not to respond to AMDH’s calls to halt the judicial proceedings.¹²

THE FIGHT FOR BERBER RIGHTS

The coda to this account of the ongoing contestation between Berber activists and their opponents was actually triggered by the author of these lines. In August 2010, the Portuguese Institute of International Relations published an analysis of mine on the prospects and limitations of Israel’s relations with the Maghreb states.¹³ It included a brief mention of the Berber factor in Morocco and the Maghreb in general,

including the affinity among some members of the movement toward Jews and even Israel. It also referred to its primary

opponents, the Islamist and pan-Arab currents, for whom rejection of any semblance of normalization with Israel is a sacred principle.

This academic analysis was picked up in a wildly distorted form by the pan-Arab and Moroccan media, from al-Jazeera television to *al-Quds al-Arabi*, and the Istiqlal Party’s *al-Alam*, which announced the existence of an Israeli “plan,” drawn up by the Moshe Dayan Center (this author’s home institute at Tel Aviv University) to promote Israel’s “penetration” of the Maghreb through the manipulation of the Berber movement.¹⁴ The reports touched off yet another round of heated exchanges in the Moroccan press and various Internet talk forums. To its credit, one liberal French-language Moroccan weekly, *Actuel*, sought me out for a response and printed the full text of my answers to their questions.¹⁵ A special section of the monthly *Le Monde Amazigh* included the interview, translated into Arabic, along with a number of articles rebuffing the accusation that the Berbers were a tool of the Zionist movement. The real purpose behind the campaign, said Berber activists, was to divert attention from a concurrent damning report by the U.N.’s Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Issued on August 25, the committee took the Moroccan state to task for its failure to recognize the Berber language as an official language and called on it to ensure that the Berbers would not be subject to discrimination, particularly in the areas of employment and health services. It also recommended that the state give special attention to the development of Berber-inhabited regions and ensure that Moroccan Berbers have the choice to give Berber names to their children, a long-running issue for the Amazigh movement.

12 “Wiesenthal Center Urges Moroccan Authorities to Act against Antisemitic Insults, Threats, and Intimidation,” Simon Wiesenthal Center, Los Angeles, Aug. 19, 2010.

13 Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, “The Limits and Potential of Israel-Maghreb Relations,” *IPRIS Maghreb Review*, July 2010, pp. 15-8.

14 Sept. 5, 7, 8, 2010.

15 “Israel ne soutient pas les Amazighs,” *Actuel*, Sept. 18-24, 2010, pp. 47-8.

However amorphous, the Berber movement's core demand in both Morocco and Algeria is clear-cut: state recognition of the Berber demographic, historical, and cultural underpinnings of North Africa; constitutional recognition of Tamazight as an official language of the state; and remedial economic, social, cultural, and educational measures to begin redressing decades of neglect and injustice.

In both countries, the authorities have made some gestures toward the movement with the Moroccan monarchy, in particular, legitimizing Berber culture as an integral part of the Moroccan patrimony even as it tries to contain it within acceptable parameters. Given that the essential parameters of Moroccan political life remain circumscribed, these competing movements are engaged in a kind of para-politics, limited in their capabilities but nonetheless energetically pursuing the reshaping of Moroccan society in their preferred images. It is in this context that the debates regarding Israel, Zionism, and the status of Moroccan Jewry, both past and present, are taking place. However secondary to the main issues facing Morocco, they are clearly hot button subjects for political activ-

Photo will not display.

Berber men participate in a festival celebrating their indigenous culture. The Berber movement advocates the recognition of the Berber underpinnings of Moroccan culture and calls for the recognition of their language, Tamazight, as an official state language. An estimated 40-45 percent of Morocco's 32 million-strong population speak one of the three main Berber dialects.

ists, being useful as a mobilizing tool, especially for the Islamists while Berber militancy has now reached the point where activists are willing and able to verbally give as good as they get. With Morocco's evolution toward greater political openness moving forward, however unevenly, this public dynamic of contention will bear watching.



Saudi Expert: Girls at 11 Ripe for Marriage

Ghazi Al-Shimari: "Allah be praised, they raised us according to the Koran and Sunna. The problem does not lie in [girls] being 12 or 13 years old. ... It depends on their upbringing. If she is 11, 12, or 13 years old, yet she is ripe and sensible, and capable of bearing the responsibility ..."

Interviewer: "So if a girl is well developed and tall, and is 11 or 12 years old, she can marry?"

Ghazi Al-Shimari: "Why not? At the age of 13 ... Yes, she's ready for marriage. ... I deliver lectures at many schools, and I can tell you that girls in junior high know things that even adults don't know."

Interviewer: "You give lectures at schools for women?"

Ghazi Al-Shimari: "But only through a one-way screen."

Iqraa TV, May 20, 2010, trans. MEMRI

Do American Muslims Support Terrorism?

by Daveed Gartenstein-Ross

Anti-Terror Lessons of Muslim-Americans. By David Schanzer, Charles Kurzman, and Ebrahim Moosa. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 2010. 61 pp. Free download.

Schanzer and Moosa of Duke University and Kurzman of the University of North Carolina have garnered a fair amount of media attention for their study despite its complete methodological failure. *Anti-Terror Lessons* asks some good questions in assessing the level of radicalization among American Muslims and identifying mechanisms to counter radical ideology. But the authors' approach to answering these questions evinces a lack of rigor that renders the report's conclusions untrustworthy.

The problems begin with a failure to define terms. A report about radicalization (a word that appears ninety-nine times in its pages) obviously must define that term; what constitutes radicalism is by no means self-evident. The authors' reliance on two contradictory datasets makes this problem even more acute.

One set consists of more than 120 interviews conducted in Buffalo, Houston, Seattle, and Raleigh-Durham to gather information on American Muslims' attitudes toward terrorism and their anti-radicalization efforts. The authors conclude from these interviews that "Muslim-Americans do not support terrorism directed at the United States or innocent civilians." They

concede that "some of our interviewees were less quick to condemn other acts of violence outside the United States," but because the project was intended to focus on domestic terrorism, they "did not attempt to gauge the extent of this support or probe interviewees on these issues."

The other set includes data on American Muslims who since 9/11 have either perpetrated a terrorist act or have been sought, arrested, or convicted of a terrorism-related offense involving violence. However, the study's appendix of "Muslim-American Terrorism Offenders" includes the names of perpetrators whose acts related solely to violence outside the United States, such as the Lackawanna Six and twenty individuals involved in Somalia's Al-Shabaab recruiting network. The failure to probe interviewees on attitudes directly related to the data set on terrorist offenses amounts to sheer incoherence.

At times *Anti-Terror Lessons* reads more like an advocacy brief than academic research, drawing sweeping conclusions from insufficient evidence. The report's discussion of "public and private denunciations of violence" argues that there has been "active denunciation of terrorist violence" by "senior Islamic scholars in the United States and the Middle East." Some denunciations of violence are indeed quoted but without providing a complete picture that might call into doubt either the sincerity or scope of these statements. For example, the very first *fatwa* cited in the report's section on denunciations of violence—a document that condemns the 9/11 attacks and affirms the need to "apprehend the true perpetrators" in order to try them "in an

Daveed Gartenstein-Ross directs the Center for the Study of Terrorist Radicalization at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and is a Ph.D. candidate in world politics at the Catholic University of America.

impartial court of law”—boasts Yusuf al-Qaradawi as its lead author. *Anti-Terror Lessons* does not mention that Qaradawi has also proclaimed that Muslims “killed in a military operation aimed at expelling American occupation forces from the Gulf” are martyrs and sanctioned suicide bombings against Israelis.¹ *Anti-Terror Lessons* favorably cites the Muslim American Society’s (MAS) denunciation of the 7/7 transit attacks in London but fails to mention either MAS’s curriculum (which includes the works of such Islamist ideologues who have advocated violence against the West as Sayyid Qutb, Sayyid Abul ala Mawdudi, and Hassan al-Banna) or its publication of *The American Muslim*, which has published a *fatwa* declaring that suicide bombings directed at Israelis are “not suicide and should not be deemed as unjustifiable means of endangering one’s life.”² Likewise, the authors uncritically quote a condemnation of terrorism issued by the Council on American-Islamic Relations without noting the group’s many ties to terrorism and extremism more broadly.³

The authors’ predilection simply to ignore evidence that might contradict the rosy picture they want to paint is also evidenced in their praise

Five Muslim Americans from the Washington, D.C. area were sentenced to ten years in prison in Pakistan on June 24, 2010. They were convicted of planning to travel to Afghanistan to attack U.S. troops. Despite finding that American Muslims do not support terrorism within the United States, the authors of the study conceded that some interviewees were “less quick to condemn ... acts of violence outside the United States.”

for the Muslim Alliance in North America’s (MANA) prisoner outreach program as an important counter-radicalization effort. Less than three months before *Anti-Terror Lessons* was released, one of MANA’s leaders, Luqman Abdullah, was killed in a firefight with federal authorities while resisting arrest for illegal possession and sale of firearms. The criminal complaint subsequently filed against his coconspirators (some of whom, it notes, “converted to Islam while they were serving sentences in various prisons across the United States”) accused Abdullah of “call[ing] his followers to an offensive jihad” and telling them that “they need to be with the Taliban, Hizballah, and with Sheikh bin Laden.”⁴ Abdullah’s teachings may or may not be typical of MANA’s prisoner outreach efforts, but they are one of the few inside glimpses that have been afforded. The

1 Yusuf al-Qaradawi, “Those Who Die Fighting U.S. Occupation Forces Are Martyrs,” *Islam for Today*, accessed Aug. 2, 2010; Haim Malka, “Must Innocents Die? The Islamic Debate over Suicide Attacks,” *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2003, pp. 19-28.

2 Faysal Mawlawi, “*Fatawa* [Scholarly Opinions]: Questions about Palestine,” *The American Muslim*, Mar. 2002.

3 Daniel Pipes and Sharon Chadha, “CAIR: Islamists Fooling the Establishment,” *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2006, pp. 3-20.

4 *United States of America v. Luqman Ameen Abdullah*, criminal complaint, no. 2:09-MJ-30436 Eastern District of Michigan, Oct. 27, 2009.

report's decision to ignore them underscores its selective reading of Islam in America.

To laud the various American Muslim organizations cited above as bulwarks against extremism, *Anti-Terror Lessons* clearly needed to deal with the controversies that have surrounded them along with the evidence that suggests their stances on terrorism and extremism may be more problematic than their published denunciations suggest. The report's failure to do so is particularly damning because *Anti-Terror Lessons* professes to analyze not only public messaging but what occurs in private, so as to refute those observers who "fear that these denunciations are intended solely for public consumption by non-Muslims." *Anti-Terror Lessons* assures the reader that this is not the case since the researchers conducted numerous interviews and "cross-checked information with additional respondents and with digital searches of local newspapers." After undertaking this research, "[n]o significant discrepancies were discovered." The evidence about those groups that *Anti-Terror Lessons* claims do not deviate in private from their public denunciations of violence is easily accessible; thus, one has either to question the rigor with which they cross-checked their information or else doubt the authors' honesty.

This same propensity to draw sweepingly positive conclusions without considering evidence that would disturb their thesis leads the authors to laud Salafism, stating that "the self-described Salafis that our project interviewed were among the most hostile to radical Islamic

movements." Salafism, they explain, is misunderstood by the American media as "the term is more commonly used to refer to an intense form of personal religiosity, with no political implications." This discussion ignores the high percentage of "homegrown" Muslim terrorists who have embraced Salafism as their brand of Islam. Moreover, the report fails even to mention the most well-funded strain of Salafism within the United States, that fostered by Saudi Arabia. Even a casual reading of the Saudi-funded translation of the Qur'an leaves no doubt that this branch of Salafism is anything but apolitical.⁵

So what should the reader make of the ultimate conclusion in *Anti-Terror Lessons* that although "some observers are concerned" about increased religiosity among American Muslims, "our research suggests otherwise"? Quite simply, the authors have not done sufficient research to validate that finding, other than locating a few disparate data points and ignoring contradictory information. It seems the authors of this report are neither interested in providing a comprehensive picture nor in genuine academic inquiry. This review by no means covers all of the methodological and outright factual errors contained in this report, which will do far more to confuse than to illuminate future discussions of Islam in America.



5 Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan trans., *Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an in the English Language*, 15th ed. (Riyadh: Darussalam Publishers and Distributors, 1996).

Iranian Influence Spreading Like a Disease

Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak compared Iran's growing influence in the Middle East to a "cancer," according to a cable released by the anti-secrecy website WikiLeaks.

"President Mubarak has made it clear that he sees Iran as Egypt's—and the region's—primary strategic threat," says the secret cable, sent April 28, 2009, from the U.S. Embassy in Cairo. "His already dangerous neighborhood ... has only become more so since the fall of Saddam, who, as nasty as he was, nevertheless stood as a wall against Iran, according to Mubarak. He now sees Tehran's hand moving with ease throughout the region, 'from the Gulf to Morocco.'"

The Washington Times, Dec. 15, 2010

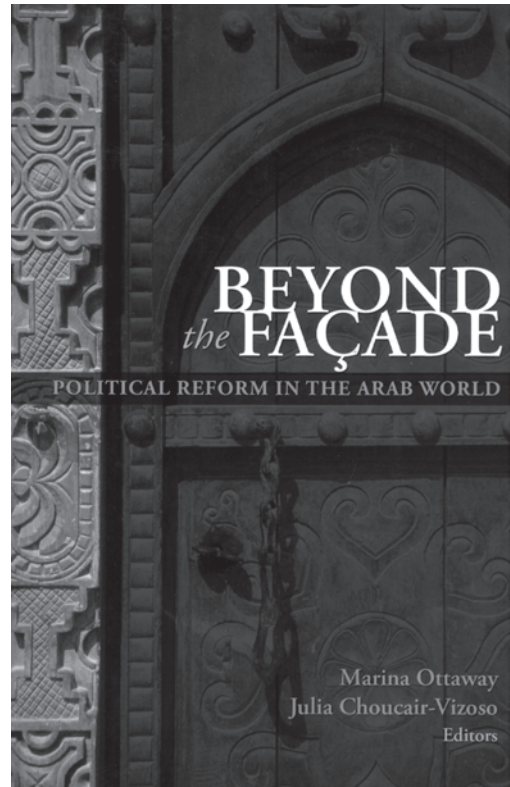
Brief Reviews

Beyond the Façade: Political Reform in the Arab World. Edited by Marina Ottaway and Julia Choucair-Vizoso. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2008. 295 pp. \$22.95, paper.

What is political reform in Arabic-speaking countries and what is its future? *Beyond the Façade* provides well-balanced answers that challenge facile assumptions and break down the façade covering such reform in ten case studies on Egypt, Jordan, Syria, the Palestinian territories, Lebanon, Algeria, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Yemen. The main goal, as stated by Ottaway, director of the Carnegie's Middle East program, is "to distinguish partial steps that start altering the distribution of power and the character of the political system from those that are only window dressing."

The Moroccan and Kuwaiti governments are creating the most encouraging models of reform. Yemen is termed not resistant to change; Egypt presents "a stark reminder of the reversibility and uncertainties of reform processes," and Saudi Arabia's system is not completely stagnant but undergoing many small changes. The Jordanians and Syrians are "drifting politically" because of both domestic and regional factors. Algeria continues to witness political ferment due to "the struggle between military and civilian elites," a struggle that has not resulted in more political participation. The Lebanese are caught between political reform and confessional politics while reform is failing in the Palestinian territories.

Ottaway, in her introduction, goes to great lengths to explain that, beyond reform, what is needed is political transformation or a paradigm shift whereby those in or out of power abandon their old assumptions about "the fundamental organization of the polity, the relation between the government and the citizens, and thus the source, distribution, and



exercise of political power."

Finally, in arguing for the need to engage Islamists, as Nathan J. Brown and Julia Choucair-Vizoso do in separate, excellent chapters, it is important to recognize that in order for democracy to succeed, all major factions, including opposition groups, have to agree to play by the same rules and uphold the same law. This means that all parties must commit not only to participating in, but also maintaining, the democratic structures and processes of the state. This expectation has neither been appreciated nor fulfilled in Arabic-speaking countries.

Saliba Sarsar
Monmouth University

The Caliphate Question: The British Government and Islamic Governance. By Sean Oliver-Dee. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2009. 216 pp. \$70.

The Caliphate Question examines the British government's actions toward the Ottoman Empire around World War I—during the dissolution of the Ottoman caliphate in 1924 and after. Oliver-Dee's purpose is to "address the strengths and weaknesses of previous approaches to questions of Islamic governance with a view to furnishing present policymakers, commentators, politicians, and advisors with an evidence-based rubric for effective engagement in this vital area."

The author, an associate research fellow at the London School of Theology, first establishes context by exploring whether the concept of the caliphate was theologically justified, concluding that "the scriptural basis for the Caliphate seems remarkably small," a fact that undoubtedly prompted Kemal Atatürk, Turkey's founder who abolished the caliphate in 1924, to declare, "Our Prophet has instructed his disciples to convert the nations of the world to Islam; he has not ordered them to provide for the government of these nations. ... The notion of a single Caliph exercising supreme religious authority over all the Muslim people is one which has come out of books, not reality."

The bulk of the book examines primary-source texts and correspondences from the British Empire's files concerning the caliphate. Although bureaucratic in nature and dry reading, these documents make Oliver-Dee's case, namely that, because the British did not understand the significance of the caliphate, "their discussion was therefore predicated on an incomplete picture, which increased the opportunity for error."

Oliver-Dee shows how Arabic words—such as *din*, which is routinely translated into English as "religion"—have misled the West, including the British Empire: Far from having any spiritual connotations, *din* means "obligation, submission, judgment." Most significant are the relevant analogies: The British made it a priority to "satisfy Muslim interests in the [Brit-

ish] Empire" by making, according to one 1917 governmental memo, "a few needed concessions" to the Islamic world—by placing "the concerns of all other religious and ethnic interests within the Empire beneath the necessity of securing Muslim loyalty," which was hardly secured.

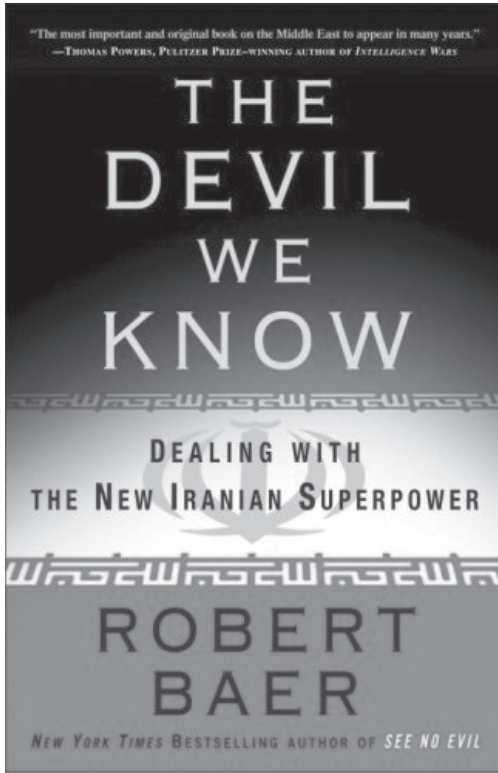
This, then, is the book's important message: An approach similar to that taken by today's Western governments toward the Muslim world—especially a failure to understand the Muslim worldview and a belief that appeasement buys loyalty—dramatically failed nearly a century ago. Worse, whereas British politicians operated in an epoch when many Muslims were, in fact, open to Westernizing and apathetic to Islam—and so can be excused for not taking the caliphate's role more seriously—there is no excuse for their modern day counterparts, who seem to take it even less seriously, even though Muslims today are constantly declaring the need to resurrect it.

Raymond Ibrahim

The Devil We Know: Dealing with the New Iranian Superpower. By Robert Baer. New York: Crown, 2008. 288 pp. \$25.95 (\$15, paper).

Part geopolitical *tour d'horizon*, part behind-the-scenes travelogue of a CIA operative-turned-author, *The Devil We Know* aspires to chronicle Iran's ascent to power. But intelligence fieldwork is one thing, strategic forecasting quite another. Baer, a former CIA case officer and a columnist on intelligence for *Time.com*, may be a savvy observer of regional trends with much experience in the Middle East, but his views are colored by interactions with questionable characters, from jet-setting businessmen to shadowy power brokers. What emerges is a less-than-faithful rendering of regional realities.

Baer argues, for example, that the Iranian regime—confident in its ability to project power asymmetrically via regional proxies—places little real value on its nuclear program. This, despite the billions of dollars Iran's leaders invested over the past quarter-century in atomic



capabilities and the prominence that nuclear status has assumed in their political lexicon and strategic planning. His analysis makes little sense.

But on his larger point, that the past decade has seen Tehran formulate a comprehensive strategy for regional hegemony, Baer is considerably more convincing. Washington, meanwhile, has no corresponding macro-plan for preventing Iran's ascendancy—or even for successfully managing it.

Baer's solution to this vexing challenge is troubling. In his words, the United States should "settle with Iran" and accept its regional will to power. "What America needs to do," he counsels, "is ask for a truce with Iran, deal with it as an equal, reach a settlement one issue at a time, and continue along the same course until Iran is ready for détente—and maybe more."

That advice has already failed. The Obama administration spent the past two years testing the proposition that the United States and the

Islamic Republic can coexist. In response, Iran's leaders have displayed little willingness to engage Washington or alter their pattern of subversion and irregular warfare. As such, *The Devil We Know* amounts to little more than an already-discredited argument that America should learn to love the Middle East's newest hegemon.

Ilan Berman
American Foreign Policy Council

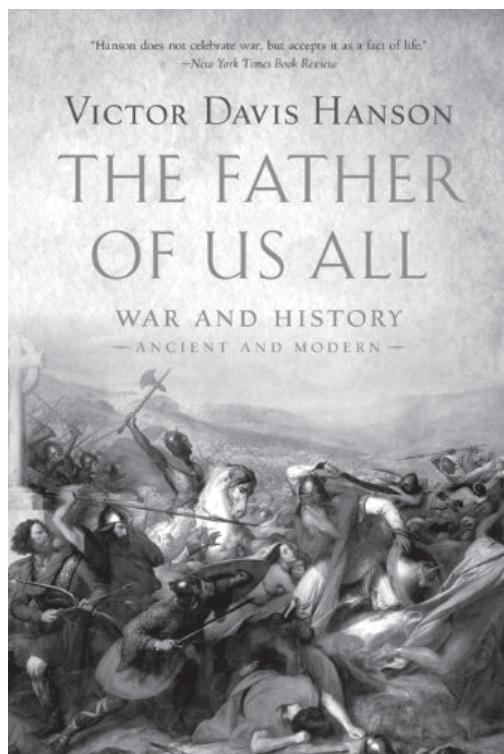
The Father of Us All: War and History, Ancient and Modern. By Victor Davis Hanson. New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2010. 260 pp. \$25.

Inspired by a quote from the ancient philosopher Heraclitus—that war is "the father, the king of us all"—Hanson's latest book offers many insights into the nature of war, especially within the context of contemporary America's outlook on armed conflict in general and vis-à-vis the Middle East and Islam in particular.

Hanson, a military historian and essayist, begins his analysis by explaining how and why military studies in American schools have all but disappeared. The situation might not be so troubling if it was not accompanied by the fact that there is virtually no study of Islamic war doctrine (codified in Shari'a or Islamic law) at the same time the United States is engaged with an enemy that draws heavily upon those very principles. As former Pentagon official William Gawthrop put it, military analysts "still do not have an in-depth understanding of the war-fighting doctrine laid down by Muhammad, how it might be applied today by an increasing number of Islamic groups, or how it might be countered."¹

Hanson contends that "the American public, not the timeless nature of war, has changed." As a result of political correctness, utopian pacifism, and unprecedented affluence, Americans have come to view war as an aberrant phenom-

1 William Gawthrop, "The Sources and Patterns of Terrorism in Islamic Law," *The Vanguard: Journal of the Military Intelligence Corps Association* 11, no. 4 (2006): 10.



enon to be avoided at any cost. The result, he argues, is “ever more contempt and audacity on al-Qaeda’s part”—which likens U.S. soldiers to “paper tigers”—and saber-rattling by Iran as it sprints unchecked toward nuclear armament.

Hanson’s historical perspective reminds us that Samuel P. Huntington’s clash of civilizations thesis has antecedents in the ancient writings of Herodotus and Thucydides (the latter used it to define war between democracy and autocracy, as two distinct forms of civilization). Paradoxes abound: While militaries are mistrusted in the West as illiberal, hierarchical, and authoritarian institutions, in the case of Turkey—the only democratic Muslim country—the military “is the one institution that is most likely to resist the insidious imposition of shari’a law.”

As for what is perceived by some as U.S. wartime mistakes—from Abu Ghraib to Guantánamo Bay—the reader is soberly reminded that “victory in every war goes to the side that commits fewer mistakes ... not to the side that makes no mistakes at all. A perfect mili-

tary in a flawless war has never existed.”

Hanson also reminds the reader that “some will always prefer war to peace; and other men and women, hopefully the more numerous and powerful who have learned from the past, will have a moral obligation to stop them.”

Raymond Ibrahim

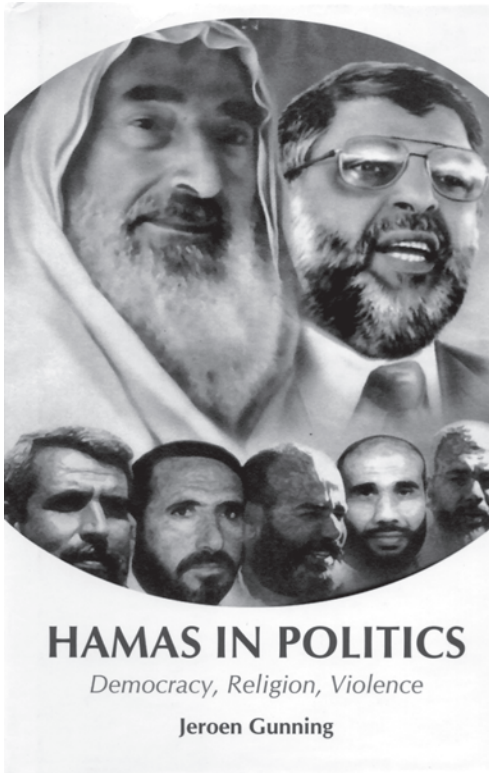
Hamas in Politics: Democracy, Religion, Violence. By Jeroen Gunning. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008. 310 pp. \$36.50.

Gunning, a lecturer at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, lived in the Gaza Strip for nine months in 1998. This book, completed nine years later, is the culmination of his studies about the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas.

Unfortunately for Gunning, he completed his manuscript before the civil war between the rival Hamas and Fatah factions in 2007; presumably, he regrets discounting the possibility of that conflict. Gunning erroneously predicted that in its struggle with Fatah, “Hamas is more likely to employ symbolic rather than actual violence.” He even postulated that Hamas would not carry out violence “against ... civilian government institutions.” In all this, he could not have been more wrong. In the battle for Gaza, Hamas stormed government buildings and brutalized Palestinian Authority forces in a battle that killed 161 Palestinians and wounded some 700.² Gunning’s analysis, therefore, is proven to be both naive and spectacularly wrong.

To make matters worse, Gunning apologizes for Hamas, starting with his repetitious use of “resistance” instead of “terrorism” when referring to attacks on Israeli civilians or his repeated insistence that “political conditions” imposed by Israel drove Hamas to suicide bombings and rocket attacks. Gunning expends the entirety of his chapter on “Hamas’ Political Philosophy,” trying to explain away the group’s xenophobic

2 “Black Pages in the Absence of Justice: Report on Bloody Fighting in the Gaza Strip from 7 to 14 June 2007,” Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, Oct. 1, 2007, p. 6.



and violent political philosophy through the works of John Locke, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Isaiah Berlin, and Pierre Bourdieu. A delusional Gunning claims that these great thinkers “have all helped to sharpen our understanding of Hamas.” Need one point out that it strains credulity to assert that Hamas had these philosophers in mind when drafting its 1988 charter, which states that there is “no solution for the Palestinian question except through jihad”?

Admittedly, at odd moments, the author recognizes that Hamas is a violent and dangerous organization. He also occasionally concedes that Hamas’s interpretation of Islam reinforces its thinking and actions. In the end, however, Gunning’s book is sadly representative of Middle East studies specialists around the world who obfuscate the basics of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Jonathan Schanzer
Foundation for Defense of Democracies

Iraq and Rupert Hay’s *Two Years in Kurdistan*.
Edited by Paul Rich. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2008. 260 pp. \$26.95.

Between 1918 and 1920, the British Indian government dispatched political officer Capt. Rupert Hay to Iraqi Kurdistan which, with the World War I-occupation of Ottoman Mesopotamia, had suddenly become a British territory. Like many contemporary officers stationed on the frontiers of empire, Hay saw his mission as much an anthropological as a military undertaking. Hence, the first six chapters of *Two Years in Kurdistan* discuss everything from flora and fauna, to the structure of village life, the roles of women in society, tribes, agriculture, and trade. The next eight chapters are both diary and travelogue, as Hay travels to Altun Kepri, Erbil, Ranya, and Rawanduz, as well as smaller towns and districts.

Hay’s mission was to establish a civil administration as the British took control of Iraq from Ottoman authorities. Even though World War I was over, Ottoman authorities remained in control, if only on the local level, until Hay and his column relieved or co-opted them. Hay revitalized government, working to increase the influence of allies and decrease those of adversaries in society. He pensioned families of Turkish soldiers who had perished in the war, subsidized mullahs, appointed district governors, and played tribal politics. What took dozens of U.S. officials to carry out in 2003 and 2004, Hay did largely by himself eighty-five years before, meeting with tribal sheikhs and urban notables, entertaining, negotiating, and when necessary, commanding.

The final chapters of *Two Years in Kurdistan* chronicle a revolt among some Kurdish tribes against the order Hay constructed. The revolt pitted Kurd versus Kurd, and tribesman versus city-dweller. For Hay, though, there was a happy ending: Key tribal allies remained loyal, and the instigators failed to conquer Erbil.

Not only historians should value Hay’s memoirs of his time in Kurdistan: The many Western policymakers and journalists who

Iraq and Rupert Hay's
**TWO YEARS IN
KURDISTAN**



Edited and Introduced by

PAUL RICH

pass through Iraqi Kurdistan today see the region's progress but fail to understand its turbulent, pre-Saddam history. They may have heard of the 1994-97 civil war fought between forces loyal to Kurdish strongmen Masoud Barzani and Jalal Talabani but do not realize that such intra-Kurdish fighting is the norm rather than the exception in modern times. Indeed, this context makes it easier to understand the resentment so many Kurds feel toward Barzani and Talabani. Likewise, Hay's account reminds policymakers that Iraqi Kurdistan has always been a region in flux, that Kurds have not always dominated Kirkuk, and that blood feud rather than arbitrary alliance shapes Kurdish society.

The editor's introduction adds basic context but does not seek to dominate. His mission is to reassert Hay into the canon of Kurdish studies, and this he does masterfully.

Michael Rubin

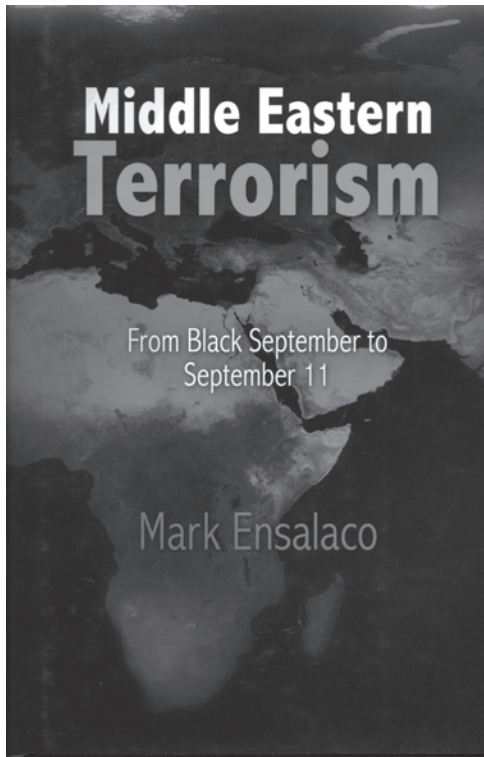
Middle Eastern Terrorism: From Black September to September 11. By Mark Ensalaco. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008. 318 pp. \$39.95.

In *Middle Eastern Terrorism*, Ensalaco of the University of Dayton describes the evolution of modern terrorism from the pioneer actions of the Palestinian organizations, through the Iranian-backed Shiite groups, to al-Qaeda.

Palestinians often appear as precursors and inventors of modern transnational terrorism: airplane hijacking, hostage taking, and attempts at suicide terrorism. The passage from Palestinian to Iranian-backed terrorism is embodied in Imad Mugniyah, who went from being a member of Yasser Arafat's Force 17 to head of Hezbollah's terrorist apparatus responsible for killing the largest number of Americans before 9/11.

Although not clearly expressed, the book's main conclusion is that the successes of global terrorism result not from legitimate national or religious grievances but from an "intricate web of [Arab] state sponsorship to Palestinian terror," as well as Iranian support for Hezbollah and Iraqi Shiites. Inconsistently, Ensalaco declares al-Qaeda to be "mystifyingly different because it acquired a global reach without state sponsor" after mentioning Sudanese and Afghan support of the organization.

Ensalaco argues that the United States and Western Europe did not effectively challenge the threat of Middle Eastern terrorism and the states supporting it, thus permitting it to develop into a strategic threat. He downplays Jimmy Carter's role in the success of Khomeini's revolution in Iran, his conduct in the subsequent hostage crisis, and the ensuing escalation in Islamist terrorism. Ronald Reagan did not "awake to the threat of feeding and arming [Islamists] in Afghanistan" and handled the Hezbollah hostage takings in Lebanon poorly. Reagan emerges as the tragic figure in the U.S. counterterrorism strategy; while bombing Qaddafi's Libya, he did not punish Iran and Syria for their involvement in the murder of hundreds of U.S. marines, diplomats,



and CIA officers in Lebanon. Bill Clinton warned about the threat of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorists but failed to deal forcefully enough with al-Qaeda for bombing U.S. embassies in Africa and the USS *Cole* in Aden. George W. Bush did not take seriously the signs presented by the intelligence community months before 9/11.

Middle Eastern Terrorism is an important book, based on good academic sources, for researchers and those laymen who have the patience to absorb so much information although written in a light and sometimes repetitive journalistic style. The section on strategic and political analysis, however, is too short and needs to be expanded for a better understanding of the “long twilight struggle” against terrorism.

Ely Karmon
International Policy Institute for
Counter-Terrorism
Herzliya, Israel

The Next Founders: Voices of Democracy in the Middle East. By Joshua Muravchik. New York: Encounter Books, 2009. 372 pp. \$25.95.

Muravchik, a fellow at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, offers a panorama of Middle Eastern democracy advocates through profiles of seven prominent campaigners for popular sovereignty. Each of these portraits supports the case for Western encouragement of rapid and positive political change in the Middle East.

Of the seven, Mithal al-Alusi and Mohsen Sazegara are the two most interesting. Alusi, an Arab Sunni living in the predominantly Shiite area of Baghdad’s Sadr City, came to international attention in 2005 after he had attended an international conference on terrorism affiliated with the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya, Israel. He made no attempt to conceal his presence there, and as a result, was expelled from Ahmad Chalabi’s Iraqi National Congress (INC). Upon his return to Baghdad, there were accusations of spying for Israel and attempts to kill him, along with a refusal by the U.S. authorities for protection. The result? The murder of his two sons, Ayman and Jamal,³ along with a devoted supporter considered his “third son.”

Despite this, Alusi was elected to Iraq’s national assembly at the end of 2005 as the sole successful candidate of the secularist Democratic Party of the Iraqi Nation, which he created. Although unseated in the 2010 Iraqi election, Alusi’s saga of dedication to the democratization of his country, as well as his personal sacrifice, justifies Muravchik’s enthusiasm about the yearning for liberation current in the Middle East.

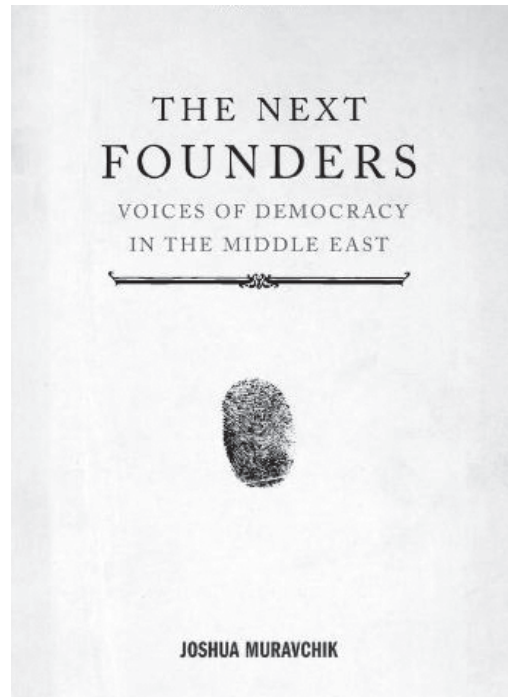
The other stand-out figure is the Iranian “revolutionist,” Mohsen Sazegara, who accompanied Ayatollah Khomeini from exile in France to triumphal reentry into Tehran in 1979. After the victory of the Iranian Islamic Revolution, Sazegara occupied high positions in the clerical regime, playing a major role in the creation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. But internal

³ Heather Robinson, “Dissident Watch: Mithal al-Alusi,” *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2009, p. 96.

conflicts within the dictatorship, as well as its brutal repression of opponents, drove Sazegara to launch a series of newspapers critical of the regime. He struggled to stay out of jail and, in 2004, left Iran for Scotland, eventually settling in Washington, D.C.

Muravchik's book meets the author's goal of showing that Iraqis, Iranians, and other citizens of Middle East Muslim societies seek political freedom in ways not so different from the founders of the American republic. But whether democratization in the region will receive any substantial help from the Obama administration seems, to this reviewer, extremely doubtful. One must conclude, sadly, that the remarkable personalities detailed by Muravchik may never become "the next founders," and like moderate Muslim believers as well as secularists, may be abandoned with their hope left to be redeemed by yet another such generation.

Stephen Schwartz
Center for Islamic Pluralism



STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION OF MIDDLE EAST QUARTERLY, REQUIRED BY ACT OF 12 AUGUST 1970: SECTION 3685, TITLE 39, UNITED STATES CODE, FILED 10/25/01

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Circulation: Average number of copies printed for each issue during the preceding 12 months: 2059. Number of copies printed for single issue nearest to filing date: 2048. Average number of paid mail subscribers during the preceding 12 months: 1381; for single issue nearest to filing date: 1361. Sales through agents, newsdealers, or otherwise: 268; for single issue nearest to filing date: 276. Average number of free distribution: 79; actual for single issue nearest to filing date: 80. Average number of copies distributed during the preceding 12 months: 1728; for single issue nearest to filing date: 1717.

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. Signed, Judy Goodrobb, Managing Editor.