



Middle East Quarterly

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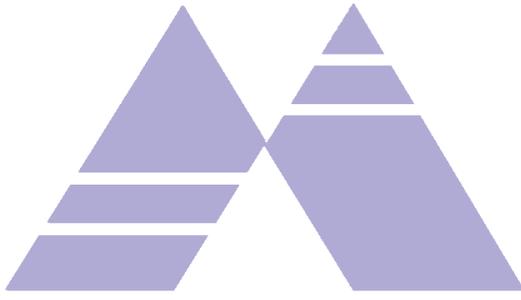
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Middle Eastern Upheavals

Weakening Washington's Middle East Influence

by Lee Smith

Trailing the wave of revolutions that began sweeping through the Arabic-speaking Middle East this January, I recently traveled in the region, visiting some of the capitals where what we have come to call the “Arab Spring” has hit.

In Cairo, I kept company with the handful of Egyptian political activists from the social media generation who were skeptical of a revolution that had already started to show its populist roots. In Manama, I met with members of the mainstream opposition movement who contended that, contrary to their government’s claims, the Shiites of Bahrain wanted nothing to do with Tehran: In the 1970 U.N. poll about the emirate’s future, Bahrainis expressed the wish to remain part of an independent Arab state under the ruling al-Khalifa family but demanded their political rights—and still do. And from Beirut, I watched another uprising kick off over the anti-Lebanon mountain range in Damascus as many Lebanese quietly hoped that the revolution there would do away with the Assad regime while fearing the repercussions could not help but come back on them.

After a month in North Africa, the Levant, and the Persian Gulf countries, I am still unsure what these uprisings have in common, if anything. The regimes that suffered these blows are themselves different from place to place, for all authoritarian regimes are authoritarian in their own way—Husni Mubarak was no Saddam Hussein, nor even a Bashar al-Assad.

Perhaps our eagerness to see the upheavals as one wider movement is less a representation of reality than a reflection of how the Middle East is understood by large segments of the American intelligentsia—a habit of mind that of late was most powerfully expressed by President Barack Obama. It was during the June 2009 Cairo speech,¹ after all, where Obama transgressed the borders according to which Washington maintained and advanced its interests, describing the region in terms of Muslims, a Muslim world that is by definition borderless, transnational, and not specific to the particular circumstances of history, geography, and politics that give nation-states their character. Obama’s Muslim world is amorphous, more like a sentiment than a physical fact, something perhaps similar in nature to the “Arab Spring.”

Lee Smith is a senior editor at *The Weekly Standard* and the author of *The Strong Horse: Power, Politics, and the Clash of Arab Civilizations* (Doubleday, 2010).

¹ *The New York Times*, June 4, 2009.

BIRDS OF MANY FEATHERS

It has been argued that the recent events were driven by economic motives, insofar as all these revolts pitted the have-nots against the haves; and yet the particular circumstances vary greatly. There is little comparison, for instance, between the grand prize up for grabs in Libya's civil war (control of the country's oil) and the fairer employment, and educational and housing

The uprisings have further underscored the fractious character of the region.

opportunities sought by the Bahraini opposition. Furthermore, the blanket charge of corruption against economic elites across the region obscures the genuine reforms that won the Tunisian and Egyptian regimes high marks from the World Bank and the

International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The onetime, popular notion that all these opposition groups are united in their calls for democracy is starting to fade in light of the evidence. It seems, for instance, that the Libyan rebels comprise a large component of violent Islamists,² some of whom fought against U.S. forces in Iraq. There is concern that parts of the Syrian revolution are also spearheaded by Islamists, and there is little doubt that the fall of Egyptian president Mubarak will give more power to the Muslim Brotherhood. And even the very model of the Arab democracy activist, that young, middle-class, social-media-mad Egyptian, has begun to look different than when he first took to Tahrir Square on January 25. In their demands for retribution and revenge against the scions of the late regime, the Egyptian activists seem less inspired by the rule of law, due process, and other features of liberal democratic reform for which they petitioned and protested, than by the tradition of modern Egypt-

tian populism,³ from Saad Zaghloul to Gamal Abdel Nasser.

As for the revolutionaries themselves, there is no consistent profile from country to country or little to suggest that their different resumes make them necessarily sympathetic to each other's goals. To be sure, the Tunisian activists found common cause with their Egyptian counterparts, explaining to them how to use the social media to get people to take to the street. As Lebanese journalist Hazem al-Amin told me in Beirut, "The first time the Tunisians tried, they failed. That was back in 2008, and this time they were prepared."⁴ And yet Muhammad Bouazizi—the iconic figure of the "Arab Spring" whose self-immolation triggered the Tunisian revolution—seems to have had little in common with the Libyan rebels, who unlike every other opposition movement, took up arms against the ruling order almost immediately.

The sectarian divisions between the opposition movements are also noteworthy. While the moderate mainstream of Bahrain's Shiite opposition has earned the admiration and support of Hezbollah, the Syrian uprising's Sunni current has cursed this same terrorist organization, sponsored by Damascus's Alawite regime, from the outset of their demonstrations.

The ostensible sources underlying the revolutionary eruptions are equally myriad. Many point to social media, like Facebook and Twitter, which served as a billboard and meeting place for opposition movements. And yet some argue that it was the Mubarak regime's ill-considered decision to shut down the Internet and mobile phone service that really filled the streets of Cairo. As Egyptian political analyst Amr Bargisi told me as we walked through Tahrir Square in early spring, "If your mother can't reach you on the phone, she is going to send your brother down to look for you."

Others point to broadcast media, especially al-Jazeera. However, even as this instrument of Qatari foreign policy assiduously covered the

2 See, for example, Christopher Boucek, "Dangerous Fallout from Libya's Implosion," The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C., Mar. 9, 2011.

3 *Microsoft Network News*, Apr. 8, 2011.

4 Interview, Mar. 20, 2011.

uprising against Mubarak, a Qatari adversary, it was virtually mute when turmoil first started brewing in Syria, an ally. Given Riyadh's fears that the revolutionary wave might eventually crash on Saudi Arabia, al-Arabiya, the majority Saudi-owned satellite network, has been only a little bit better on the Syrian protests and all but ignored the opposition to the government of Bahrain, a Saudi ally.

Many Shiites in the region are of the opinion that it was the 2003 invasion of Iraq that inspired the "Arab Spring." For some, the end of a Baathist regime that had persecuted Shiites marked an almost millenarian turning-point for the Middle East. In Beirut, independent, anti-Hezbollah, Shiite activist Lokman Slim told me that "the toppling of Saddam's statue made many things seem possible that seemed impossible before." Others in Lebanon claimed it was their own 2005 Cedar Revolution that led the way—even as the March 14 pro-democracy movement has suffered a major setback with Hezbollah's de-facto takeover of the government this January.⁵ And yet others pointed to Hezbollah's Iranian sponsor as inspiration. "The 1979 Islamic Revolution first proved to people that they could change their own rulers," one young Shiite activist told me in Bahrain.⁶

AN "ARAB SPRING"?

If success has many fathers, it will be some time yet before anyone knows whether the "Arab Spring" was a success or instead turns out to be



There is little in common between Muhammad Bouazizi, the 26-year-old Tunisian vegetable seller, whose self-immolation triggered the revolutionary wave throughout the Middle East and North Africa, and the Libyan rebels, who unlike every other opposition movement, took up arms against the ruling order almost immediately.

a series of failures. In fact, it is not even clear what has really changed. Consider that Tunisia and Egypt, the two countries where the rulers were actually brought down, merely witnessed direct military takeovers of what were already military security regimes.

Hence the various and often conflicting narratives surrounding events seem to suggest that the "Arab Spring" is a misnomer. The belief that there is some deeper trend underlying the recent wave of political upheaval in the region, something uniquely Arab tying them all together, is of a piece with the discredited pan-Arab notion that the three hundred million inhabitants of the Arabic-speaking Middle East constitute a unified Arab nation.

To most Americans, the reality of Arab disunity was laid bare most recently when Shiites and Sunnis slaughtered each other in post-Saddam Iraq—a reality reinforced, paradoxically, by the "Arab Spring." If the tendency is to see this string of uprisings as a pan-Arab enterprise linking Arab publics across borders, then the uprisings have further underscored the fractious character of the region. In effect, the "Arab

⁵ *The Guardian* (London), Jan. 25, 2011.

⁶ Interview, Mar. 23, 2011.

Photo will not display.

Secretary of State Clinton excused the administration's failure to repeat the Libyan precedent in Syria by claiming that Mu'ammarr Qaddafi (right, with other leaders at the G8 summit, July 10, 2009) had been firing on his subjects from airplanes. Damascus took note and instead used tanks to suppress its own demonstrations. Also pictured are (left to right) Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, French president Nicolas Sarkozy, Russian president Dmitri Medvedev, U.S. president Barack Obama, and U.N. secretary general Ban Ki-moon, L'Aquila, Italy.

come at the expense of actual democratic reform. For one thing, the regimes will ignore calls to reform, from both their own populations and Washington, in the conviction that reform is simply another word for the weakness that brought down Mubarak. For another, the activists themselves may find democracy less conducive to their ends than populism. As the young Egyptian activists have shown, they can wield more power from the pulpits

Spring" is a series of civil wars, sectarian and tribal conflicts, and divisions not only between the political elites and the people but also within certain regimes themselves.

In other words, as of yet there has been no fundamental shift in Arab political culture. Where some have argued that the Arab publics have been empowered with their newfound voice, the truth is that Arab officials have long had to reckon with the power of the masses, especially when manipulated by talented demagogues like Nasser, lest they wind up butchered by the mob in the streets of their capitals, as was Iraqi prime minister Nuri Said in July 1958.⁷

Moreover, the additional power of the street and its ability to bring down rulers will

of Tahrir than by participating in parliament.

OBAMA'S STRATEGIC BLUNDER

But if little has so far changed in the region, it is a very different matter for U.S. policymakers. Even though the dust is far from settling in the Middle East, in Washington the picture is already starting to become clear. The U.S. position in the region, an area of vital interest since the end of World War II, has been weakened. The erosion has taken place gradually over time and is a factor of many forces not attributable to any single episode or administration, but one can nonetheless identify a defining moment—Obama's Cairo speech.

For more than half a century, Washington had been accustomed to dealing with the Middle East, its allies and adversaries alike, in terms of

⁷ BBC, "On This Day, July 14, 1958," accessed Apr. 25, 2011.

nation-states, discreet political units with their own interests and internal makeup. U.S. policymakers were less concerned with the desires and aspirations of Arab peoples than with those of their authoritarian regimes. If to many Arabs this seemed cruel and hypocritical coming from one of the world's oldest democracies, the fact is that the most salient feature of the modern international system is that states deal with states whether those governing institutions are elected by their free citizens or imposed by powerful ruling cliques. To deal instead with opposition forces is by definition an act of subversion, or more spectacularly, war. And yet as it

turns out, despite all the repression suffered at the hands of their authoritarian regimes, the Arab masses would have their voices heard by the Americans on 9/11.

In retrospect, it is clear that the attacks themselves were less significant than how this monumental episode of anti-U.S. violence was received around the region. It is interesting to speculate how the Bush administration might have responded had the 9/11 attacks been condemned, and terrorism and extremism in all its varieties isolated and targeted both by the Arab regimes and the Arab masses. But because the bloodshed of innocent civilians was justified and celebrated, from North Africa and the Levant to the Persian Gulf and Pakistan, it was difficult for U.S. policymakers not to conclude that the furies were endemic in the region and needed to be addressed as such.

The Bush administration saw the issue as a political pathology, one that could be solved by importing democracy to the region, beginning with Iraq, which would be a beacon unto its neighbors. The Obama administration, partly to correct for a predecessor deemed wildly unpopu-



By deserting Egypt's president Mubarak (left, in the White House, August 18, 2009), President Obama condemned the peace process to failure, for it was lost on no one in the region that the man who kept the peace with Israel for more than thirty years was trashed when the pride of the U.S. president won out over U.S. national interests.

lar at home and abroad, took another view and tended to see popular Arab anger at the United States as the product of legitimate grievance. Hence it believed that by pressuring Israel to accommodate Arab demands, it would win the approbation of the Arab and Muslim masses.

The practical effect of both administrations was to set political precedents that reflected a sea-change in U.S. political-strategic thinking, namely that the Arab states were no longer Washington's primary interlocutors but rather its regional problem. The solution was to go over the heads of Arab rulers and make Washington's case directly to the Arab peoples. There was, however, a big difference between the two presidents: Bush made war against an Arab adversary while Obama undermined a U.S. ally.

The main flaw with Obama's Cairo speech is not simply that it contravenes the norms of political and diplomatic practice or that the belief in the existence of a unified Muslim world ignores the reality of 1,400 years of Muslim sectarianism; nor is it that the leader of a secular republic should avoid categorizing the world's inhabitants by their religious beliefs. No, the



Many Shiites in the region believe it was the 2003 invasion of Iraq that inspired the “Arab Spring.” Others in Lebanon claimed it was their own 2005 Cedar Revolution that led the way. And yet others pointed to Iran. “The 1979 Islamic Revolution first proved to people that they could change their own rulers,” said one young Shiite activist in Bahrain.

biggest problem is that Obama played into the strategic communications campaign of Washington’s chief regional adversary, the Islamic Republic of Iran. For it is Tehran that insists that for all their divisions (Sunnis versus Shiites, Sufis versus Salafis, Arabs versus Persians, Africans versus Asians, etc.), there truly is one factor uniting all the world’s Muslims: resistance to the United States and its regional allies, Israel as well as the Sunni states such as Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt.

But while Washington’s relations with these states and others constituted the cornerstone of U.S. Middle East policy, by describing the region as an amorphous body of believers (an *umma* of sorts), Obama strayed into a minefield without a map—or no map other than the one that confirmed the Iranian view of the Middle East.

ADDING INSULT TO INJURY

If Tehran loses its one Arab ally in Damascus, the score may be somewhat evened. But so far, only pro-U.S. regimes have fallen, in Egypt

and Tunisia, and the Iranians have already benefited from a number of subsequent U.S. errors.

To begin, in Libya the White House has entered into a conflict whose outcome may be important to the Europeans but would have had very little effect on U.S. interests—unless Washington decided to intervene. Now that it has, the danger is that Washington may be bound to its European allies in a stalemate or forced to sacrifice prestige by eating its words and acknowledging Qaddafi’s restored legitimacy to rule. A testament to the administration’s confusion is the description of its support of armed Libyan rebels as a humanitarian inter-

vention while other peaceful opposition movements such as Syria’s have failed to win any support from Washington. Hillary Clinton excused this difference by the Libyan regime’s firing on its subjects from airplanes. The secretary of state obviously did not mean to imply that so long as the Syrians eschewed the use of fixed-wing aircraft they were safe from U.S. intervention, but that is how Damascus understood it and so used tanks against Syrian civilians.

The Libyan adventure is not about humanitarian causes. Rather, as some analysts have explained, Obama and key aides saw Libya as an opportunity for the administration to fold U.S. power into a multilateral dispensation.⁸ If the commander in chief believes that unilateralism, or unbridled U.S. power, which Bush was wrongly faulted for, is a danger both to the world and to the United States itself, the fact remains that the White House has intentionally hobbled U.S.

8 Stanley Kurtz, “Samantha Power’s Power,” *National Review*, Apr. 5, 2011.

power and prestige to put them at the service of European interests.

As for events in Bahrain, the White House failed to keep a tight rein on two key U.S. allies—the governments of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. By turning a blind eye to the entry of a 4,000-strong, Saudi-led Gulf Cooperation Council force that has helped the Bahraini security forces terrorize the local Shiite population, Washington has paved the way for the Iranians to lend comfort and perhaps eventually material support to their coreligionists. Even before the Bahrain uprising, Washington had shown its inability to manage the Saudis, who crossed U.S. interests in Iraq and Lebanon by cozying up to Damascus, temporary alliances that strengthened Tehran's hand in both Baghdad and Beirut. There was little chance Riyadh was inclined to heed Washington's counsel regarding Manama since the Saudis are still fuming over Obama's treatment of Mubarak.⁹

The key issue then is Egypt, arguably the cornerstone of the U.S. position in the Middle East for more than thirty years. The peace treaty with Israel was not only a corollary of Cairo's shift from the Soviet camp to Washington's side but also neutralized the largest and most influential of Arab states and made a full-scale regional war with Israel many times less likely. Since then, Egypt has served as a sort of U.S. trophy, an example of what other Arab states could have—money, arms, and prestige—if they simply made peace with Israel. And it was that treaty that turned Washington from a great power into a power broker—U.S. support for Israel proved to the Arabs that if they wanted anything from Jerusalem, they would have to come through Washington to get it.

If Obama seemed to understand the centrality of Cairo, the sticking point, according to reports at the time, was the president's sense of personal honor. How, he asked aides, could he not support the aspirations of the Arab and Muslim masses that he himself had promoted

and praised in his Cairo speech before the very same audience that was now out in the streets demanding Mubarak's ouster?¹⁰

HUBRIS AND ITS COSTS

The conflict between national duty and personal gratification is one of the perennial trials scoring political life since the beginning of recorded history. The Hebrew Bible and the Greek and Latin epics document that there can be no marriage between the two, no compromise; for the essential test of the statesman, failing which he cannot be one, is to come down on the side of the national interest. As Obama could not choose between Dido and Rome, he dithered, making a series of mistakes that showed that the administration was caught unaware—by a popular insurrection whose pattern fit perfectly with the essential message of the Cairo speech.

For what allegiance did Egyptians owe their president when Obama had approached them directly in terms of their political loyalty to the *umma*? What the regime actually stood for, or the fact that the protestors greeted the army like brothers when it actually

was the most corrupt institution in all Egypt, as well as Mubarak's real flaws and successes—including an economy that had grown steadily at 7 percent for more than half a decade—were all irrelevant. The Egyptians were part of something larger—the “Arab Spring.” Would Obama side with the activists—as the American press blithely ignored or suppressed the anti-American and anti-Israeli sentiment during the protests—or would he stand with an ally that undergirds the U.S. position in the Middle East?

For Tehran, there was no contradiction to smooth out. The mullahs could congratulate the

Even before the Bahrain uprising, Washington had shown its inability to manage the Saudis.

9 Jackson Diehl, “Amid the Mideast Protests, Where Is Saudi Arabia?” Feb. 25, 2011; *Yahoo News*, Apr. 18, 2011.

10 *The New York Times*, Feb. 12, 2011.

Egyptian and Tunisian peoples on their great successes in tossing out their rulers even as they ruthlessly repressed their own opposition movement and helped Assad put down his own. The administration knew neither its own interests nor policy. Mubarak's naming a vice president and his promise to step down

The centerpiece of Obama's regional strategy, Arab-Israeli conflict diplomacy, is no longer relevant.

after the autumn elections was precisely what U.S. policymakers had sought from the Egyptian leader for nearly a decade. Had the administration pocketed that as a victory, the situation would have looked very different. Instead, the president seemed to make a fetish of consistency;

Mubarak, Obama announced, had to go.¹¹

Nor, for that matter, is there anything obviously consistent about demanding that U.S. ally Mubarak step down while tacitly supporting Assad, whose security services were responsible for the deaths of U.S. soldiers in Iraq as well as of U.S. allies in Iraq, Lebanon, Israel, and the Palestinian territories. Having warned Damascus to refrain from violence against protestors, Obama drew a moral equivalence between the regime and its unarmed opposition by admonishing demonstrators to avoid shedding blood.¹² The reason the administration has shown Assad so much favor is no secret: Obama needs Damascus to sign a peace treaty with Israel, with which he means to win the affection of the Arab masses.

The rather inconvenient truth is that an Arab-Israeli peace process no longer exists. To be sure, as animals for slaughter survive the deathblow standing on all fours for moments before succumbing, many Washington policymakers on both sides of the aisle continue to insist on the centrality of finding a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. But there will be no takers on the Arab side. It was lost on no one in the region that the man who kept the peace with Israel for more than thirty years at some personal risk to himself was trashed by Washington when the pride of the U.S. president won out over U.S. national interests. In other words, the administration is not yet aware that the centerpiece of its regional strategy, Arab-Israeli conflict diplomacy, is no longer relevant.

Egypt's future is unclear, but there is little consolation in the fact that the Egyptian army seems not to want another war with Israel or to lose \$2 billion a year in U.S. aid.¹³ The decisions made by the rulers of modern Egypt, from King Farouk to Nasser, have often been driven by domestic, regional, and international dynamics beyond their control. Even as there is no longer a contest between superpowers played out in the Middle East, the regional competition is as heated as ever, given Iranian and Turkish ambitions. Cairo's permitting two Iranian ships to pass through the Suez Canal for the first time since the Iranian revolution is a taste of things to come, for the Egyptians will continue to test Washington's resolve and mettle. For thirty years, thanks to Mubarak, war between Egypt and Israel, two U.S. allies was unimaginable. So far, all Washington has reaped from the uprisings in the Middle East, the "Arab Spring," is the whirlwind.

11 *The Washington Post*, Feb. 2, 2011.

12 Michael Doran, "The Heirs of Nasser," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2011.

13 Reuters, Jan. 29, 2011.



Middle Eastern Upheavals

Tunisia's Morning After

by Bruce Maddy-Weitzman

Where does Tunisia, the unlikely igniter of the Middle Eastern upheavals, stand on the democratic transition scale three months after the overthrow of the long reigning autocrat Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali? And can the country, which stood (mostly by choice) at the margins of Arab political life since achieving independence in 1956, serve as a democratizing exemplar for other Arab states?

BLAZING THE DEMOCRATIC PATH

The answer to the second question seems fairly clear. As early as 1991, Samuel Huntington identified what he termed one of the most important global political developments of the late twentieth century—a third wave of democratization among thirty previously nondemocratic states.¹ There was no Arab state on his list, yet he identified Tunisia as a prime candidate for future democratization owing to its pace of economic growth, educated middle class, and concurrent liberalization measures undertaken by the country's new president, Ben Ali.

In the end, however, it was the self-immolation of a struggling 26-year-old vegetable seller in a dusty, provincial Tunisian town on December 17, 2010,² rather than Ben Ali's fleeting political reforms, that ignited a steadily rising tsunami of popular protests, which cascaded across the Middle East and North Africa. Still

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Huntington's prognosis was, on the whole, on target. For notwithstanding its own long history of bureaucratic-oligarchic rule, Tunisia enjoys a unique mix of factors, not much present elsewhere in the region, that increase its chances for a relatively successful democratization. These factors include:

1. a compact, well-defined national entity with a particular history as an open Mediterranean trading country, and thus a strong collective sense of self;
2. a modernization process that produced a substantial, educated middle class, the highest rate of female literacy and lowest rate of population growth in the Arab world, and a systematic effort to raise the status of women, including the banning of polygamy (no other Arab country has dared to explicitly do so, as it contradicts the Qur'an);
3. a tradition of active civil society, particularly labor unions and the bar association; and

1 Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, Okla. and London: Oklahoma University Press, 1991).

2 Reuters, Jan. 20, 2011; *The Sunday Times* (London), Jan. 23, 2011.

4. a small-sized, non-politicized military, whose chief of staff, Rachid Ammar, pointedly refused Ben Ali's directive to fire on protestors, instead acting to control policemen, security and intelligence personnel, and affiliated thugs. He also turned

aside any suggestion that he and his fellow officers, and not civilians, assume control of the country.³

Thousands demonstrated in favor of a return to normalcy, without abandoning the revolution's goals.

All this, of course, by no means ensures that Tunisia's democratizing experiment will succeed, for there are any number of countervailing factors and likely obstacles ahead. Tunisians have

been quick to point, for instance, to the violent actions of provocateurs, carried out by members of the security services of the old regime or under their instruction. Although these accusations could not always be substantiated, they did seem to make sense at times: Indeed, Huntington identified this as a common threat to newly democratizing regimes. Nonetheless, Tunisia's possibilities for success remain considerable, and developments since Ben Ali's overthrow do not suggest otherwise.

POLITICAL, INSTITUTIONAL, AND CONSTITUTIONAL TRANSITION

In comparison to Egypt, Tunisia maintained a greater degree of constitutional legitimacy and continuity during the fashioning of a new order. Upon Ben Ali's departure, the speaker of the chamber of deputies, 77-year-old Foued Mebazaa, assumed the role of interim president in line with article 57 of the Tunisian constitu-

tion. The sitting prime minister, 71-year-old Mohamed Ghannouchi, a former finance minister and World Bank official, remained in his post until his forced resignation on February 27; he was succeeded by 84-year-old Beji Caid Essebsi,⁴ who had held a number of senior cabinet posts in the governments of Ben Ali's predecessor, Habib Bourguiba, but not those of Ben Ali. All three men belonged to the Tunisian political elite that had ruled the country since independence, raising the question, still not yet definitively answered, as to whether Tunisia is on a path in which the leader is sacrificed to the public protests while the ruling political-economic-security elites successfully scramble to preserve their positions.

Indeed, this question was very much on the mind of Tunisians. The initial Ghannouchi national unity government included members of opposition parties, and even a blogger, Slim Amamou, who had been imprisoned during the protests.⁵ Yet it was deemed top heavy with former regime figures in key positions. As a result, Tunis continued to witness large scale popular protests, creating a good deal of tension between those who feared that their revolution was going to be hijacked and those who understood the economic, social, and security consequences of further disorder. For instance, 11,000 prisoners had escaped or been released in the chaotic last days of Ben Ali's rule,⁶ and at least some had returned to a life of crime, creating serious concerns over personal safety, particularly in the evenings. Over the following month, the authorities undertook a number of measures designed to demonstrate their seriousness of intent and placate the protestors, including the removal of some Ben Ali stalwarts from the cabinet, suspending the activities of the former ruling party, the Rassemblement constitutionnel démocratique (RCD) in advance of its banning, arresting a number of key political and business associates of Ben Ali, and seiz-

3 *The New York Times*, Jan. 24, 2011.

4 *Asia One News* (Singapore), Feb. 28, 2011; *The Washington Times*, Mar. 7, 2011.

5 *The Guardian* (London), Jan. 18, 2011.

6 *The New York Times*, Jan. 26, 2011.

ing financial and real estate assets squirreled away by members of Ben Ali's entourage.⁷ However, the atmosphere after one month's time was anything but calm with numerous wage strikes, demonstrations, and sit-ins by unemployed miners and others threatening to paralyze the country. One response came in the first week of March when thousands demonstrated in favor of a return to normalcy, albeit without abandoning the revolution's goals, and the number and scale of protests declined significantly after that.

This was not, however, a simple victory for the advocates of order. The calming of the atmosphere was due in no small part to the largest protest since Ben Ali's overthrow—a 100,000-strong demonstration on February 25 in the center of Tunis demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Ghannouchi.⁸ The scene in front of the Ministry of the Interior, the symbol of Ben Ali's heavy handed rule, was chaotic, resulting in running street battles between police and protestors. Five persons were killed in clashes with the police the following day. At this point, Ghannouchi bowed to the pressure and resigned, albeit bitter about what he called a media conspiracy, which underreported his government's actions and silenced his supporters, even on Facebook.⁹ But the specter of chaos receded. For now, Tunisia had stepped away from the edge.

Ghannouchi's replacement, Essebsi, quickly pledged fidelity to the revolution's aims. His new cabinet included no holdovers from the Ben Ali era, and within one week's time, he announced the abolition of the hated secret police.¹⁰ More important was the scheduling of an election on July 24, 2011, to choose a constituent assembly



On January 14, 2011, Tunisia's long-reigning president Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali (right, with French president Nicolas Sarkozy) bowed to public pressure and fled the country to a comfortable exile in Saudi Arabia.

that will be charged with rewriting the constitution, preparing a new electoral law and legislation regarding press independence, and deciding on the country's future political system.¹¹ Presumably, the intention is to establish a parliamentary democracy with clear limitations on presidential powers. The sequence was the reverse of what was decided in Egypt where presidential and parliamentary elections will be held in September under the existing, albeit amended, constitution, a method that most analysts of democratic transitions view as more problematic and less likely to ensure a successful outcome.

But how could the Tunisian authorities' commitment to real democratization be ensured? Decades of authoritarian rule had emasculated political parties and civic associations as well as ensuring an economic sector heavily dependent on state patronage and favors.

Still, Ben Ali's toppling gave the country's dormant political arena an electric shock. No less than twenty-eight parties and organizations of varying political persuasions had already called in February for the establishment of the National

7 *The Telegraph* (London), Jan. 19, 2011.

8 *The Guardian*, Feb. 27, 2011.

9 *La Presse de Tunisie*, Feb. 28, 2011.

10 *The New York Post*, Mar. 8, 2011.

11 Associated Press, Mar. 3, 2011; Reuters, Mar. 3, 2011.

Photo will not display.

On January 30, two weeks after Ben Ali's departure, the prominent Islamist leader Rashid al- Ghannushi (center; surrounded by admiring followers) returned to Tunis after twenty-two years in exile, to a tumultuous welcome at the airport by thousands of jubilant supporters.

Council for the Protection of the Revolution.

The Ghannouchi government responded swiftly and favorably by establishing the High Commission for the Realization of Revolutionary Goals, Political Reforms, and Democratic Transition. On March 17, the commission, made up of 12 parties, 42 national figures, and 17 civil society and national organizations, convened its first session. Its declared mission was to examine laws related to political organization and to propose specific reforms in keeping with the demands of the revolution. It was also expected to observe the conduct of the interim government and to draft legislation regarding the July 24 constituent assembly election. The meeting itself was contentious, with complaints being voiced over the exclusion of many of the forces that had taken part in the revolution.¹²

In another display of the authorities' responsiveness to criticism, the council's membership was nearly doubled to 130 in order to strengthen the representation of parties, youth, women, re-

gions, and independent figures, constituting an additional marker of the newly emerging balance between state and civil society.

Meanwhile, Tunisians marveled at their new-found freedoms, relishing the chance to openly discuss and debate the desired next steps. Print and electronic media were transformed overnight into lively and contentious platforms. One American analyst familiar with the Tunisian scene wrote that "the whole country seems involved in a massive group therapy session—and loving it."¹³ Bloggers, such as "A Tunisian Girl," who had played important roles during the uprising and had been targeted by the security forces, became minor celebrities while continuing to warn against complacency and expressing skep-

ticism. Blogger Zied Abidi declared, "I don't see any political parties that are capable of presenting leaders who enjoy the trust of the people ... I don't either see figures capable of charting my future or the future of next generations." Blogger Houssam sarcastically lambasted the criticism emanating from the elites advocating a return to order:

The enemies of revolution, they say, are those who want everything; the enemies of revolution are those who want things to proceed in an ideal way; the enemies of revolution are those who are endangering the country's economy. ... Let's call a spade a spade, and let's highlight the causes of diseases. The enemies of revolution are the [former ruling party] RCD. It's true that the RCD is temporarily suspended, and its dissolution is only a matter of time [the final judicial confirmation of its dissolution came on March 28], but its cancerous cells are spread everywhere.¹⁴

12 *Magharebia.com* (United States Africa Command), Mar. 22, 2011.

13 J. Scott Carpenter, "Help Tunisia First," *Foreign Policy*, Feb. 24, 2011.

14 *Magharebia.com*, Feb. 13, 2011.

THE ECONOMY

Two additional factors that will most certainly be crucial in shaping Tunisia's political evolution are the economy and the newly legalized Islamist current: The stronger the economy, the less the likelihood that Islamists can win large scale support, and vice versa.

The Tunisian economy, as a former U.S. State Department official observed, "was in good shape from a macroeconomic perspective. Inflation was low; the central bank had three months' currency reserves; budget deficits as a percentage of GDP [gross domestic product] were within acceptable levels, and the economy had been growing at an annual rate of 5 percent or higher."¹⁵ At the same time, it suffered from a number of structural problems, including an overreliance on agriculture, the weakness of the private sector, an unfavorable international environment, and, as a result, chronically high rates of unemployment, especially among the young.¹⁶

By mid-March, Western governments had seen the need to provide economic backing. On a March 17 visit, U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton brought a U.S. endorsement for Tunisia's political and economic reforms, including pledges that a conference of donor states would be held in a few months' time, that Washington legislators would be asked to create a fund for Tunisian-American projects, and that economic partnerships between U.S. businesses and young entrepreneurs would be forged.¹⁷ On March 23, the U.S.'s Middle East Partner Initiative allocated \$20 million dollars, one third of its total budget, to promoting the democratic transition. The European Union, alarmed by the thousands of Tunisians who had fled the country on boats to neighboring Italian islands, pledged a similar amount. Near the end of the month, the U.S. embassy in Tunis hosted a trade and in-

vestment mission, which included representatives of ten American companies from a variety of sectors, and was led by Suresh Kumar, assistant secretary of commerce.¹⁸

On April 1, Tunisia's finance minister Jalloul Ayed provided a clear picture of the challenges ahead. Growth in 2011 had originally been forecast for 5.4 percent with the Ben Ali government's budget designed to create 80,000 new jobs. Now, however, the forecast was for between zero and 1 percent growth with foreign investment declining by one billion Tunisian dinars (\$720 million). Only 40,000 jobs would be created, he said, split evenly between the private and public sectors, and \$4 billion were required in loans for 2011.¹⁹

POLITICAL ISLAM

Tunisia's Islamist movement emerged in the late 1980s. As elsewhere, it came partly as a response to socioeconomic dislocations stemming from the complex processes of modernization and development. In addition, Tunisia's authoritarian system under Habib Bourguiba provided no political channels for activity. Most importantly, according to one scholar, was the "psychosocial alienation" from the predominant, Western, liberal model of modernity that left Tunisian youth feeling rejected and marginalized, and thus "in the market for an ideology that could reaffirm both their economic and cultural self-worth."²⁰

In Ben Ali's initial, brief liberalization phase, he permitted Islamists to run in the 1989 elec-

Print and electronic media were transformed overnight into lively and contentious platforms.

15 Carpenter, "Help Tunisia First."

16 Paul Rivlin, *Arab Economies in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 266-86.

17 Radio France International, Mar. 17, 2011.

18 "Trade Mission Recap," U.S. Embassy, Tunis, Mar. 31, 2011.

19 Reuters, Apr. 2, 2011.

20 Susan Waltz, "Islamist Appeal in Tunisia," *Middle East Journal*, Autumn 1986, pp. 665-70.

Photo will not display.

Tunis continued to witness large-scale popular protests after Ben Ali's departure, culminating in a 100,000-strong demonstration on February 25, demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi, a remnant of the Ben Ali administration. He resigned two days later.

tions as independents. Officially, they captured around 14 percent of the vote, coming close to winning a majority in several urban areas, and their real strength was thought to have been more than double the official tally. Alarmed, and with next-door Algeria ripping itself apart following its own sudden liberalization and complete legalization of the Islamist movement, Ben Ali quickly shifted course, banning the newly formed Islamist al-Nahda (Renaissance) Party. Taking advantage of some Islamists' violent acts, he imprisoned thousands of activists. Party leader Rashid al-Ghannushi fled to a London exile.²¹

On January 30, two weeks after Ben Ali's departure, Ghannushi returned to Tunis, welcomed at the airport by thousands of jubilant supporters. Also present was a small contingent of women's rights activists, concerned with preserving Tunisia's secular underpinnings and with emphasizing the equal rights of women. That their concern was shared by many was indi-

cated by a march of thousands in central Tunis in mid-February calling for a separation of mosque and state. The march came in the wake of the murder of a Polish priest and an attack on a brothel. "Nothing is irreversible," said Khadija Cherif, a former head of the Tunisian Association of Democratic Women, a feminist organization. "We don't want to let down our guard."²²

On the spectrum of Islamist thinker-activists, Ghannushi generally comes out on the side of dialogue, multiparty democracy, and nonviolence, promoting a modernist-Islamist synthesis, what the Tunisian-born political scientist Larbi Sadiki terms "soft Islamism."²³ In an interview with al-Jazeera after returning to Tunis, Ghannushi spoke

of the ruling Turkish Justice and Development Party as the party closest to al-Nahda's outlook. On the matter of head scarves, he told al-Jazeera: "We have continuously defended the right of women and men to choose their own lifestyle, and we are against the imposition of the headscarf in the name of Islam, and we are against the banning of the headscarf in the name of secularism or modernity."²⁴ But he has also justified the murder of secular, anti-Islamist intellectuals in Algeria and Egypt and used standard anti-Semitic motifs in condemning Israel and Zionism, including its alleged promotion of Western hostility toward Islam.²⁵

Ghannushi's approach to the coming phase was clearly cautious. He favored a national unity government for the time being, expressed no in-

22 *The New York Times*, Feb. 20, 2011.

23 Larbi Sadiki, "BA 2886: The Return of Ghannouchi," al-Jazeera TV (Doha), Jan. 30, 2011.

24 Al-Jazeera TV, Feb. 7, 2011.

25 Martin Kramer, "A U.S. Visa for an Islamic Extremist?" *Policywatch*, no. 121, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington, D.C., June 29, 1994.

21 *Today's Zaman* (Istanbul), Feb. 23, 2011.

tention to run for president, and suggested that it was time for a younger generation of Islamist activists to take the lead. While expressing confidence with al-Nahda's popularity among the public, party officials had no way of knowing its extent. Nor did al-Nahda have a monopoly in the Islamist arena. Its cofounder, Abdel Fattah Morou, had been imprisoned in the 1990s while Ghannushi was in exile and, since that time, had taken a more conciliatory approach to the regime than his colleague. Though present at the airport to welcome Ghannushi, he subsequently made it clear that he had differences with al-Nahda and was preparing to form a new party.²⁶ There is also a new Islamist party, Justice and Development, headed by a former army officer imprisoned in the 1990s for plotting a coup.²⁷

Along with many other parties, al-Nahda was legalized in early March.²⁸ By contrast, the radical, pan-Islamic Hizb al-Tahrir was banned. It had organized a hostile demonstration in front of Tunisia's main synagogue, an event widely viewed on YouTube. One prominent lawyer and human rights activist claimed that she clearly identified a number of former regime provocateurs in the crowd.²⁹ The incident was highly embarrassing to the authorities, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs quickly condemned it, as

did the center-left, ex-communist Ettajdid Party.³⁰

CONCLUSION

The focus of regional and international attention on the Arab upheavals has long since shifted from Tunisia to other hot spots, from the civil war in neighboring Libya—where Tunisia has been providing aid to refugees and injured Libyans and would very much like to see Qaddafi fall—to teetering Yemen, Bahrain, Egypt, and, most recently, Syria. This lack of attention suits Tunisians just fine. It also indicates that, however tortured the path to greater political pluralism, rule of law, and the necessary degree of comity among competing social forces and political movements, Tunisia has made substantive progress in the first months of its new era. Whether or not the country's elites will demonstrate the wisdom and leadership necessary to manage the transition—perhaps the key factor in determining the success of a democratizing transition according to Huntington—remains to be seen.

A march of thousands in central Tunis called for a separation of mosque and state.

26 *Asharq al-Awsat* (London), Mar. 11, 2011.

27 *Ibid.*, Mar. 10, 2011.

28 Al-Jazeera TV, Mar. 1, 2011.

29 *Jeune Afrique* (Paris), Jan. 29, 2011.

30 Agence France-Presse, Feb. 18, 2011.



Do You Believe in Magic?

Iran's powerful clerics have accused associates of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of witchcraft, including summoning genies, amid an increasingly bitter rift between Ahmadinejad and the country's supreme religious leader.

In recent days, some 25 confidants of Ahmadinejad and his controversial but loyal chief of staff Esfandiar Rahim Mashaei have been arrested and charged with being "magicians." One aide, Abbas Ghaffari, has reportedly been accused of summoning a genie, who caused his interrogator to have a heart attack.

The president himself has made supernatural claims, telling followers in 2005 that he was surrounded by a halo of light during a speech to the U.N. General Assembly, in which the foreign leaders in the hall were transfixed, unable to blink for a half hour.

ABC News, May 9, 2011

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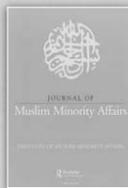
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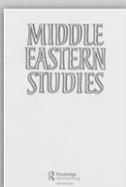
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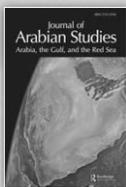
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Middle Eastern Upheavals

Egypt's Islamist Shadow

by Cynthia Farahat

Will the Muslim Brotherhood seize power in Egypt? This often repeated question, or rather fear, assumes that the Islamist organization does not already wield power yet may be able to hijack the largely secular revolution owing to its superior organization, tight discipline, and ideological single-mindedness.¹

In fact, this situation already exists. For while the Muslim Brotherhood does not formally or organizationally rule Egypt, it has ideologically controlled the country for nearly sixty years since the overthrow of the monarchy by the July 1952 coup d'état (euphemized as the "July Revolution"). The real question, then, is not whether the Muslim Brotherhood will seize power but whether it will continue to hold it, either directly or by proxy.

THE FREE OFFICERS' ISLAMIST-FASCIST ROOTS

Since it is exceptionally difficult to define ideological differences and allegiances in Egypt's Islamic politics, a simple rule of thumb will suffice: Politicians or institutions bent on implementing the Shari'a (Islamic law), or some elements of it, qualify as Islamists; Egypt's ruling military oligarchy clearly falls into this category.

Not only does the Egyptian constitution make the Shari'a "the principal source of legislation," but the Free Officers, as the perpetrators of the 1952 putsch called themselves, were closely associated with both the Muslim Brotherhood's military wing and the Young Egypt Society (Misr al-Fatat), a nationalist-fascist militia established in 1929 by Ahmad

Hussein, a religiously educated lawyer. Both Egyptian presidents hailing from the Free Officers—Gamal Abdel Nasser (1956-70) and Anwar Sadat (1970-81)—received their early political schooling in al-Fatat, which in 1940 transformed into the National Islamic Party.²

The group spread its xenophobic and militant ideas through its magazine, *al-Sarkh'a* (Scream), which combined vicious attacks on Western democracy with praise for Fascism and Nazism and advocacy of the implementation of Shari'a rule. In a famous letter, Hussein invited Hitler "to convert to Islam."³ This outlook was shared by the Muslim Brotherhood's publication, *al-Nazir*, which referred to the Nazi tyrant as "Hajj Hitler," and by the society's founding father, Hassan al-Banna—an unabashed admirer of Hitler and Mussolini, who "guided their peoples to unity, order, regeneration, power, and

1 See, for example, *The Washington Times*, Mar. 27, 2011.

2 Anwar Sadat, *Asrar at-Thawra al-Misriya* (Cairo: Dar al-Hilal, 1957), pp. 44-53, 60-7, 90-2; P. J. Vatikiotis, *Nasser and His Generation* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), pp. 54, 60, 73.

3 *Al-Masry al-Youm* (Cairo), Oct. 8, 2009.

Cynthia Farahat is an Egyptian political activist and writer.

glory.”⁴ As late as 1953, Anwar Sadat, whose staunch pro-Nazi sympathies landed him in prison during World War II, wrote an “open letter” to Hitler in a leading Egyptian newspaper, in which

Mubarak’s regime colluded with Islamists against more democratically-inclined compatriots and religious minorities.

he applauded the tyrant and pronounced him the real victor of the war.⁵

Misr al-Fatat’s attempted assassination in 1937 of Egypt’s democratically elected liberal prime minister, Mustafa Nahhas, got the organization banned, and in the 1940s, the officers took their radicalism a step further by collaborating with the Muslim

Brotherhood’s military wing. Some of them even joined the Brotherhood as did Nasser, who reportedly joined in 1944. In his memoirs, Khaled Mohieddin, a fellow Free Officer, claimed that Banna had personally asked Nasser to join the Brotherhood, recounting how he and Nasser swore allegiance on a gun and a Qur’an.⁶

This background has continuing relevance because it informs the Free Officers’ DNA: The leaders of Egypt since 1952 have pursued means and goals that originated in the Muslim Brotherhood. Moreover, Misr al-Fatat’s Islamic-socialist and fascistic ideas are very much alive and well, and in 1990, the party was reestablished and granted a license to work as a legal entity by Mubarak’s regime.

FROM NASSER TO MUBARAK

Following Banna’s murder on February 12, 1949, by government agents in retaliation for the

assassination of Prime Minister Nuqrashi Pasha a few weeks earlier, the military and civilian wings of the Muslim Brotherhood split. Nasser proceeded to form the Free Officers movement, which mounted the 1952 coup. In the coming decades, the military regime and the Brotherhood would maintain a strenuous relationship interrupted by occasional outbursts of violence and terrorism—notably a 1954 attempt by the Brotherhood on Nasser’s life—and repressive countermeasures by the regime including mass arrests and sporadic executions. But this should be understood not as a struggle between an autocratic, secular dictatorship and a would-be Islamist one but a struggle between two ideologically similar, if not identical, rival groups, hailing from the same source.

In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that, in the past, some elements within the younger generations in the military would collaborate with Islamist groups or devise their own jihadist plots, notably Sadat’s October 1981 assassination by Lt. Khaled Islambouli. A military court sentenced Islambouli to death in 1982, but speculations that the death sentence was never carried out continue to circulate, especially after Sadat’s daughter Roukaya made that claim on Egyptian television on March 17, 2011, saying that she saw him with her own eyes at a Saudi hotel in 1996 and that the murderer panicked upon seeing her. Roukaya recently filed a complaint with the attorney general in which she accused Mubarak of complicity in Sadat’s assassination and asked for the reopening of the investigation into her father’s murder.⁷ Some other members of Sadat’s family have similarly implied that the military was involved in his assassination. One such accusation, by Talaat Sadat, Anwar’s nephew and a former member of parliament, led to his incarceration for a year in military prison in 2006 for defaming the military.⁸

Such accusations must have been particularly galling to Mubarak, who was groomed by

4 Robert St. John, *The Boss: The Story of Gamal Abdel Nasser* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1960), pp. 41-2.

5 Open letter from Anwar Sadat to Adolf Hitler, *al-Musawwar* (Cairo), Sept. 18, 1953.

6 Khaled Mohieddin, *Memories of a Revolution* (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 1995), p. 45.

7 *Al-Yaum al-Sabe’a* (Cairo), Mar. 18, 2011; *Misr News* (Cairo), Mar. 21, 2011.

8 *The New York Times*, Nov. 1, 2006.

Sadat as his successor. Mubarak also narrowly escaped an Islamist attempt on his own life while on an official visit to Ethiopia in June 1995 and portrayed himself to the West as a relentless fighter against Islamist radicalism.

To be sure, the Ethiopia incident set in motion a repressive campaign that saw the incarceration of thousands of Islamists and the execution of some. Yet this was aimed at the more militant Salafi groups, such as al-Takfir wa-l-Hijra (Ex-communication and *hijra*), al-Gama‘at al-Islamiya (the Muslim associations), and Tanzim al-Jihad (Organization of the jihad), rather than the Muslim Brotherhood, which had transformed during the Sadat years into a parliamentary opposition party.

If Mubarak did indeed ban, threaten, and terrorize some Egyptians, it was the secularists rather than the Brotherhood. As cofounder of a secular political party, the Liberal Egyptian Party, whose political program calls for secularism, human rights, capitalism, the rule of law, and rejection of pan-Arabism and Islamic imperialism, this author saw it rebuffed as a legal entity by court order for being opposed to Shari‘a law, which indeed it was. By contrast, not only did Mubarak allow eighty-eight Muslim Brotherhood members into parliament in 2005—as a useful tool for scaring the Western governments into thinking that democracy in Egypt would inevitably bring the Islamists to power—but his regime subtly colluded with Islamists against their more democratically-inclined compatriots and religious minorities, notably the Copts.⁹



The mass protests in Cairo’s Tahrir Square, resulting in the toppling of President Husni Mubarak after nearly thirty years in power, were largely carried out by middle class, secularist Egyptians, much to the dismay of the Islamists. It was only after realizing the immense sociopolitical potential of the protest movement that the Muslim Brotherhood and its smaller Islamist counterparts entered the fray in strength.

CURRENT REALITIES

This background explains why the Muslim Brotherhood initially declared its opposition to the street protests in January 2011, refused to demonstrate against the regime, and issued a formal statement almost a week prior to the mass protests in which it stated that the organization “will not take part in the street protests against Mubarak’s regime as a political force or a political entity.”¹⁰ Only on realizing the inevitability of Mubarak’s fall did it change tack and join the protest in strength.

Likewise, a statement by the leader of al-Gama‘at al-Islamiya, Nageh Ibrahim, urged all members of Islamist groups to shun street protests as these were against the Islamic *da‘wa* (call to join Islam)¹¹ whereas another group, The Salafi Da‘wa in Egypt, rejected the protests as

9 Daniel Pipes, “Copts Pay the Price,” *DanielPipes.org*, Jan. 12, 2011.

10 *Al-Dustur* (Cairo), Jan. 19, 2011.

11 *Al-Ahram* (Cairo), Jan. 24, 2011.

Photo will not display.

Egyptian Islamic scholar Yusuf al-Qaradawi, associated with the Muslim Brotherhood, waves to the crowd during Friday prayers attended by thousands in Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt, February 18, 2011. Protests have continued, and labor unrest has increased.

opposed to the interests of Salafis.¹²

For its part, the Egyptian Supreme Council of the Armed Forces has taken several actions after Mubarak's resignation that ensure continuity with past conduct of the regime. These include:

- Freeing Col. Aboud al-Zomor, the mastermind behind the Sadat assassination, from prison¹³ while arresting a secular, classic liberal Egyptian blogger. Maikel Nabil Sanad was arrested on March 28, 2011, and faced trial in a military court for criticizing the ruling military council and the Egyptian army in his latest article. After announcing that they would issue a ruling on April 12, the military authorities on April 10, attempting secrecy, sentenced him to three years in military prison for practicing his basic right to free

speech, two days before the date they announced in court to his lawyers.

- Issued a constitutional declaration on March 30, 2011, and revised articles that had not been voted on or mentioned in the referendum while adding the second article in the constitution—making the Shari'a "the principal source of legislation"—to the declaration, so as to combat free speech, suppress secular dissent, and persecute non-Muslims and women.

- Consulting with Sheikh Muhammad Hassan before issuing a statement on the rebuilding of a church

near Cairo, destroyed by a Muslim mob on March 5, 2011. Hassan is a jihadist known for his radicalism and online incitement of suicide bombings as well as for his support of the Mubarak regime and opposition to the street protests. Hassan and the military have agreed to rebuild the church in accordance with the Shari'a concept of *diyyah*, in which a Muslim is not punished for vandalizing the property of an infidel but can pay a financial compensation.¹⁴

- Not arresting or persecuting any of the Muslims responsible for hate crimes against Christians. In March 2011, for example, a group of Salafi thugs attacked and brutally tortured a Christian man, cutting off his ears, for renting one of his apartments to a single Muslim woman. This suggests that the military

12 Mawqi as-Salafi website, accessed Mar. 30, 2011.

13 *Al-Ahram Online* (Cairo), Mar. 11, 2011.

14 Assyrian International News Agency, Mar. 16, 2011; YouTube, Feb. 26, 2003, Jan. 16, 2009.

plans to continue governing Egypt in accordance with Shari'a law and practice whereby Muslims are not punished for committing any crime against a non-Muslim.¹⁵

- Appointing Tareq al-Bishri, a retired judge, to head a committee for constitutional reform. Bishri has expressed approval of and fondness for the Brotherhood, saying that he personally appreciated the organization; he is also known for radicalism expressed in his book *The Secular-Islamic Dialogue* in which he stated that a secular-Islamic dialogue was completely pointless.¹⁶

FIGHTING THE 2011 REVOLUTION

All this means that, at the governmental level, the Egyptian revolution has thus far failed because the Mubarak regime, albeit without the person himself, remains very much in place. The constitutional changes approved by the March 19 referendum, aimed at paving the way for parliamentary and presidential elections in the early summer, are not conducive to real democratic reform but pander to those groups opposed to democracy. The changes put the nascent secularist and liberal parties in marked disadvantage vis-à-vis their well organized Islamist counterparts, on the one hand, and the ruling establishment, on the other.

The majority of the fourteen million voters who approved the changes (or 77.2 percent of the total vote) came from the government's six million employees and their families—a massive voting bloc rejecting the revolution and opposed to real change, which sought to preserve the status quo from which it had profited. But the fact that the Islamists cast their vote the same way



Notwithstanding some cosmetic measures to satisfy popular demands for change (notably the arrest of Mubarak and his two sons), the Egyptian Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, headed by Field Marshall Muhammad Hussein Tantawi (right, with President Mubarak), has been busy ensuring continuity with past conduct of the regime, including the arrest of a prominent blogger and reaffirmation of the Shari'a's position as "the principal source of legislation."

provides further proof of the communality of goals and interests of the two camps and their eagerness to secure the status quo as the next parliament will write the new Egyptian constitution in the absence of classic liberals and secularists and leave the real reformers out in the cold.

Then there is the Saudi government, whose relations with the Brotherhood date back to the 1930s, which views the protests as a potential threat—not only to its influence in Egypt, currently a major breeding ground of Salafism, but also to the future stability of the Saudi monarchy itself. Small wonder, therefore, that Riyadh rejected Cairo's possible drift toward democracy and criticized Washington's cold shouldering of Mubarak. It also had a leading mufti issue a *fatwa* (religious edict) against the protest movement, calling this nonviolent dissent "an act of war on Islam and the collective Islamic nation."¹⁷

15 *Akhbar Misr* (Cairo), Mar. 26, 2011.

16 Al-Jazeera TV (Doha), Feb. 15, 2011; al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun, Feb. 15, 2011.

It even threatened to cut all diplomatic ties with Cairo, should Mubarak be prosecuted.

UNDOING THE TOTALITARIAN MENTALITY

Islamists have long controlled the educational system and mass media in Egypt. As a child in a private Cairo school, I was personally taught intolerance and militancy through my Arabic language textbooks. We were taught, for instance, that hacking necks and limbs was good if done for the “right reasons” and urged to follow the example of Uqba ibn Nafi (622–83), a militant, Arab Muslim hero known for his cruelty, from an Ara-

bic school textbook that carried his name. Later, when I joined other secular Egyptians in publishing a newspaper, *al-Insan* (The Human), the Mubarak government denied us permission—even as it allowed Salafi jihadists daily access to

Islamists have long controlled the educational system and mass media in Egypt.

television and other state-sponsored media.

The Egyptian government was not unusual in this regard: Regimes in Arab countries have been united by common crimes, not by common

interests or goals. The dismantling of the collective, totalitarian psyche threatens the so-called “moderate Arab regimes,” those that justify their existence by systematically inflating the Islamist threat, which they pretend to suppress, while effectively collaborating with Islamists.

Now suddenly, the long subdued, subject populations are uniting to overthrow these regimes—not in the name of Shari‘a or pan-Arabism but under the banner of freedom and prosperity. The Tunisian revolution was the first step in dismantling the old repressive, regional order; the Egyptian revolution was the second.

Even if the near future belongs to the enemies of freedom, something profound has changed among Egyptians; none of them will be the same again. Freedom may look like a distant dream, but it is still closer than ever imagined prior to 2011.

Tahrir Square has proven even to sworn skeptics that countries are not inherently Salafist, xenophobic, fascist, suicidal, and intolerant; it takes a ruthless and well organized system of governance to shape them this way; and yet this system never succeeds in killing the natural human yearning for liberty. That is why the Salafi, jihadist line of thought did not exist in Tahrir Square. Disowning Mubarak brought out the best of Egyptians. As Senator John McCain (Republican of Arizona) aptly noted: “This revolution is a repudiation of al-Qaeda.”¹⁸



17 *Nabanews* (Sanaa), Feb. 5, 2011; *goodnews4me* (Cairo), Mar. 17, 2011.

18 Agence France-Presse, Feb. 27, 2011.

Qaddafi: Still Crazy after All These Years

Documents from the National Archive files report that the [British] Foreign Office discreetly asked ambassadors throughout North Africa and the Middle East to assess Libya’s new leader [in 1969]. A dispatch from the British Embassy in Tripoli stated: “The simplest conclusion to draw would be that in his vision of himself as a new Arab messiah, Gaddafi is bordering on the insane.” King Hussein of Jordan regarded him as an unworldly “nutcase.” North Yemen president Saleh was so shaken by an encounter with Qaddafi that he turned to the American ambassador at an event and commented: “Mad, isn’t he?”

The Daily Mail (London), Apr. 13, 2011

Middle Eastern Upheavals

The View from Syria and Lebanon

by Hilal Khashan

Demands for democracy are unlikely to make headway in fragmented societies such as Syria and Lebanon. While Egypt and Tunisia are historically and geographically well-defined entities with fairly homogeneous populations and national attributes, Syria is dominated by a small minority sect whose fate hinges on the survival of President Bashar al-Assad's regime, which will not flinch from crushing pro-reform demonstrations, even if these do not demand a systemic change. Nor is political reform conceivable in Lebanon—a country suffering from a serious sovereignty deficit resulting from deep-seated sectarian divisions.

DEMOCRACY AND ITS CRITICS

Lebanese analysts and politicians have unabashedly claimed credit for the Arab uprisings, which, in their view, are bound to culminate in the establishment of democratic political systems throughout the region. Speaking on the sixth anniversary of the Cedar Revolution last March, its politically battered leader Saad Hariri asserted that the popular uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya were all inspired by those Lebanese who in 2005 converged in downtown Beirut to demand the departure of Syria's occupying army from the country.¹ This process, according to a London-based Lebanese publication, amounted to nothing short of "the beginning of the collapse of the Arab

equivalent of the Berlin Wall ... a new Arab order in which political authority is transferred periodically and peacefully."²

At the same time, this rhetorical hype has been marred by apologetics and blatant misrepresentation. Thus, for example, columnist Hassan Sabra entreated Arab youths "to take revenge for their grandparents who unsuccessfully rebelled against despotism and their fathers who regrettably appeased it and bequeathed them shame and sorrow." This, however, did not prevent him from empathizing with Egypt's Husni Mubarak, "who served his country in peace and war and seemed ready to step down,"³ or from commending Saudi King Abdullah for "launching his own revolution several years ago for the sake of transforming his society long before the spring of reform has

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1 *An-Nahar* (Beirut), Mar. 14, 2011.

2 *Al-Hawadith* (London), Feb. 11, 2011.

3 *Ash-Shiraa* (Beirut), Feb. 7, 2011.



His own government having collapsed on January 12, 2011, Lebanon's politically battered former prime minister Saad Hariri (right, with Secretary of State Clinton in Beirut, April 2009) claimed credit for the popular uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, which had allegedly been inspired by those Lebanese who in 2005 converged in downtown Beirut to demand the departure of Syria's occupying army from the country.

crept up many Arab publics' list of priorities."⁴

For their part, Assad's supporters in Syria and Lebanon dismissed Hariri's claim to parenthood of the Arab uprisings (ridiculing the Cedar Revolution as the Gucci Revolution due to the presence of many high-heeled young women in the daily sit-ins following the February 2005 assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq Hariri),⁵ equating the public demand for freedom not with a yearning for democratic participation but with standing up to the alleged machinations of the United States and Israel. "The Arab publics admire the Syrian policy line because it arrested Arab collapse and is currently well-positioned to take the ini-

tiative to win back usurped Arab rights," argued the prominent anti-Hariri journalist Nizar as-Sahli⁶ while Subhi Ghandour, a Lebanese analyst and director of the Arab Dialog Center in Washington, reduced the Egyptian uprising to "an endeavor to restore for Egypt its leading role in advocating the just causes of the Arab nation."⁷

TROUBLE IN ASSAD'S SATRAPY

On March 12, 2011, the Arab League urged the U.N. Security Council to impose a no-fly zone over Libya to protect the civilian population from strikes by Mu'ammar al-Qaddafi's air force. The move was opposed by Yemen, Algeria, and Syria—probably the league's most fragmented countries: Yemen is divided along tribal, sectarian, and regional lines; Algeria's political fault line pits Arabs against Berbers

and Islamists against secularists; and in Syria, the divide is most pronounced in that it places the ruling Alawite minority, no more than 12 percent of the population, against the rest of the country's ethnic-religious mosaic. Small wonder, therefore, that the regime's supporters condemned the no-fly zone in harsh Baathist rhetoric, reminiscent of the pan-Arab discourse of the 1950s and 1960s: "This weird decision appeared as if it was issued by the U.S. Congress or Israeli Knesset."⁸

Assad's resentment of the international protection of Libyans from their heavy-handed ruler is not difficult to understand. Evidently

4 Ibid., Mar. 28, 2011.

5 *Al-Akhbar* (Beirut), Mar. 14, 2011.

6 *Ath-Thabat* (Beirut), Jan. 21, 2011.

7 *Nabd Suria* (Beirut), Feb. 10, 2011.

8 *Ath-Thabat*, Mar. 18, 2011.

equating democracy with regime change, the Syrian dictator has been loath to loosen his grip on his long suffering subjects lest even the most modest political reform might lead to his undoing.⁹ The Damascus regime may digress from David Ignatius's assertion that "if the experience of other countries over the past two months shows anything, it's that delaying reform too long in a one-party state like Syria is potentially a fatal mistake,"¹⁰ yet it has missed no opportunity to underscore Assad's personal commitment to reform despite the foreign conspiracies confronting him: "Mr. President Bashar Assad perseveres in his reform mission and cannot possibly be sidetracked by those who bear malice against Syria and wish to destabilize it."¹¹

To be sure, the road to reform is rarely easy or smooth, and even the most thorough reforms hit the occasional snag. As an editorial in the official mouthpiece of the regime put it: "There is no doubt that the march of reform, begun several years ago, has made progress at different levels, but at the same time, it has not been unblemished or corruption-free."¹² Yet this does not mean that the authorities will put up with "a foreign conspiracy" masquerading as public protests and "aimed at destabilizing Syria and the rest of the region," to use the words of Buthaina Sha'ban, Assad's advisor



Having publicly precluded the spread of the Tunisian and Egyptian upheavals to Syria, President Bashar Assad (left, with Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad) has been loath to acknowledge the true nature of the rapidly spreading discontent in his own country, repeatedly attributing it to foreign attempts to subvert Syria.

for political and media affairs.¹³

It is doubtful whether the official clichés about Assad's unwavering commitment to reform have struck a responsive chord with ordinary Syrians. Even some of the regime's supporters have become increasingly disillusioned with its neglect of the real issues pertaining to reform. One such critic is veteran Lebanese analyst and former Arab League official Clovis Maksud. Noting that, as early as April 2005, Assad requested the executive director of the U.N. development programs to propose reform policies for presentation before the Tenth Baath Party Congress, which convened two months later, Maksud expressed his astonishment at the failure to act on these reforms "that were adopted by the congress and the Syrian cabi-

9 *Ash-Shiraa*, Apr. 4, 2011.

10 *The Daily Star* (Beirut), Feb. 28, 2011.

11 *As-Siyasa* (Kuwait), Apr. 10, 2011.

12 *Tishrin* (Damascus), Mar. 20, 2011.

13 *BBC Arabic*, Mar. 26, 2011.

Photo will not display.

Despite repressive measures, protests continue to spread like wild fire throughout Syria, forcing the regime to lift the country's decades-old state of emergency in an attempt to pacify the situation.

Ribal al-Assad, director of the London-based Organization for Democracy and Freedom in Syria, dismissed his cousin's declared intention to reform the Syrian political system as "a big, deceptive campaign in the name of democratic reform."¹⁸ Therefore, "it seems inevitable that protest may soon crack the regime's brittle political immobility ... the birth of freedom ... is not easily forgotten—or trumped by state handouts and vacuous statements by a

net."¹⁴ Nor could he hide his disapproval of the regime's derision of the demonstrators as "lackeys of foreign agents."¹⁵

The fact of the matter is that despite his inner insecurity, Assad seems to have concluded that the Western intervention in Libya is not repeatable in the Syrian context, apparently drawing some comfort from Hillary Clinton's assurance after the killing of dozens of protesters in the northern port city of Latakia that "the USA will not interfere in Syria in the way it has in Libya."¹⁶ Moreover, judging by his defiant speech of March 30, in which he laid the blame for the protests on "saboteurs [who] tried to undermine and divide Syria and push an Israeli agenda," Assad seems to believe that he has received a new lease to rule Syria as he sees fit whereby "reforms are not a wave that we ride, and we will not proceed hastily."¹⁷

distant, self-isolated leadership."¹⁹

What may be working in Bashar al-Assad's favor is that the protest movement, while spreading from the southern border city of Dar'a to other parts of Syria, including Damascus, still appears too weak to seriously challenge his regime, owing to the heterogeneity of Syrian society, which discourages cohesion among the opposition.²⁰

Official statements and press editorials leave no doubt regarding the regime's readiness for an all-out showdown: "We are in the midst of a confrontation and not on a picnic. The country is facing a real battle with foreign forces spending tens of millions of dollars, whose aim is to destabilize Syria."²¹ This decision came only three days after the authorities had promised to exercise maximum restraint in dealing with public protests: "There are orders from the highest echelons

14 *An-Nahar*, Apr. 13, 2011.

15 *Ibid.*, Apr. 3, 2011.

16 *The Guardian* (London), Mar. 27, 2011.

17 *As-Safir* (Beirut), Mar. 31, 2011.

18 *BBC Monitoring*, Feb. 5, 2011.

19 *The Daily Star*, Mar. 3, 2011.

20 *Ibid.*, Mar. 19, 2011.

21 *Al-Watan* (Damascus), Mar. 24, 2011.

to all security agencies to refrain from opening fire on demonstrators, even if they deliberately wound or kill politically disinterested countrymen.”²²

It is highly unlikely that these contradictory statements demonstrate a shift of course in dealing with the protests since the government’s vacillation has had little impact on the scale and intensity of regime repression. Confronted with the gravest domestic challenge to the Assad dynasty since 1982, when Bashar’s father, Hafez, killed tens of thousands of civilians in the northern city of Hama in an attempt to suppress the ongoing, nationwide Islamist revolt, the regime decided to invoke terrorism as a dominant factor overshadowing the demands for reform.

Accordingly, the government has repeatedly claimed that armed gangs keep opening fire on protesters, army troops, and security forces. Oddly enough, these armed gangs have conspicuously failed to open fire on demonstrators and security personnel when regime-organized, pro-Assad rallies caused traffic congestion in major Syrian cities. As Anis Karam, the Lebanese chairperson of the American-Middle Eastern Congregation for Freedom and Democracy, put it, the regime has been “labeling demonstrators as outlaws to justify its mass killings.”²³ Indeed, the authorities have clearly indicated that they have no intention of desisting from their excessive force in quelling the disturbances. Assad even fired Samira al-Masalima, editor in chief of the state-run *Tishrin* daily, after she told al-Jazeera television that opening fire on demonstrators in Dar’a was “a security breach because it violates the explicit orders of President Assad.”²⁴

The Syrian protests may intensify, but they are unlikely to create a wholly new political reality. Though winning some seemingly major concessions, notably the lifting (on April 19) of Syria’s 48-year-old state of emergency,²⁵

the balance of power overwhelmingly favors the regime for now.

LEBANON: NO DOOR TO KNOCK ON

Some Lebanese writers expect the Arab uprisings to reach Lebanon. Nasser al-As’ad, a member of Hariri’s party and a former activist in the defunct Communist Action Movement, believes that “the ultimate goal of the Arab risings is the installation of modern democracies and the emergence of a pluralist Arab order.” Since Lebanon is a mirror image of the state of affairs in the region, he reasoned, any positive developments there were bound to have a similar impact on Lebanese politics.²⁶ Lebanese intellectual Karim Pakraduni has been similarly upbeat, arguing that Lebanese youths are no less capable of effecting change than their Arab counterparts elsewhere and prophesying the “eventual demise of Lebanon’s confessional political system and the inauguration of a civil polity on its ruins.”²⁷

Likewise, the communist-minded Lebanese Youths Movement called for a mass demonstration to spark the process of bringing down the country’s confessional system: “Why do we accept to be ruled by a confessional system that has lasted longer than the combined regimes of Mubarak, Ben Ali, and Qaddafi?”²⁸

Very few people showed up for the demonstration and repeated calls failed to attract a significant number of participants. This did not surprise prominent columnist Talal Salman, who lamented the Lebanese exception in the age of Arab revolutions: “The nature of the country’s political system prevents the Lebanese from

Very few Lebanese are eager to start an uprising of their own.

22 Ibid., Mar. 21, 2011.

23 *Al-Muharrir al-Arabi* (London), Apr. 2, 2011.

24 *As-Siyasa*, Apr. 10, 2011.

25 *BBC News*, Apr. 20, 2011.

26 *Now Lebanon* (Beirut), Mar. 5, 2011.

27 *Al-Hawadith*, Mar. 25, 2011.

28 Al-Jadeed TV (Beirut), Mar. 3, 2011.

ridding themselves of the shackles of quiescence and attaining their natural right of becoming citizens, and not just subjects or hapless followers of confessional leaders.”²⁹

For his part, political analyst Ahmad Ayyash sees no chance for the Lebanese people to follow the Egyptian example “since the country does not have a solid and cohesive regime to rebel against. The Lebanese political system amounts to nothing more than a small bourgeoisie and sectarian interests patronized by conflicting regional and international powers.”³⁰ Likewise, Lebanese commentator Michael Young finds the Arab upheavals

unworkable in the context of the country’s sectarian divide, making a case for shielding Lebanon against its vagaries in fear that the destabilization of the Arab world lead to a “Sunni-Shiite conflict in the country [that] would be devastating for all.”³¹

As much as the Lebanese are focused

on developments in the Arab countries, very

few of them are eager to start an uprising of their own. Attributing their country’s travails to foreign meddling, they content themselves with considering the regional changes as a positive development without expecting them to affect their own country.

THE FUTURE OF ARAB DEMOCRACY

Until very recently, most political scientists and commentators considered the Arab world impervious to change. They were wrong. Arab publics have been gathering enormous pent-up frustration for at least two generations, and all that was needed for its release was an appropriate spark. This was provided by the self-immolation of an ordinary Tunisian, which served as a devastating, political indictment of the magnitude of ordinary people’s suffering at the hands of self-aggrandizing ruling elites and set in train the momentous chain of events sweeping the Middle East.

Yet it is one thing for the Arab uprisings to get started; it is quite another for them to reach the ultimate goal of empowering the people and introducing true democracy. These uprisings are making the Arab world as unstable as ever. Heightened instability is likely to persist for years to come.



Arab publics have been gathering enormous pent-up frustration for at least two generations.

29 *As-Safir*, Mar. 7, 2011.

30 *Ash-Shiraa*, Mar. 7, 2011.

31 *The Daily Star*, Mar. 24, 2011.

If the Arabs Had Recognized Israel

If Israel was recognized in 1948, then the Palestinians would have been able to free themselves from the hollow promises of some Arab dictators who kept telling them that the refugees would be back in their homes and all Arab lands will be liberated. ...

If Israel was recognized in 1948 ... there [would] be no war in June 1967, and the size of Israel would not be increased, and we, the Arabs would not have the need for a U.N. resolution to beg Israel to go back to the pre-1967 borders.

Now, the Palestinians are on their own. Each Arab country is busy with its own crisis. From Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Sudan, Yemen, Syria, Jordan, Somalia, Algeria, Lebanon, and the Gulf states. For now, the Arab countries have put the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on hold.

Abdulateef Al-Mulhim, commodore (Retd.), Royal Saudi Navy

Middle Eastern Upheavals

Iraq Weathers the Political Storm

by Sterling Jensen

The Middle East political storm of early 2011 has had an interesting impact on Iraq. Though the government was confronted with almost daily demonstrations, which led to a number of high profile resignations and the use of force to suppress political dissent, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki felt sufficiently confident to boast that “Iraq has become the most stable country in the region.”¹ While this may seem a bold claim given the recent past, Maliki is not alone in showing confidence in Iraq’s prospects. The Sadrists, Kurds, and leaders of the primarily Sunni Iraqiya bloc have been equally upbeat about the country’s prospects while many Iraqi insiders believe that their battle-torn country will not only weather the instability but will also serve as a model for democracy.

Indeed, the democratic system established in Iraq through its second elected government in six years is becoming more representative and responsive to the people. While the country still has many sectarian and political differences to resolve in order to ensure its long-term stability, this system is likely to last due to four main elements: a representative government, an independent and transparent media, a professional security force, and a close relationship with the United States.

AN ELECTED GOVERNMENT

Iraqis were euphoric after the successful national elections of March 2010. Most local media stations, regardless of political slant, aired sound bites and discussions hailing the elec-

tions as blazing a democratic path for other Arab countries to follow. That euphoria quickly wore off as controversy over the election results and eight months of party negotiations followed. By December, media reports about the political process had become more depressing and fears of a new Maliki dictatorship grew. Yet once the government was formed, most Iraqis gave it a month-long honeymoon. During that period in mid-January, public demonstrations in Tunisia successfully removed Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, their 23-

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¹ *Iraq Daily Times* (Baghdad), Mar. 23, 2011.

year dictator, from power. Then in February, Husni Mubarak resigned in Egypt following protests. With an Arab League summit planned to take place in Baghdad at the end of March, Iraqi politicians, who had urged their own government to reform, also preached to their Arab counterparts on the need to learn from the Iraqi democracy.

The Iraqi Security Forces need to be more disciplined and politically neutral, especially during demonstrations.

The key for Washington will be to reinforce the importance of free and fair elections. In response to Arab instability, many government officials, including Maliki, called for the delayed local elections to take place.² This is not

the way ahead; Washington should help Iraqis prepare for local elections, then direct attention toward national elections in 2014. Following Mubarak's departure, Maliki announced he would not seek a third term.³ His statement of intent may help Iraq with a peaceful transfer of power in 2014, and Washington should press the prime minister to keep his word.

INDEPENDENT AND TRANSPARENT MEDIA

Iraq experienced its first nationwide demonstrations on February 25, 2011, in part in Baghdad's Tahrir Square. Prime Minister Maliki, who had previously encouraged citizens to exercise their constitutional rights to demonstrate peacefully—even against him—made an abrupt turnaround, and two days before what Iraqi organizers called the "Day of Rage," patterned after the Egyptian "Revolution of Rage," which started on January 25, decried the forthcoming event as a provocation by terrorists and Baathists. This ploy failed, and while there were scattered incidents of violence, such as the

deadly clashes in Mosul⁴ and the desecration of public property in Kut,⁵ the demonstrations have been relatively peaceful. Whenever the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) used excessive force, the domestic media gave extensive coverage to public outrage and dissatisfaction, driving the alarmed government to denounce any violations and to promise fact-finding investigations. Governors, mayors, and city councils resigned due to pressure from demonstrators,⁶ and the government significantly altered the 2011 budget to spend more on investment and immediate financial assistance in order to appease public demands.

This responsiveness would not have been forthcoming had there not been an independent and transparent media. The gap between the government and the people would have been much more difficult to bridge had the people been fed only state propaganda as in Libya, Egypt, and Syria.

Iraq's continued path to democracy and improved human rights will require U.S. and international pressure to keep the Iraqi media open and free. And while Washington has been reluctant to criticize the government, as it ends one of its most controversial and costly wars, it must not lose sight of the free media's role as democracy's watchdog.

A MORE PROFESSIONAL SECURITY FORCE

While the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) have come a long way from the days of sectarian death squads in 2004-08,⁷ they have yet to establish the trust required to be considered a neutral and purely national force. Rather than being seen as sectarian, the ISF are now accused of politicization. As witnessed during the Day of

2 See, for example, *The Boston Globe*, Mar. 1, 2011.

3 *Middle East Online* (London), Feb. 6, 2011.

4 *The Guardian* (London), Feb. 25, 2011.

5 *Dawn* (Karachi), Feb. 26, 2011.

6 *Middle East Online*, Feb. 27, 2011; *The Washington Post*, Feb. 27, 2011.

7 *The Times* (London) Feb. 16, 2006; *BBC News*, Feb. 16, 2006.

Rage, and despite the government's attempt to portray them as neutral protectors of the people, the ISF proved more loyal to the incumbent political parties than to the people they were supposed to protect.⁸ On a positive note, when violations occurred, such as firing on demonstrators or closing down political offices, the media and public pressure have provided checks on the parties' use of the ISF for political purposes.

As long as the media remains free and the government representative, the ISF will become more apolitical. The respect the Egyptian army was shown by demonstrators was not overlooked

in Iraq. During Iraq's wave of demonstrations beginning with the Day of Rage, the majority of Iraqi television stations aired both demonstrators and members of the ISF voicing their hope to act as the Egyptian army and not suppress or prevent peaceful protests.⁹

Notwithstanding Maliki's invocation of al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) to discredit the demonstration, AQI and other violent groups have not used the protest to carry out high profile attacks. Mullah Nathem Jabouri, a former AQI religious leader, argued that while the organization would love to blow up a Tahrir Square packed with thousands of Shiites, it would not do so because the demonstrations were also undermining public trust in the ISF and the government.¹⁰

In order to gain, rather than lose, trust from

8 *The Christian Science Monitor* (Boston), Feb. 25, 2011.

9 Baghdadia TV (Baghdad), Feb. 25, 2011; Sharqiya TV (Baghdad), Feb. 25, 2011.

10 Author telephone interview with Mullah Nathem Jabouri, Mar. 2, 2011.

Photo will not display.

Though the initial euphoria attending the successful national elections of March 2010 wore off as controversy over the election results and eight months of party negotiations followed, the democratic system established in Iraq through its second elected government in six years is becoming more representative and responsive to the people.

the demonstrations, the government will need to implement reforms and resist the impulse to use the ISF to quell public protest. Moreover, for Iraq to continue on the path of democracy, the ISF will need to be more disciplined and politically neutral, especially during public demonstrations. For their part, the United States and NATO should maintain their close relationship with the ISF so as to allow it to become more professional, which leads to the fourth element in guaranteeing Iraq's future as a stable democracy.

CLOSER TO WASHINGTON, FURTHER FROM TEHRAN

There is a growing fear among some experts, especially in the Persian Gulf states, that the Iranian regime's attempts to exploit the Arab instability will pull Baghdad closer to Tehran. In fact, the revolutions have taken Baghdad one step closer to Washington. Thus, for example, Jassib Moussawi, a prominent professor at Baghdad University, argued on state-run Iraqiya television in late February, just after Mubarak's res-

ignation, that “the U.S. neo-con plan to democratize the Middle East and help Arab human development has succeeded, and Iraq should strengthen its ties with the U.S. in order to become more of a model of democracy for the countries in the region.” He even urged the Iraqi parliament to extend the security agreement with the United States beyond 2011, all on the state-run TV station.¹¹ Statements such as these have become increasingly common in the Iraqi media.¹²

The Iraqi government wants greater regional respect and reassertion of its position in the Arab world. The nascent trend toward democracy and open society will place Baghdad more in the Western camp than in Tehran’s. Though at odds with Washington’s Persian Gulf allies, notably Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrain, due to their reluctance to accept a Shiite-led government, Baghdad will continue

to side with Washington rather than with Tehran as it develops its democratic potential still further. Iraq’s state television and Shiite politicians both condemned Tehran’s use of force against the Iranian opposition in February 2011,¹³ and they have been much more vocal about

Bahrain’s use of force against the emirate’s Shiite majority.¹⁴ While Sunnis and anti-Iranians might see this strong stance against Bahrain as an indication of Baghdad’s propensity to support Iranian interests in the region, it is important to distinguish between Iraqi and Iranian solidarity

on Shiite issues and their distinct individual national interests. Baghdad will show its solidarity with Tehran on Shiite-related issues in the region, but it will not do so at the expense of weakening its own political development. As Iraq achieves greater domestic stability, the government can be expected to display more confidence in its Shiite-led democracy that weakens, rather than strengthens, Tehran.

CONCLUSION

The Arab revolutions have given the Iraqi government added confidence that it will emerge from the last eight years of conflict stronger and more capable of playing a leading role in the Middle East in the next decade or two. Baghdad sees itself as an emerging economy and democracy that will need assistance from Washington and other Western states to accomplish these aspirations; and while Iraqi energy officials may be overly optimistic in predicting the daily export of ten million barrels of oil by 2021, exporting even half that quantity would greatly boost Iraq’s geopolitical weight.

The Persian Gulf states would be wise to stop viewing Iraq through a sectarian lens. If Baghdad is able to resolve its internal disputes peacefully and improve government efficiency through modest reforms, its future will be bright. An open media will help the people keep the government honest, and free and fair elections will make it more representative. U.S. administrations will need to stay close at hand although the U.S. relationship will no longer be based on security. Proximity to Washington will help check the government’s impulse to use the ISF for political purposes, silence the media, or not fully implement needed government reforms. Although the withdrawal of U.S. troops makes it easier for Baghdad to defy Washington, it is likely to rely on U.S. assistance in its attempt to become the model of Arab democracy it is beginning to approach.

Baghdad sees Iraq as an emerging economy and democracy that will need assistance from Washington.

11 Jassib Moussawi interview, Iraqiya TV (Baghdad), Feb. 18, 2011.

12 Hassan Snayd, Abdul Hadi Hamani, and Mahmood Othman, Sharqiya TV, Apr. 7, 2011; Borhan Mizher, Hurra Iraq TV (Baghdad), Mar. 29, 2011.

13 Iraqiya TV, Feb. 15, 16, 2011.

14 TVNZ (Auckland, New Zeal.), Mar. 17, 2011; *Kuwait Times* (Kuwait City), Mar. 21, 2011.



Middle Eastern Upheavals

Mixed Response in Iran

by Ali Alfoneh

It is too early to tell whether the revolutions sweeping across the Arab world will prove the long awaited “third wave of democratization” or will merely substitute Islamist totalitarianism for the existing secular, authoritarian regimes. It is clear, however, that no regional regime is immune to their impact, not even the self-proclaimed vanguard of permanent world revolutions, the Islamist regime in Tehran.

Perceptions in Iran of the nature of the “Arab Spring” vary. While describing it as an “Islamic awakening” inspired by Iran’s 1979 revolution, the clerics have not failed to indicate their determination to suppress future dissent and to rebuff any foreign intervention. By contrast, despite tracing the Arab revolts to Iran’s June 12, 2009 presidential elections, the opposition has thus far refrained from publicly challenging the regime though more radical forms of resistance may be brewing beneath the surface. Thus, the winds of change have apparently radicalized both rival sides.

PEOPLE POWER IS GOOD FOR SOME ARABS ...

Both regime and opposition responses to the Arab upheavals have varied from case to case, but there has been a clear consistency in the opposition’s moral support for all pro-democracy movements whereas the regime has endorsed “people power” only in countries allied with the United States but not in those aligned with Tehran, such as Syria. There was also a great deal of caution in both the regime’s and the opposition leadership’s responses during the first phase of the uprisings though ordinary opposition members found quick inspiration for their cause as the events unfolded in the region.

Public protests against Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali broke out on December 17, 2010, and by January 15, 2011, the Saudi government announced that it was hosting the former Tunisian president and his family for an unspecified period of time.¹ The first official Iranian coverage of the Tunisian events appeared on the Islamic Republic’s Arabic language al-Alam TV on December 28, eleven days after the protests had begun.² The first newspaper editorial on Tunisia appeared in the January 4 edition of *Iran*, more than three weeks after the beginning of the Tunisian uprising.³ On January 16, the day after Ben Ali’s arrival in the Saudi capital, Ali Larijani, speaker of parliament, made the first official comment on the situation, accusing the United States and the West more generally of being “behind repression and pres-

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1 Al-Jazeera TV (Doha), Jan. 23, 2011.

2 *BBC Monitoring* (London), Dec. 28, 2010.

3 *Ibid.*, Jan. 4, 2011.

asures imposed on the people of Tunisia under the rule of its former president.²⁴ Surprisingly, the otherwise opinionated President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad made no comment on Tunisia before January 19⁵ while Supreme Leader Ali Khamene'i made his position known on February

The regime's analysis of the Libyan experience has strengthened its resolve to pursue its nuclear goals.

4. Addressing the people of Tunisia and Egypt in Arabic after delivering the Friday prayer sermon in Tehran, Khamene'i portrayed himself as "your brother in religion," described President Husni Mubarak as a "traitor dictator," and said that the events in Tunisia and Egypt were "natural ex-

tensions of Iran's Islamic revolution in 1979."⁶

The Islamic Republic's official responses to the Egyptian revolution were swifter than in the Tunisian case. The first protests in Egypt started on January 25, 2011, and on February 11—the anniversary of Iran's 1979 revolution—Mubarak resigned his post and handed over power to the Supreme Military Council.⁷ Again, Larijani was the first official to refer to the situation, toward the end of January⁸—two weeks after the protests had begun but well before Mubarak stepped down. Khamene'i's statement of February 4, which also preceded Mubarak's resignation,⁹ shows that the Islamic Republic had an easier time taking a position on Egypt. A few hours before Mubarak announced his resignation, Ahmadinejad, addressing the crowds on the occasion of the anniversary of the 1979 revolution, claimed ownership of the revolutionary movements in the entire region.¹⁰

Yet from Tehran's point of view, people power is good for some Arabs but not all Arabs.

Though there was little love lost between the Islamist regime and those in power in Libya and Yemen, Ramin Mehmanparast, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, condemned NATO's airstrikes, which aimed at defending the very same people to whom Tehran had extended its rhetorical support, catching the regime in a bit of a contradiction.¹¹ As for Damascus, it was completely exempted from the regime's rhetorical support for people power as there were no commentaries and very little press coverage of the Syrian protests, which began on January 26.¹² Instead of supporting the protesters, Larijani met Syrian prime minister Muhammad Naji Otri on March 10 to discuss the regional developments.¹³

Official Iranian responses to the crisis in Bahrain came fast but were generally more cautious than reactions to the Egyptian and Libyan crises though some Iranian authorities have claimed the tiny Persian Gulf emirate, with its majority Shiite population, as Iranian territory. *Kayhan* editor Hossein Shariatmadari, Khamenei's unofficial spokesman, has on several occasions described Ahmadinejad's trip to Bahrain as "a provincial trip."¹⁴ The Bahraini opposition declared February 14 an anti-government "Day of Rage," and by March 16, the Bahraini security forces, supported by Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) units, had succeeded in suppressing the opposition.¹⁵

The first Iranian editorial on Bahrain appeared in the February 16 issue of *Quds*, which stressed the need for reforms in the emirate.¹⁶ Stepping up the criticism, on February 17, an unidentified source at the Iranian Foreign Ministry described, in an interview on the English language Press TV, the developments in Bahrain as an "internal affair" but called on Manama to "exercise restraint."¹⁷ On Febru-

4 Ibid., Jan. 16, 2011.

5 Ibid., Jan. 19, 2011.

6 Ibid., Feb. 4, 2011.

7 Al-Jazeera TV, Feb. 14, 2011.

8 *The New York Times*, Jan. 29, 2011.

9 *The Christian Science Monitor* (Boston), Feb. 4, 2011.

10 Ibid., Feb. 11, 2011.

11 Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting World Service (Tehran), Mar. 21, 2011.

12 Reuters, Mar. 30, 2011.

13 *BBC Monitoring*, Mar. 10, 2011.

14 *Asr-e Iran* (Tehran), Nov. 20, 2008.

15 Reuters, Mar. 16, 2011.

16 *BBC Monitoring*, Feb. 16, 2011.

17 Ibid., Feb. 18, 2011.

ary 19, Amir Abdollahian, the Foreign Ministry's director-general for the Persian Gulf and Middle East, stressed that "the demands of Bahraini people can be achieved by democratic and peaceful means; it is regretful to see that the police have resorted to violence in that country."¹⁸ Again, Larijani took the official lead by accusing Washington of complicity in a "violent crackdown of popular uprisings" in Bahrain while addressing the parliament on February 20, 2011.¹⁹ He was followed three days later by 191 Iranian parliamentarians who issued a statement condemning the "merciless massacre of Muslim people in Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, and Morocco."²⁰ On February 27, 2011, Hassan Firouzabadi, chief of the General Staff, attacked the United States as well, calling it "the flag-bearer of neo-racism."²¹ Khamene'i, however, did not comment on Bahrain before his March 21 New Year address.²²

... BUT BAD FOR IRANIANS

The Islamic Republic may, at least rhetorically, support the idea of people power for the Tunisians, Egyptians, the Bahrainis, and the Yemenis, but Iranians apparently belong to the same category as the Syrians for whom people power is bad.

On February 6, Mehdi Karrubi and Mir-

18 Ibid., Feb. 19, 2011.

19 Ibid., Feb. 20, 2011.

20 Ibid., Feb. 23, 2011.

21 Ibid., Feb. 27, 2011.

22 "Payam-e Nowrouzi-ye 1390," Office of the Supreme Leader Sayyid Ali Khamene'i (Tehran) Mar. 21, 2011.

Photo will not display.

In his Friday sermon on February 4, 2011, Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamene'i (standing in front), hailed the Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings as "natural extensions of Iran's Islamic revolution in 1979" that would inflict "irreparable defeat" on U.S. and Israeli influence.

Hossein Mousavi in a joint letter asked the Interior Ministry for a permit to demonstrate "in solidarity with popular movements of the region, especially the liberation seeking revolts of the people of Tunisia and Egypt."²³ Not surprisingly, the permit was denied, and the two opposition leaders, together with former president Mohammed Khatami, were put under house arrest.²⁴ As the state-controlled media pounded the opposition movement as "seditionists," Basij militia chief Mohammed-Reza Naghdi warned that the "Western spy agencies are trying to find a mentally degenerate person [to] self-immolate in Tehran so they can liken this with the beginning of the events in Tunisia and Egypt."²⁵

Ignoring the demonstration ban, the opposition rallied on February 14 and March 1 with slogans connecting the fate of the Tunisian and Egyptian dictators with Supreme Leader Khamene'i: "Mubarak, Ben Ali, it is now the turn

23 *Rah-e Sabz* (Tehran), Feb. 6, 2011.

24 Bloomberg News (New York), Feb. 28, 2011.

25 *Asr-e Iran*, Feb. 13, 2011.



Though Bahrain, with its majority Shiite population, had long been claimed by Tehran as its own, official Iranian responses to the crisis in the emirate were generally more cautious than the regime's reactions to the Egyptian and Libyan crises, with Washington—rather than Riyadh, which had sent troops to suppress the protests—being accused of a “violent crackdown of the popular uprisings.”

of Seyyed Ali [Khamene'i],”²⁶ “Khamene'i, Mubarak, congratulations with your marriage!”²⁷ and “Those in Iran with motorcycles or those in Cairo with camels, death to the dictator.”²⁸

Although limited to the major population centers and incapable of mobilizing the millions who had joined the protest movement in the immediate aftermath of the 2009 elections, the anti-regime demonstrations unmasked the duplicity and double standards of the Islamist regime: People power is good for some Arabs but not for Iranians.

LESSONS LEARNED

The regime has concluded that it must decisively suppress dissent to prevent it from

²⁶ “Mubarak, Ben Ali. Now It's Time for Seyyed Ali,” YouTube, Mar. 1, 2011.

²⁷ Iran Press Service (London), Feb. 14, 2011.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Feb. 14, 2011.

snowballing into a major crisis yet seems neither willing nor capable of liberalizing the political system once the crisis is over. Khamene'i's March 21 speech in Mashhad derided the opposition forces in Iran as “[Western] agents, weak, ghoulish individuals who are prisoners of their egos.”²⁹ Such words leave little room for mutual accommodation.

The regime's analysis of the Libyan experience has also strengthened its resolve to pursue its nuclear goals as well as its intent to shape regional developments according to its worldview. In his address, Khamene'i specifically referred to Libya's cooperation with the West, which he believed had led to Mu'ammarr al-Qaddafi's problems: “In recent years, he did a great service to the West,

which realized that a very simple threat drove this gentleman to dismantle his nuclear capabilities.” Khamene'i continued:

Take a look at the position of our nation and the position [the Libyan regime] finds itself in. Our nation witnessed a U.S.-led offensive against Iran's nuclear quest, making military threats, pledging an attack, and what not. The Iranian authorities not only did not retreat when confronted by the enemy, but every year they increased their nuclear capabilities. Over there [in Libya], the people saw that the regime, in the face of Western threats, or Western incentives as they call it, gave the orders to dismantle its nuclear capabilities. Like putting a sour lollypop or chocolate into a child's mouth, they gave them incentives, and they lost everything forever! Well, the nation sees this, its heart bleeds, and its pride

²⁹ “Bayanat Dar Haram-e Mottahar-e Razavi Dar Aghaaz-e Sal,” The Office of the Supreme Leader Sayyid Ali Khamene'i, Mar. 21, 2011.

is wounded. This can be seen in all the countries in which the people revolted.³⁰

Such statements do not provide much hope for a peaceful solution to curbing the Islamic Republic's nuclear ambitions. Khamene'i also indirectly warned Washington's allies of U.S. perfidy:

These countries [the United States and its allies] have always supported the dictators. They supported Husni Mubarak to the last possible moment, but upon realizing that he could no longer be saved, threw him away! Let this be a lesson to the heads of state dependent on the United States. When they are no longer useful, it will throw them away just like a piece of old cloth and will ignore them!³¹

The opposition, however, may also have learned at least one lesson: the need for a division of labor, or even a split, between such reformists on the one hand as Mousavi, Karrubi, and Khatami, who against all wisdom continue to call for reforming the system, and on the other

hand, a clandestine, radical opposition, which no longer believes the regime is capable of self-reform and, therefore, might pursue revolutionary goals.

CONCLUSION

The winds of change sweeping across the Middle East and North Africa have indeed reached the shores of Iran though at no point did the 2011 anti-government demonstrations threaten the regime's survival. Better geared to suppressing internal dissent than other regional dictatorships, the clerics probably have better prospects of weathering the current crisis, but as long as they are unwilling or incapable of liberalizing the political system, increased repression may result in the surfacing of more radical opposition movements inside Iran.

At no point did the 2011 anti-government demonstrations threaten the regime's survival.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.



Palestinians Dream of a Caliphate

Ramallah (Wafa)—A new survey by Near East Consulting (NEC) published Wednesday revealed that 72 percent of Palestinians surveyed believe that the Palestinians do not have a partner for peace in Israel.

About how the respondents identify themselves, the majority, 57 percent, identified themselves as Muslims; 21 percent identified themselves as Palestinians first, 19 percent as human beings first, and 5 percent as Arabs first.

The increase in adherence to religious identity is also reflected in the system preferred by the Palestinian people.

About 40 percent of the respondents said that they believe that the Islamic caliphate is the best system for Palestinians; 24 percent chose a system like one of the Arab countries, and 12 percent prefer a system like one of the European countries.

The survey was conducted on a random sample of 844 Palestinians over the age of 18 in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, including East Jerusalem.

Palestinian News and Information Agency, May 4, 2011

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Curbing Tehran's Nuclear Ambitions Tightening the Economic Noose

by Ilan Berman

Are sanctions capable of derailing Tehran's nuclear drive? Some skeptics reject such measures altogether, preferring to deal with Tehran by either accommodation or containment.¹ Others point to the spotty historical record of sanctions in altering state behavior in arguing that they will similarly fall short of forcing the ayatollahs to rethink their long-standing nuclear ambitions.² For example, sanctions were found to be successful in only a third of the 105 instances in which they were applied between World War I and the end of the Cold War.³ As the past year has shown, however, Tehran may well turn out to be the exception to the rule—but only if the Obama administration (and Western governments more generally) make swift and skillful use of the economic and strategic means at their disposal.

RAMPING UP THE PRESSURE

In June 2010, citing Iran's ongoing intransigence over its nuclear program, the United Nations Security Council authorized a fourth round of sanctions that significantly expanded economic penalties and restrictions on Tehran.⁴ It was followed just weeks later by congressional passage of the U.S. Comprehensive Iran Sanctions Accountability and Divestment Act, a sweeping set of new provisions aimed in large measure at throttling the Iranian regime's oil sector.⁵ These measures—together with ancillary steps adopted by U.S. allies in Europe and Asia—have helped considerably ratchet up the costs to Iran's leaders of their nuclear endeavor.

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Iran's gasoline imports, for example, have declined precipitously, a product of skittish foreign companies pulling back their shipments to the Islamic Republic.⁶ To mitigate the effects of this slump, the Iranian regime has been forced to ramp up its domestic refining capacity and elimi-

1 See, for example, Robert Baer, *The Devil We Know: Dealing with the New Iranian Superpower* (New York: Crown, 2008), and James Lindsay and Ray Takeyh, "After Iran Gets the Bomb," *Foreign Affairs*, Mar./Apr. 2010.

2 See, for example, Yagil Henkin, "Why Economic Sanctions Alone Won't Work," Adelson Institute for Strategic Studies, *On Second Thought*, Oct. 22, 2009.

3 Kimberly Ann Elliot, "Factors Affecting the Success of Sanctions," in David Cortright and George A. Lopez, eds. *Economic Sanctions: Peacebuilding or Panacea in a Post-Cold War World?* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), p. 53.

4 "Non-proliferation," U.N. Security Council resolution 1929, New York, June 9, 2010.

5 Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act of 2010, U.S. House of Representatives resolution 2194, Jan. 5, 2010.

6 *Bloomberg Business Week* (New York), Aug. 2, 2010; *Financial Times*, Aug. 11, 2010.

Photo will not display.

“The most recent analysis is that the sanctions have been working,” Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (right, with Joint Chiefs chairman Adm. Michael Mullen, at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, May 2010) told a television talk show in the United Arab Emirates in mid-January 2011. “They have made it much more difficult for Iran to pursue its nuclear ambitions.”

nate costly subsidies on refined petroleum—at considerable economic and political cost. Iran’s oil exports likewise have been affected as international restrictions have progressively squeezed the ability of the world’s fourth-largest oil exporter to bring its crude to international markets.⁷ Most recently, Iran’s national shipping line, IRISL, is said to be encountering significant problems as a result of U.S.-led economic pressure from bank foreclosures on many of its 170 vessels to difficulties in obtaining the necessary insurance to underwrite the voyages of the others.⁸

The impact of this economic pressure has been augmented by a series of asymmetric initiatives. Chief among these is Stuxnet, the mysterious software—believed to have been created by Israel, the United States, or both—which has wreaked havoc on Iran’s nuclear control systems

since the summer of 2009. According to the Institute for Science and International Security, between 2009 and 2010, Stuxnet succeeded in disabling close to 1,000 of the existing 9,000 uranium enrichment centrifuges at the Natanz facility in central Iran, thereby effecting at least a temporary slowdown of Iran’s nuclear cycle.⁹ At the same time, covert action has had an impact on the human element of Tehran’s nuclear endeavor. The late-November assassination of one nuclear scientist and the wounding of another in separate attacks in Tehran are but the latest signs of what the media has come to call “the covert war against Iran’s nuclear program.”¹⁰

Collectively, these measures are believed to have retarded Iran’s path to a nuclear weapon, perhaps significantly so.¹¹ As a result, U.S. officials now believe that the international community has gained “a little bit of space” to confront Iran.¹² “The most recent analysis is that the sanctions have been working,” U.S. secretary of

state Hillary Clinton told a television talk show in the United Arab Emirates in mid-January. “They have made it much more difficult for Iran to pursue its nuclear ambitions.”¹³

Yet, in spite of these successes, the available evidence suggests that international sanctions have so far fallen short of substantively altering Iran’s strategic calculus.¹⁴ To do so, Washington will need to amplify its existing pressure on the Iranian regime through the exploitation of new economic and strategic “entry points.” Fortunately, a number of those exist.

9 David Albright, Paul Brennan, and Christina Walrond, “Stuxnet Malware and Natanz: Update of ISIS December 22, 2010 Report,” *ISIS Report*, Institute for Science and International Security, Washington, D.C., Feb. 15, 2011.

10 *Newsweek*, Dec. 13, 2010.

11 *The Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 8, 2011.

12 As cited in David Ignatius, “Buying Time with Iran,” *The Washington Post*, Jan. 9, 2011.

13 *The Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 10, 2011.

14 Press TV (Tehran), Mar. 25, 2011.

7 *Financial Times*, Sept. 13, 2010.

8 *The Diplomat* (Tokyo), Mar. 27, 2011.

CURBING IRAN'S CLERICAL ARMY

In October 2007, the Bush administration designated Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a "specially designated global terrorist" under U.S. law.¹⁵ The move was historic: This was only the second time Washington had blacklisted the elite military of another nation. (The first took place during World War II when the Roosevelt administration explicitly targeted Hitler's Waffen SS.) It was also potentially far-reaching: the designation provided Washington with the authority to target the various companies and commercial entities controlled by the IRGC and to begin to exclude them systematically from international markets.

So far, however, comparatively little has been done on that score. While some sanctions have been levied by the U.S. Treasury Department against IRGC-owned businesses, interests, and personnel,¹⁶ these restrictions are still far from comprehensive. Nor does the current administration seem to possess an authoritative picture of the IRGC's global economic presence.

By all indications, the scope of that footprint is immense. In recent years, the IRGC has emerged as a major economic force within the Islamic Republic, in command of numerous construction, industrial, transportation, and energy projects as well as various commercial enterprises, valued in the billions of dollars.¹⁷ When tallied in 2007, it was estimated to have a cumulative net worth of some \$12 billion.¹⁸ Additional commercial deals since have expanded this empire still further.

This economic ascendance has been reinforced by preferential treatment from the Iranian president. Himself a former Guardsman, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad wasted no time funneling massive

amounts of commercial business and allotting preferential government posts to his onetime comrades-in-arms upon taking office in 2005, with far-reaching effects. Two years into Ahmadinejad's first term, fourteen of Iran's twenty-one cabinet posts were occupied by members of the IRGC¹⁹ while former Guardsmen and their fellow travelers made up more than a fifth of the seats in the *majles*, Iran's unicameral parliament.²⁰ The aggregate result of this trend, which has only intensified over time, has been a "creeping coup d'état" in which Iran's clerical elite, long the economic center of gravity within the Islamic Republic, has gradually been eclipsed by its own ideological muscle.²¹

Policymakers in Washington have become increasingly aware of this fact. In September 2010, Secretary of State Clinton, in a speech before the Council on Foreign Relations, described Iran's transformation into "a military dictatorship with a ... sort of religious-ideological veneer."²² Yet this recognition has not translated into a meaningful change in how the administration applies pressure on the Islamic Republic. While sanctions against Iranian entities, many of them IRGC concerns, continue apace, U.S. officials have not yet outlined the width and breadth of the IRGC's economic empire—or moved creatively against it.

Washington certainly has the ability to do so. A case in point is Khatam al-Anbiya, the construction arm of the Revolutionary Guards. A massive conglomerate of over 800 companies, it casts a long shadow over economic commerce within the Islamic Republic. As Mark Dubowitz and Emanuele Ottolenghi of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies have detailed, Khatam al-Anbiya's subsidiaries "collectively employ

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has emerged as a major economic force within Iran.

15 "Fact-Sheet: Designation of Iranian Entities and Individuals for Proliferation Activities and Support for Terrorism," U.S. Department of the Treasury, Washington, D.C., Oct. 25, 2007.

16 Ibid.

17 Mehdi Khalaji, "Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, Inc.," *Policywatch*, no. 1273, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington, D.C., Aug. 17, 2007.

18 *Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 26, 2007.

19 Ali Alfoneh, "All Ahmadinejad's Men," *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2011, pp. 79-84.

20 Ibid.

21 Amir Taheri, "The Odd Guard," *The New York Post*, Aug. 29, 2007.

22 Reuters, Sept. 8, 2010.

around 40,000 people and have won approximately 1,700 government contracts, including billions of dollars in energy-related contracts awarded without a competitive bidding process.”²³ This, in turn, means that foreign companies doing business in Iran are more likely than not to find the IRGC as their economic partner.

The U.S. Treasury Department has at-

Identifying and punishing Tehran’s uranium ore suppliers can hamper its nuclear ambitions.

tempted to flag these risks for international investors, sanctioning a series of Khatam al-Anbiya’s affiliates over the past two years in order to “help firms worldwide avoid business that ultimately benefits the IRGC and its dangerous activities.”²⁴ But it has not yet penalized multina-

tionals that knowingly engage in commerce with the IRGC. Nor has it taken serious aim at the overseas activities of the IRGC itself—even when those activities have a direct impact on U.S. national security interests. In Iraq, for example, U.S. officials estimate that one of the largest economic players in post-conflict reconstruction is none other than Khatam al-Anbiya.²⁵ That state of affairs makes the IRGC a key (if silent) partner in Iraq’s post-Saddam economy and politics—one with considerable power to steer the country into Tehran’s geopolitical orbit. And yet, despite the billions of dollars already committed to the reconstruction of Iraqi infrastructure,²⁶ concerted measures have not been taken to prevent U.S. taxpayer expenditures from becoming Tehran’s gain.

They should be. Increasingly, the economic fate of the IRGC is intimately intertwined with that of the Islamic Republic itself. Mapping the IRGC’s financial empire and then limiting its fis-

cal freedom of action are, therefore, critical points of leverage for the West in addressing Iranian behavior.

TARGETING TEHRAN’S URANIUM TRADE

In December 2009, a confidential report obtained by the Associated Press shed light on a hitherto unexplored dimension of Tehran’s nuclear edifice. The study, prepared by a member state of the U.N.’s nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), detailed Iran’s expanding global quest for the raw material necessary to keep its nuclear program afloat.²⁷ As part of that effort, the report said, Tehran was close to finalizing a deal with Kazakhstan to “clandestinely import 1,350 tons of uranium ore” from the Central Asian state at a cost of \$450 million.²⁸

The report laid bare what amounts to a major chink in the Islamic Republic’s nuclear armor. For all of its atomic bluster, the Iranian regime lacks enough of the critical raw material necessary to acquire independently a nuclear capability. Indeed, nonproliferation experts believe Iran’s known uranium ore reserves to be “limited and mostly of poor quality.”²⁹ As a result, Tehran desperately needs sufficient, steady supplies of uranium ore from abroad. Without them, its nuclear plans would—quite simply—grind to a halt.

This vulnerability, moreover, is deepening. In the spring of 2010, an exposé in *Time* magazine noted that Iran’s aging uranium stockpile—acquired from South Africa in the 1970s—had been mostly depleted.³⁰ This reality, nuclear experts say, goes a long way toward explaining why Tehran has sought to expand its partnership with the government of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, a major uranium ore repository, over the past year.³¹ It also plays a role in Iran’s expanding

23 Mark Dubowitz and Emanuele Ottolenghi, “The Dangers of Doing Business with Iran’s Revolutionary Guards,” *Forbes*, June 15, 2010.

24 “Sanctions against Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Affiliates,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, Washington, D.C., Feb. 10, 2010.

25 Author’s conversations with U.S. officials, Washington, D.C., summer/fall 2010.

26 *USA Today*, Mar. 22, 2010.

27 *CBS News*, Feb. 24, 2011; Associated Press, Feb. 24, 2011.

28 MSNBC, Dec. 29, 2009; Associated Press, Dec. 29, 2009.

29 *USA Today*, Feb. 24, 2011; Associated Press, Feb. 24, 2011.

30 *Time*, Apr. 27, 2010.

31 *Ibid.*

strategic relationship with Venezuela; with the blessing of the Hugo Chavez regime in Caracas, Iran is believed currently to be mining in Venezuela's Roraima Basin, which may house the world's second largest deposit of uranium ore.³²

Yet by themselves, these sources do not appear to be sufficient to feed Tehran's uranium habit. This February, a new intelligence summary from an unnamed IAEA member state reaffirmed that the Islamic Republic continues to search extensively for new and stable sources of uranium to fuel its nuclear program. In particular, Iran has focused on Africa—home to a number of key uranium producers including Zimbabwe, Senegal, Nigeria, and the Democratic People's Republic of Congo—as a key future source for its uranium imports.³³

Tehran's procurement patterns underscore a major window of opportunity for the West. Over the past three years, Western chancelleries have marshaled considerable diplomatic efforts to dissuade potential uranium suppliers such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Brazil from providing Tehran the requisite raw material for its nuclear program.³⁴ For all their concern, however, policymakers in Washington have not yet given serious thought to penalizing countries for their uranium sales to Iran—or crafted a legislative framework that makes it possible to do so. They should; by identifying and then punishing Tehran's current uranium ore suppliers, the international community can hamper the regime's acquisition of the raw material necessary to realize its nuclear ambitions. Punitive measures can also send a strong signal to prospective uranium sources that their involvement with the Islamic Republic's nuclear program will come at a steep economic and political cost.



In October 2007, the Bush administration designated Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a "specially designated global terrorist" under U.S. law, giving Washington the authority to target the various companies and commercial entities controlled by the IRGC throughout the world and to begin to exclude them systematically from international markets.

HARNESSING HUMAN RIGHTS

The past two years have witnessed a significant, albeit largely unnoticed, evolution in U.S. policy toward Iran. Early on in its tenure, the Obama administration—hopeful of reaching a negotiated settlement over Iran's nuclear program—consciously chose to break with its predecessor's tough stance in favor of engagement with the Iranian leaders. This led the White House to de-emphasize systematically its democracy promotion efforts toward Iran and to remain silent when Ahmadinejad's fraudulent reelection galvanized widespread protests against the Islamist regime.³⁵ Over time, however, as the prospects for meaningful engagement have faded, the administration has gravitated toward a greater focus on the Iranian street. This shift was encapsulated in its 2011 Persian new year message, in which President Obama told the Iranian people in no uncertain terms that he supported their "freedom of

32 *The Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 15, 2009.

33 *USA Today*, Feb. 24, 2011.

34 *The Sunday Times* (London), Jan. 24, 2009.

35 Ilan Berman, "How to Support the Struggle for Iran's Soul," *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2010, pp. 53-61.



Stuxnet, a mysterious computer worm—believed to have been created by Israel, the United States, or both—wreaked havoc on Iran’s nuclear control systems. Between 2009 and 2010, Stuxnet is believed to have disabled close to 1,000 of the existing 9,000 uranium enrichment centrifuges at the Natanz facility in central Iran, thereby effecting at least a temporary slowdown of Iran’s nuclear cycle.

peaceful assembly and association; the ability to speak your mind and choose your leaders.”³⁶

Washington’s renewed focus on human rights in Iran has been mirrored at the international level. In late March, the United Nations Human Rights Council approved the establishment of a special rapporteur to monitor Tehran’s violations of human rights and report on them to the council and U.N. General Assembly.³⁷ This move, which reinstated international monitoring of Iran’s domestic environment for the first time since 2002, came in response to deteriorating conditions within Iran. The Islamic Republic is now estimated to execute more people per capita than any other country in the world.³⁸ More than 1,250 political activists have been arrested over the past year for participating in protests against the re-

36 “President Obama’s Nowruz Message,” White House Blog, Washington, D.C., Mar. 20, 2011.

37 “Rights Monitor on Iran Approved,” *VOA News*, Mar. 28, 2011.

38 *VOA News*, Mar. 2, 2011.

gime.³⁹ And a recent report by human rights watchdog Amnesty International highlighted the regime’s increasingly draconian treatment of religious minorities such as the Baha’is, in violation of international norms.⁴⁰

Cumulatively, these developments lay the groundwork for Washington and its allies to make human rights an issue in their dealings with the Islamic Republic. They can do so in at least two concrete ways.

The first is diplomatic. New international data on the depths of Iran’s repression can serve as a lever to gener-

ate new legislation from the U.S. Congress that helps constrain the way the Islamic Republic deals with its captive population. Such initiatives have been considered in the past but with little success. There is reason to believe, however, that greater international attention to Tehran’s internal conduct could translate into a more receptive audience on Capitol Hill for sanctions that specifically target Iranian human rights violations—and for greater oversight of U.S. policy to ensure that the disparate parts of the government work in tandem on the goals of human rights and democracy in Iran.

Washington and foreign capitals can also highlight their opposition to Tehran’s domestic conduct through an array of other measures, ranging from the symbolic—such as the cessation of regular travel to Iran by foreign diplomats, and calls for the release of prominent political prisoners as part of official diplomatic parlays—to the

39 Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Mar. 23, 2011.

40 Agence France-Presse, Mar. 31, 2011.

concrete, including travel bans on Iranian officials implicated in human rights abuses and fines levied against companies that sell Iran equipment later used for domestic repression.

The second method by which Washington and its international partners can harness human rights is economic. There is considerable evidence that Tehran's internal behavior can be significantly influenced by external trade, much the same way the Soviet Union's was during the latter half of the Cold War. Here, the Europeans have noteworthy leverage even if Washington does not. The twenty-seven countries of the European Union cumulatively serve as Iran's largest trading partner,⁴¹ and even partial interruptions to Iran-EU trade could have a catastrophic effect on the Islamic Republic's economic fortunes. To date, however, European countries—despite their worries about Iran's nuclear progress—have been reluctant to roll back their financial dealings with Tehran. Human rights, however, could succeed where strategic concerns have not; Washington's allies in Europe have historically paid considerable attention to human rights and humanitarian issues on the continent and beyond. They are likely, therefore, to be receptive to U.S. pressure to condition their trade relations with Iran on an amelioration of human rights conditions inside the Islamic Republic. Moreover, the 1975 Helsinki Final Act—to which practically all European states are signatories—provides a legal basis for scaling back trade with countries that do not allow “the effective exercise of civil, political, social, cultural, and other rights and freedoms.”⁴² Given this backdrop, limiting trade ties on human rights grounds would simply be a matter of honoring existing international commitments on the part of Tehran's European partners.

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

By exploiting these vulnerabilities, Washington has the ability to achieve far greater momen-

41 “Trade, Countries, Iran,” European Commission, Brussels, accessed Apr. 11, 2011.

42 Final Act, Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Helsinki, Aug. 1, 1975.

tum in its targeting of Tehran. Just as easily, however, sanctions could become a victim of their own success. Today, there is a growing—and dangerous—sense of inertia in Washington. In view of the successes of Stuxnet and economic sanctions, the Obama administration has increasingly adopted a wait-and-see approach to further pressure. In private and public forums in recent months, administration officials have tried to discourage new or complementary sanctions, arguing that existing measures need to be given a chance to work.⁴³ By doing so, however, Washington risks losing its window of opportunity for altering Tehran's nuclear trajectory.

Nor is success assured. At the end of the day, economic pressure alone could well be insufficient to change Tehran's strategic calculus. The Iranian regime may simply be too committed to its nuclear course to be deterred by non-violent measures. What is evident, however, is that Washington and its allies in the international community have considerable additional leverage that they can bring to bear in their effort to derail the Islamic Republic's drive toward nuclear status.

They will need to use it, and soon. French president Nicolas Sarkozy said as much back in January when he argued publicly that the Western nations “must reinforce the sanctions” they have passed to date.⁴⁴ Sarkozy's counsel is worth heeding. If they hope to successfully thwart the nuclear ambitions of the Iranian regime, Washington and European capitals will need to be as creative, and as persistent, in preventing Iran's nuclear progress as their adversary in Tehran has been in pursuing the bomb.

43 Author's conversations with executive branch officials, Washington, D.C., Jan. 2011.

44 Press TV, Jan. 24, 2011.

Washington's European allies may be receptive to conditioning their trade relations on improved Iranian human rights.



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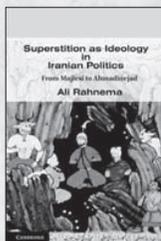
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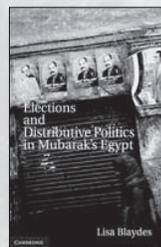
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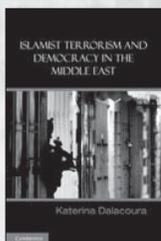
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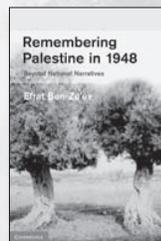


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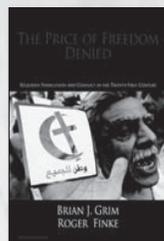


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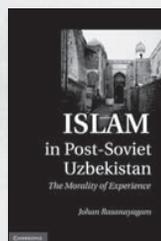
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Curbing Tehran's Nuclear Ambitions **Misreading the Mullahs**

by Aaron Menenberg

For decades now, Western governments have been seeking to contain Iranian nuclear ambitions through a standard stick-and-carrot policy combining incentives for reforms with financial sanctions for retrenchments. This approach has failed primarily because it lacks appreciation of Iranian history and Islamic values as well as the extent of the regime's religious convictions and its attendant goals. Yet as Tehran experiences a slow but significant weakening of its governing blocs with many young Iranians free of the virulent anti-U.S. sentiments that fed the Islamic Revolution,¹ positive gains can be made if the Western capitals properly understand and act upon the Iranian reality.

THE REGIME'S ISLAMIST CONVICTIONS

In a 2005 speech to residents of the holy city of Qom, Iran's supreme leader, Ali Khamene'i, outlined the errors made by the West in its evaluation of Iran, including its underrating of "the pivotal role of the religious and spiritual leadership in Iran."²

The Islamic Revolution was led by a group that believed that Islam would triumph over secular governance and that Iran, as the only country where a true Islamic government had been established, would play a central role in this victory. In the words of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the revolution's leader and the founding father of Iran's Islamic Republic:

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The Iranian revolution is not exclusively that of Iran because Islam does not belong to any particular people ... We will export our revolution throughout the world because it is an Islamic revolution. The struggle will continue until the calls "there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah" are echoed all over the world.³

This perspective remains a core belief of the Iranian leadership.⁴ For Khamene'i, the revolution was about the restoration of the Islamic faith

1 Mohsen Sazegara, "The Importance of Iran's Domestic Political Atmosphere," in Patrick Clawson, ed., *Engaging Iran: Lessons from the Past*, Policy Focus #93 (Washington, D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, May 2009), pp. 6-7; Mehdi Khalaji, *Apocalyptic Politics: On the Rationality of Iranian Policy*, Policy Focus #79 (Washington, D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Jan. 2008), p. 17.

2 Karim Sadjadpour, *Reading Khamene'i: The World View of Iran's Most Powerful Leader* (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009), p. 19.

3 Farhad Rajaee, *Islamic Values and World View: Khomeini on Man, the State, and International Politics* (Lanham: Universities of America Press, 1983), pp. 82-3; Baqer Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999), p. 236.

4 See for example, *The Washington Post*, June 4, 2009; Shimon Shapira and Daniel Diker, "Iran's 'Second' Islamic Revolution: Its Challenge to the West," Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, June 2008.

to the center of society's political, social, and religious life. Likewise, many within the current regime believe that the achievement of the goal of an *umma* (Islamic nation) on a global scale would be greatly facilitated by the attainment of nuclear weapons, which in turn makes the pursuit of these weapons too enticing to concede.

To disguise Iranian nuclear ambitions, Khamene'i has argued that Islam prohibits the

production of weapons that could kill innocent civilians. In reality, this prohibition has not ended Tehran's nuclear drive, a substantial part of which was made under Khamene'i's watch. The religious establishment has always found sufficient rationalizations to support such efforts.

The regime believes that achieving a global Islamic nation would be facilitated by attaining nuclear weapons.

By contrast, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has openly stated that the arrival of the Hidden Imam, a messianic figure for Shiites, could be accelerated by global chaos and violence. Talking to European diplomats, he asked, "Do you know why we should wish for chaos at any price?" to which he answered, "because after chaos, we can see the greatness of Allah."⁵

It would be wrong, however, to imply that the president and Khamene'i see eye to eye on the religious justification for Iran's nuclear program or its broader foreign policy goals. Ahmadinejad is a well-established believer in the idea that mankind can (and should) accelerate the return of the Hidden Imam while Khamene'i does not agree that Muslims should work for the Imam's return though he does believe that the return is extremely desirable. Nor, for that matter, did Ayatollah Khomeini, the revolution's mastermind and leader, believe in expediting this messianic eventuality. That the current Iranian presi-

dent is a diehard messianic is in fact a departure from the revolution's more down-to-earth Islamic imperialism.

When Khamene'i was brought into the role of the supreme leader, many within the religious establishment had reservations due to his limited religious credentials, his main forte being his extensive political experience. Prior to his elevation, Khamene'i cofounded the Islamic Republic Party and held numerous political and security positions, including deputy minister of defense; acting commander in chief of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps; member of the Majlis (parliament); head of the Council of Cultural Revolution; and state president. This presented a challenge to the revolution's religious ideals, in part because the Islamic Republic was not fully grounded in the infallibility of Islam, as is commonly assumed, but rather in the adoption and practice of Islam as it meshed with the regime's socioeconomic practices. Although Khomeini's theory of the rule of the jurist (*velayate faqih*), concentrating all spiritual and temporal power in his hands, was largely compatible with Islam's millenarian history, it was not so much designed to implement Islamic law as to give the supreme leader the authority to refine or overrule it.⁶ Khamene'i's political background has thus been useful in sustaining Khomeini's legacy, allowing the regime to pursue its political interests through its authority to judge and selectively apply Islamic law.

As Ahmadinejad has increasingly politicized the religious component of the regime, Khamene'i has remained truer to its purity, creating a growing divergence between the two. In the unrest attending Ahmadinejad's 2009 electoral victory, the president and his supporters sensed an opportunity to wrest some powers from the supreme leader and the religious establishment, whose unpopularity and challenged authority made them vulnerable.

For his part, Khamene'i promoted those who supported his overall agenda, rewarding them

5 *Asharq al-Awsat* (London), Feb. 2, 2007, quoted in *MEMRI Blog*, Middle East Media Research Institute, Washington, D.C., accessed Mar. 22, 2011.

6 See, for example, David Menashri, "Iran: Doctrine and Reality," in Efraim Karsh, ed., *The Iran-Iraq War: Impact and Implications* (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 42-6.

with money and positions of power and surrounding himself with conservative mullahs articulating “active presence of people believing in religion and the values of the Islamic Revolution” to maintain the status quo.⁷ Yet as Iranians increasingly voiced the demand for constitutional and governmental change, Ahmadinejad played the populist card by feigning a more secular approach. His chief of staff, Esfandiar Rahim-Mashaie, articulated the vision:

An Islamic government is not capable of running a vast and populous country like Iran. Running a country is like a horse race, but the problem is that these people [the clergy] are not horse racers.⁸

Ahmadinejad also picked several legislative and judicial fights with the clerics, challenging their prohibition of women in cabinet posts and also appointing some women to senior administrative posts, including provincial governorships. In January 2010, Science Minister Kamran Daneshjou inaugurated an international conference for women in the sciences in Tehran. Ahmadinejad’s wife delivered a speech in which she touted women, knowledge, and science as “cornerstones of Allah’s creation.”⁹

Moreover, the president included only one cleric in his post-2009 government, as opposed to the three clerics serving as ministers during his first tenure. Ahmadinejad’s cultural advisor, Javad Shamghadari, has likewise recommended that the *hijab* (head covering) should not be mandatory while Daneshjou encouraged people to observe a moment of silence at funerals instead of the traditional reciting of the first chapter of the Qur’an.¹⁰

7 Jamsheed K. Chosky, “Why Iran’s Islamic Government Is Unraveling,” *Current Trends in Islamic Ideology*, June 15, 2010.

8 *PBS Frontline*, Tehran Bureau, Nov. 8, 2009.

9 *Ibid.*, Jan. 27, 2010.

10 *Ibid.*, Dec. 1, 2009.

Photo will not display.

For President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (center; during an April 2010 visit to an enrichment facility), nuclear weapons are not merely a symbol of international status but a means to expedite the arrival of the Hidden Imam, a messianic figure for Shiites.

Between Ahmadinejad’s stacking of the government with those sympathetic to his goals and his dismissive attitude toward the theocrats, judges, and legislators, the president and his protégés have successfully attempted to take advantage of the religious hardliners’ unpopularity to tilt the balance of power in their favor.¹¹ In this sense, religion is shifting away from the center of the domestic narrative. In time, this may help produce a less Islamist government. Nevertheless, foreign and nuclear policy is formed by the supreme leader and clerics, and among Iranian diplomats and negotiators, religion still plays a critical role that must be taken into account.

MIXED HISTORICAL LEGACY

For much of its history, Iran enjoyed imperial prowess, stretching at its height over some eight

11 For Ahmadinejad’s systematic purging of Khamene’i’s supporters and building of his own patronage system, see, Ali Alfoneh, “All Ahmadinejad’s Men,” *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2011, pp. 79-84.

million square kilometers. The first great empire was founded in the sixth century BCE by Cyrus the Great, who went on to subdue the proud empire of Babylon; and as late as October 1970, the last reigning monarch, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi (r. 1941-79), chose to celebrate his fifty-second birthday on the 2,500th anniversary of this empire, vowing allegiance to its imperial legacy in front of his worldwide assembly of guests:

To you Cyrus, Great King, King of Kings, from myself, Shahanshah of Iran, and from my people, hail! ... We are here at this moment when Iran renews its pledge to history to bear witness to the immense gratitude of an entire people to you, immortal hero of history, founder of the world's oldest empire, great liberator of all time, worthy son of mankind.¹²

The shah's overthrow and the rise of the Islamic Republic did not eliminate the widespread pining for grandeur and influence, which still permeates the narrative of many Iranians and has been made more acute by the country's

steady decline over the past few centuries.

The impact of this perception cannot be overstated. Iranians look at the painful record of military and diplomatic defeats and humiliation and see a great civilization brought down by colonial powers that

have cheated it of its ability to regain its pre-modern exploits. Small wonder that Iranian negotiators consider themselves the aggrieved party at the negotiating table, a sentiment that often results in bombastic and overly-aggressive behavior and rhetoric (by Western standards) that make compromise exceedingly difficult.

¹² *Newsweek*, Oct. 25, 1971.

THE MODERATE MIRAGE

During and after the Islamic Revolution, the international community put faith in the idea of Iranian moderation against all available evidence to the contrary. From William H. Sullivan, U.S. ambassador to Tehran at the time of the revolution, who expected Khomeini to assume a "Ghandi-like role,"¹³ to the 2003 assertion of European Union foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, that the Iranians "have been honest" in discussing their nuclear project,¹⁴ to Barack Obama's proposed "engagement that is honest and grounded in mutual respect,"¹⁵ the international community has long deluded itself into a belief in Iranian moderation. In the words of Reza Kahlili, pseudonym for a double Hezbollah-CIA agent:

President Obama needs to realize that the Iranian leaders' animosity toward the U.S. and the West has nothing to do with who the president of the United States is ... the biggest misconceptions the West [has] about Iran is that it is possible to negotiate with the Iranian leadership, that there might be other players in power who could change the direction of Iran's policies, and that moderates might one day succeed in changing the regime's behavior.¹⁶

Bernard Lewis attributes the dichotomy between Iranian moderates and extremists to Western political notions:

A familiar feature of revolutions, such as the French and the Russian, is tension, often conflict ... Certainly there has been no lack of such tensions and conflicts between rival groups, factions, and tendencies within the [Iranian] revolutionary camp. The distinction between moderates and extremists is, however, one derived from Western history, and may be

¹³ Gary Sick, *All Fall Down: America's Tragic Encounter with Iran* (Lincoln: Author's Guild, 1986), p. 193.

¹⁴ Agence France-Presse, Nov. 17, 2003.

¹⁵ *The Washington Post*, Mar. 21, 2009.

¹⁶ Hannah Elliot, "Q&A with Reza Kahlili, Iranian Double Agent," *Forbes*, May 20, 2010.

somewhat misleading when allied to the Islamic revolution in Iran.

He continues,

A more accurate description ... would present the conflict as one between pragmatists and ideologues. The latter are those who insist ... on maintaining the pure doctrine of the revolution ... The former are those who, when they have gained power ... find it necessary to make compromises.¹⁷

Yet even the likelihood of finding those pragmatists (not to be misconstrued for moderates) is unfortunately very low. There is no formal mechanism in the Iranian system for reaching a compromise between different political stakeholders, which in turn makes a bargain between the various factions virtually impossible.¹⁸

Further complicating the advent of moderation is the deception commonly practiced by the Iranian regime, grounded in the revolution's religious doctrine. Among its foremost stipulations are the concepts of *khod'eh* and *taqiyya*, religiously sanctioned practices of deception, which have been in heavy rotation among Iran's government and religious establishments and are found at its very core. Thus, for example, while in exile in Paris, Khomeini promised that no clergy would hold office when the revolution won power. Back in Iran and empowered by his victory, he concentrated all power in his hands in his capacity as the republic's supreme authority. When challenged on his broken promises, he invoked the concept of *taqiyya*.¹⁹

"When we were in negotiations with the Europeans in Tehran, we were installing equip-



For Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi (r. 1941-79), the nuclear program, which he established in the early 1970s, was the ultimate reaffirmation of Iran's imperial glory. The shah's overthrow and the rise of the Islamic Republic did not eliminate the widespread pining for grandeur and influence, which still permeates the narrative of many Iranians and has been made more acute by the country's steady decline over the past few centuries.

ment in parts of the facility in Isfahan," Hassan Rowhani, Iran's chief nuclear negotiator from 2003 to 2005, candidly admitted. "The day we started the [negotiating] process, there was no such thing as the Isfahan [nuclear] project."²⁰ While Rowhani was distracting the European negotiators, the Iranians moved from having no uranium-converting capability to building a conversion plant, producing during this period enough yellow cake for five atomic bombs.²¹ The spokesman of the supposedly moderate president, Mohammed Khatami, was quoted as

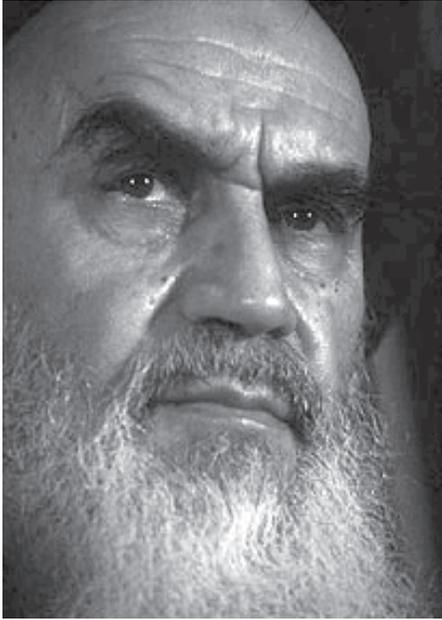
17 Bernard Lewis, "Islamic Revolution," *The New York Review of Books*, Jan. 1, 1988.

18 Patrick Clawson, *The Perfect Handshake with Iran: Prudent Military Strategy and Pragmatic Engagement Policy* (Washington, D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2010), p. 2.

19 Abbas Milani, "Pious Populist," *The Boston Review*, Nov./Dec. 2007, p. 5; for further analysis, see Dore Gold, *The Rise of Nuclear Iran* (Washington, D.C.: Regency Publishing, 2009), pp. xii, 62, 185, 246, 248.

20 Elaine Sciolino, "Showdown at the UN? Iran Seems Calm," *The New York Times*, Mar. 14, 2006; Therese Delpech, *Iran and the Bomb: The Abdication of International Responsibility* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p. 113.

21 *The Daily Telegraph* (London), Sept. 13, 2004.



From William H. Sullivan, U.S. ambassador to Tehran at the time of the revolution, who expected Ayatollah Khomeini (above) to assume a “Ghandi-like role,” to Barack Obama’s proposed “engagement that is honest and grounded in mutual respect,” the international community has deluded itself into a belief in Iranian moderation, with potentially disastrous consequences.

TEHRAN DEFIES THE SANCTIONS

On July 10, 2009, leaders at the Group of Eight summit in Italy gave Tehran a two-month deadline to begin negotiations over its nuclear program. On October 1, representatives of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, as well as Germany, met Iranian representatives in Geneva and outlined a three-point agreement, which was to be accepted by Tehran by December 31, 2009. Yet no sooner had the ink dried on the document than the Iranian government announced the postponement of an impending U.N. inspection of the Qom facility by two weeks, a move widely seen as a ploy to buy time for hiding evidence of nuclear activities. The Iranians then waited until the expiry of the deadline to present a counterproposal: Instead of shipping the low enriched uranium (LEU) abroad in a single batch, the Iranians would send it in stages and replenish the dispatched materials with LEU purchased abroad. This would allow Tehran to keep its LEU stockpile, the activity that motivated the international concern and negotiations in the first place.

To break the deadlock, Obama came up with a compromise: sending Iranian LEU to Turkey for temporary safekeeping. Tehran ignored the offer, stating that it would only exchange LEU for nuclear fuel on Iranian territory. In defiance of an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) censure, the mullahs announced their intention to build ten new enrichment plants and reasserted their determination to begin enriching LEU. And as if to add insult to injury, a day before the Geneva deadline, Tehran gave the West one month to accept its counterproposals or be confronted with full scale production of high enriched uranium.²³

The clerics, however, did not await the expiry of their own ultimatum to reject the Geneva principles altogether. Soon thereafter, Tehran

saying, “We had an overt policy, which was one of negotiation and confidence building, and covert policy, which was a continuation of the activities.”²²

True, the reality of political and religious Iran is too complicated to be exclusively explained by *taqiyya* and *khod’eh*; yet, as demonstrated by Khomeini’s comment, these millenarian Islamic practices continue to play an important, if not the leading, role in Tehran’s overall strategy and must be taken into account.

22 Michael Rubin, “Diplomacy by Itself Won’t Work with Iran,” *Investor’s Business Daily*, Feb. 13, 2009.

23 Sen. Daniel Coats, Sen. Charles Robb, Gen. (ret.) Charles Wald, “Meeting the Challenge: When Time Runs Out,” Bipartisan Policy Center, June 2010, p. 15.

moved 94 percent of its LEU to the Natanz enrichment plant and began spinning it in centrifuges. On March 17, 2010, Iran's atomic chief and vice president, Ali Akbar Salehi, tabled another proposal: Tehran would hand over 1,200 kilograms of LEU only after it received 19.8 percent enriched uranium and only if the transfer took place on Iranian soil.²⁴ With the specter of U.N. sanctions looming large, Tehran signed a deal with Turkey and Brazil, not dissimilar to the Geneva agreement, only to threaten to annul the deal if the sanctions passed. Once this happened, Tehran threatened to revise its ties to the IAEA, postpone nuclear talks with the West, and retaliate for any inspection of its ships.²⁵ Despite Obama's "open hand" outreach—a departure from George W. Bush's implied clenched fist—Tehran has not demonstrated any serious intention to reach a negotiated agreement. Nor, it seems, has it been deterred by the West's sanctions attempts.

According to Gary Sick, the National Security Council's Iran expert, during the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis, the "fatal flaw of U.S. policy" was Washington's belief in its ability to bring sufficient pressure on Tehran to release the hostages, which incubated from "the tendency to underestimate Khomeini's willingness and ability to absorb external economic and political punishment in the pursuit of his revolutionary objectives."²⁶ This belief seems to exist today in large parts of the international community, which are convinced that, notwithstanding its defiant rhetoric and political and economic attempts to circumvent the sanctions, for instance by setting up foreign banking operations and weapons factories in Venezuela²⁷ and possibly in Sudan,²⁸ Tehran lacks the will and stamina to absorb international punishment.

Rejecting the idea that Tehran will comply with Washington's demands in order to avoid sanctions, Ahmadinejad retorted, "Your incentives are definitely not more valuable than nuclear technology ... How dare you tell our people to give up gold in return for chocolate?"²⁹ That he associated nuclear technology with gold and economic incentives with chocolate provides an insightful glimpse into the psyche of the Iranian leadership and the priority it gives its nuclear program. The belief that economic concerns can be used to influence Tehran thus misses this wider motivation.

It is also crucial to understand that the 1979 revolution was based on ideas—ideas that were and still largely are unrealized in the public realm—rather than actions. These ideas underpin the regime's ideology, motivation, goals, actions, and sense of purpose. During the nuclear negotiations, the Iranians have been asked to compromise at a time when compromise itself would constitute failure. This would be a virtually impossible demand for any political actor, not least one that has repeatedly expressed readiness to die for the sake of avoiding such failure and has impudently crossed numerous red lines set by the international community.

"We do not worship Iran, we worship Allah," Ayatollah Khomeini responded to the Iraqi invasion in September 1980. "For patriotism is another name for paganism. I say let this land [Iran] burn. I say let this land go up in smoke, provided Islam remains triumphant in the rest of the world."³⁰ Echoing this mindset, Ahmadinejad wrote to President Bush:

Tehran has not demonstrated any serious intention to reach a negotiated agreement on the nuclear issue.

24 Ibid.

25 *All Headline News* (Washington, D.C.), June 29, 2010; al-Jazeera TV (Doha), June 10, 2010.

26 Sick, *All Fall Down*, p. 242.

27 "The Link between Iran and Venezuela: A Crisis in the Making?" remarks by Robert Morgenthau, district attorney for New York County at the Global Financial Integrity Symposium, Brookings Institute, Sept. 8, 2009.

28 Jonathan Schanzer, "The Islamic Republic of Sudan?" *Foreign Policy*, June 10, 2010.

29 Glenn Kessler, *The Confidante: Condoleezza Rice and the Creation of the Bush Legacy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), p. 203.

30 Amir Taheri, *Nest of Spies: America's Journey to Disaster in Iran* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), p. 269.

Those with insight can already hear the sounds of the shattering and fall of the ideology and thoughts of the liberal democratic system ... We increasingly see the people around the world are flocking towards a main focal point—that is the Almighty God.³¹

PERSISTENT WESTERN MISPERCEPTIONS

There is an irreconcilable gap between the West's and Tehran's nuclear positions: The former wants a non-nuclear Iran; the latter is determined to be a nuclear power. As the mullahs see it, those who oppose their ideology and attendant policy goals are driven by inequitable, selfish, and immoral motives and have no business asking the Islamic Republic to compromise its ideological precepts.

To this must be added the historical legacy of weaknesses, which has led Iranians to view negotiations as a means of survival and to entrench in non-conciliatory positions. From the mid-eighteenth century to the Azerbaijan crisis of 1945-47 when the Iranians prevented the Soviets from stationing large numbers of troops on their territory, Iran was in a steady process of decline, powerless to pre-

Tehran views its nuclear ambitions as indispensable to Iran's role as the preeminent Islamic power.

serve its territorial integrity and subjected to periodic foreign encroachments and occupations. Furthermore, Iranians often found their sovereignty compromised by internal divisions and political failures originating in powerful foreign influences, as in the constitutional movement of 1906-11, the role of the foreign powers in the reforms of the Pahlavi shahs, and the U.S.-sponsored overthrow of Prime Minister Mohammed

Mosaddegh in the early 1950s.

With this legacy narrating its political twentieth-century experience, the revolution was supposed to catapult Iran to the top of the regional, and eventually global, power pyramid. Thirty-two years later, the regime is finding its position as a rising regional player limited by the challenges it is facing from both domestic and international forces. Domestically, the religious authority with which the supreme leader and the religious bodies rule is facing unprecedented criticism while the current government was formed following dubious elections that led to massive and ongoing public protest. Internationally, Iran has inspired great suspicion and outright distrust and animosity throughout the Arabic-speaking world that, combined with Western and Israeli concerns, has brought together an unusual alliance against it. In this context, the nuclear ambitions, religious fanaticism, and heavy-handedness of the current regime should also be seen as an attempt to revive the passion of the revolution, which its leaders perceived to have disintegrated across large swaths of Iranian society.

Against this backdrop, the Iranians have approached the nuclear talks as a means to achieve their nuclear ambitions, viewed as indispensable to Iran's role as the preeminent Islamic power. Supporting this idea, former Iranian deputy foreign minister Mohammed Javad Larijani has said that "diplomacy must be used to lessen pressure on Iran for its nuclear program ... [it is] a tool for allowing us to attain our goals."³²

While Western societies view the concepts of negotiations and compromise as portals to peace and stability, the Iranian perspective is fundamentally different. In Khamene'i's own words, "Rights cannot be achieved by entreating. If you supplicate, withdraw, and show flexibility, arrogant [i.e., Western] powers will make their threat more serious."³³ Still the West believes that it can goad Tehran into flexibility.

31 Bret Stephens, "Iran Cannot Be Contained," *Commentary Magazine*, July/Aug. 2010.

32 *Tehran Times*, Mar. 3, 2009.

33 *Business Week*, June 4, 2007.

One of the Iranian regime's other priorities is its survival, which it secures through suppressing dissidents, shielding Iranian society from the outside world, consolidating power, and adopting independent and aggressive positions internationally. Viewed from this vantage point, rapprochement with the West constitutes a potential challenge to the regime's survival. Despite this, the West still believes that it can succeed by offering rapprochement.

Khamene'i stated,

Cutting ties with America is among our basic policies. However, we have never said that the relations will remain severed forever ... the conditions of the American government are such that any relations would prove harmful on the nation and thereby we are not pursuing them ... Undoubtedly, the day the relations with America prove beneficial for the Iranian nation I will be the first one to approve of that.³⁴

However, taken in the context of his speeches and policies, the message is not one of moderation but entrenchment. While some have offered this quote as evidence of moderation, a more probable interpretation is that Khamene'i simply believes once Tehran gets what it wants, the two countries' positions will be better attuned and their relations will consequently improve. While it is true that the Iranian regime craves the legitimacy attending renewed relations with Washington, experience shows that Tehran has thus far been highly adept in engaging the U.S.



"When we were in negotiations with the Europeans in Tehran, we were installing equipment in parts of the facility in Isfahan," Hassan Rowhani (left, with British foreign secretary Jack Straw in Tehran), Iran's chief nuclear negotiator from 2003 to 2005, candidly admitted. "The day we started the [negotiating] process, there was no such thing as the Isfahan [nuclear] project."

government while simultaneously showing it the back of its hand, thus winning the perception game. This may allow the Iranian regime to achieve the goal of recognition without having to pay for it.³⁵

Furthermore, although Khamene'i has repeatedly spoken about the importance of Iran's scientific and technological pursuits for national sovereignty, and while one of the revolution's main criticisms of the shah was his reliance on foreign countries for labor and expertise in these fields, the West seems to believe against all available evidence that Tehran will outsource its nuclear science and technology.

Nor have Western leaders taken the supreme leader's dismissive view of the sanctions at face value. For one thing, Khamene'i has argued that not only are sanctions "not going to have any adverse effect on our country and nation," but they will actually help Iranians be-

34 Khamene'i's address to students in Yazd, Jan. 3, 2008, cited in Sadjadpour, *Reading Khamene'i*, p. 17.

35 For additional analysis, see Michael Singh, "Changing Iranian Behavior: Lessons from the Bush Years," in Clawson, *Engaging Iran*.

come more self-sufficient by forcing them to stand on their own feet.³⁶ For another, he claimed that even in the unlikely event that sanctions would have an adverse effect, this would be a cost worth paying. In his words:

In order to attain independence and achieve national sovereignty and honor, any nation will have to pay a price. But nations should incur such expenses ... they should be hopeful of the valuable results of their endeavors, despite all the attempts that are being made ... to undermine their hopes and aspirations.³⁷

CONCLUSIONS

Western engagement policy in general and the Obama administration's outreach in particular have failed because of their fundamental misperception of the Iranian religious and historical narratives, as well as Tehran's attitudes, goals, and strategic priorities. For the Islamic Republic

regime, nuclear weapons are not a bargaining chip but the ultimate means for achieving its hegemonic ambitions abroad and securing its indefinite grip on power at home.

This is not to say that there are no ways to deter Tehran, but these will require a fundamental revision of Western working assumptions

and negotiating strategy, with engagement giving way to a more aggressive approach. Specifically, the West should

- Curb its enthusiasm and flexibility in dealing with Tehran and ratchet up the price of engagement;

- Encourage Arab and Muslim states to take tougher stands against Iran, both unilaterally and in regional and international organizations such as the U.N., the Gulf Cooperation Council, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference;

- Take steps to reduce the impact of a global rise in oil prices;

- Invest in the Global Internet Freedom Consortium's operations to help Internet users evade government censorship;

- Establish a unified U.S. approach by aligning the strategies of the executive and legislative branches;

- Ensure that Moscow will not deliver the S-300 anti-aircraft system to Iran;

- Establish a credible military threat in coordination with Israel, possibly by initiating a naval blockade of Iran;

- Intensify the efforts to reduce the capabilities and impact of Iran's proxies; and

- Establish better ties with the Iranian people, especially the opposition and youth, through indirect engagement such as increased reach of Western media in Iran, confronting Iranian human rights abuses at international forums, and frustrating government censorship of the Internet.

In 1961, Antulio Ramirez Ortiz used a gun to become the first person to hijack a U.S. aircraft. Forty years later, it took only knives for nineteen men to hijack four U.S. aircraft and use them as weapons of mass destruction to murder over 3,000 people. Clearly, weapons in themselves are not the potential enemy but rather the people possessing them. The way to prevent a nuclear Iran, therefore, is to concentrate less on its nuclear program and more on the regime seeking to acquire this capability.

The Obama administration's outreach has failed because of a misperception of Iranian religious and historical narratives.

³⁶ Sadjadpour, *Reading Khamene'i*, p. 11.

³⁷ *Ibid.*



Shari‘a and Violence in American Mosques

by Mordechai Kedar and David Yerushalmi

How great is the danger of extremist violence in the name of Islam in the United States? Recent congressional hearings into this question by Rep. Peter King (Republican of New York), chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, have generated a firestorm of controversy among his colleagues, the press, and the general public. Though similar hearings have taken place at least fourteen times since 2001,¹ King was labeled a latter-day Joe McCarthy and the hearings called an assault on civil liberties and a contemporary witch-hunt. Yet the larger dilemmas outlined by both the congressman and some of his witnesses remain: To what extent are American Muslims, native-born as well as naturalized, being radicalized by Islamists? And what steps can those who are sworn to the protection of American citizenry take that will uncover and disrupt the plots of those willing to take up arms against others for the sake of jihad?

ROOT CAUSES AND ENABLING MECHANISMS

While scholarly inquiry into the root causes and factors supportive of terrorism has accelerated since the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, there are few empirical studies that attempt to measure the relationship between specific variables and support for terrorism. To date, almost all of the professional and academic work in this field has been anecdotal surveys or case studies tracing backward through the personal

profiles of terrorists and the socioeconomic and political environments from which they came.²

One study by Quintan Wiktorowicz, assistant professor of international studies at Rhodes College and now on the staff of the National Security Council,³ noted that modern jihadists legitimize their violent activities by relying on the same textual works as their nonviolent Salafist counterparts. However, the approach taken to these texts by the violent jihadist may be distinguished from that of the nonviolent Salafist insofar as the jihadist uses the principles advanced by both classical and modern Islamic scholars and ideologues and adapts them to modern situations in a way that provides a broader sanction for the permissible use of violence.⁴

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1 “Timeline of the Committee’s Work on Violent Islamist Radicalization,” Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Washington, D.C., accessed Mar. 24, 2011.

2 James A. Piazza, “Rooted in Poverty? Terrorism, Poor Economic Development and Social Cleavages,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Spring 2006, pp. 159-77.

3 *Morning Edition*, National Public Radio, Jan. 24, 2011.

4 Quintan Wiktorowicz, “A Genealogy of Radical Islam,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 28 (2005), pp. 75-97.

Table 1: Number of Mosques Surveyed by State

	<u>n=</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Arizona	2	2.0
California	26	26.0
District of Columbia	1	1.0
Florida	12	12.0
Georgia	1	1.0
Michigan	8	8.0
New Jersey	5	5.0
New York	3	3.0
North Carolina	12	12.0
Pennsylvania	1	1.0
South Carolina	2	2.0
Tennessee	2	2.0
Texas	9	9.0
Utah	3	3.0
Virginia	<u>13</u>	<u>13.0</u>
Total	100	100.0

Further, in 2007, Paul Gill concluded that terrorist organizations seek societal support by creating a “culture of martyrdom” and that one theme common to suicide bombers was the support they received from a community that esteemed the concept of martyrdom. Thus, a complex dynamic is at work between a terrorist organization, society, and individuals with the interplay between these three dimensions enabling radicalization and terrorist attacks.⁵

Another item that may help to understand the growth of modern jihadism appears in Marc Sageman’s 2004 study, which found that 97 percent of jihadists studied had become increasingly devoted to forms of Salafist Islam highly adherent to Shari‘a (Islamic law) while on their path to radicalization, despite many coming from less rigorous devotional levels during their youths. This increase in devotion to Salafist Islam was measured by outwardly observable behaviors such as wearing traditional Arabic, Pakistani, or Afghan clothing or growing a beard.⁶

When viewed together, a picture emerges that may give researchers, as well as law enforcement officials, a way to monitor or potentially to predict

where violent jihad may take root. Potential recruits who are swept up in this movement may find their inspiration and encouragement in a place with ready access to classic and modern literature that is positive toward jihad and violence, where highly Shari‘a-adherent behavior is practiced, and where a society exists that in some form promotes a culture of martyrdom or at least engages in activities that are supportive of violent jihad. The mosque can be such a place.

That the mosque is a societal apparatus that might serve as a support mechanism for violent jihad may seem self-evident, but for it to be a useful means for measuring radicalization requires empirical evidence. A 2007 study by the New York city police department noted that, in the context of the mosque, high levels of Shari‘a adherence, termed “Salafi ideology” by the authors of the report, may relate to support for violent jihad. Specifically, it found that highly Shari‘a-adherent mosques have played a prominent role in radicalization.⁷ Another study found a relationship between frequency of mosque attendance and a predilection for supporting suicide attacks but discovered no empirical evidence linking support for suicide bombings to some measure of religious devotion (defined and measured by frequency of prayer).⁸

However, the study suffers from a major methodological flaw, namely, reliance on self-reporting of prayer frequency. Muslims would be under social and psychological pressure to report greater prayer frequency because their status as good or pious believers is linked to whether they fulfill the religious obligation to pray five times a day.⁹ This piety is not dependent on regular mosque attendance as Muslims are permitted to pray outside of a mosque environment whenever necessary.¹⁰

7 Mitchell D. Silber and Arvin Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat* (New York: New York City Police Department, 2007), pp. 2-90.

8 Jeremy Ginges, Ian Hansen, and Ara Norenzayan, “Religion and Support for Suicide Attacks,” *Psychology Science*, 2 (2009), pp. 224-30.

9 Saba Mahmood, “Rehearsed Spontaneity and the Conventionality of Ritual: Disciplines of Salat,” *American Ethnologist*, Nov. 2004, pp. 827-53.

5 See Paul Gill, “A Multi-Dimensional Approach to Suicide Bombing,” *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*, 2 (2007), pp. 142-59.

6 Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 93.

Table 2: Shari‘a-adherent Mosques and Violence-positive Materials

	No material (n=19)	Moderate ¹ (n=30)	Severe (n=51) ²	Total	Chi-square (all df=2)
Prayer service ³					
Segregation in prayer					
No	16 (26%)	17 (27%)	29 (47%)	62	6.48, p=.04
Yes	2 (5%)	13 (35%)	22 (60%)	37	
Alignment of prayer lines					
No	16 (36%)	10 (22%)	19 (42%)	45	16.86, p<.001
Yes	2 (4%)	20 (37%)	32 (59%)	54	
Description of imam or lay leader ⁴					
Imam or lay leader has Sunna beard					
No ⁵	13 (26%)	14 (28%)	23 (46%)	50	6.62, p=.04
Yes ⁶	3 (7%)	15 (33%)	28 (61%)	46	
Imam wore head covering					
No	9 (20%)	16 (35%)	21 (46%)	46	1.98, p=.37
Yes	7 (14%)	13 (26%)	30 (60%)	50	
Imam wore traditional (non-Western garb)					
No	11 (25%)	14 (32%)	19 (43%)	44	4.97, p=.08
Yes	5 (10%)	15 (29%)	32 (62%)	52	
Imam wore watch on right wrist ⁷					
No	15 (18%)	23 (28%)	45 (54%)	83	2.61, p=.27
Yes	1 (8%)	6 (50%)	5 (42%)	12	

¹ Has only *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* commentary on the Qur’an and/or *Fiqh as-Sunna* (n=20).

² Has *Riyadh as-Salaheen* (n=7) or more extreme *fiqh* material.

³ In 1 mosque there was no prayer and surveyor could not determine the usual practice.

⁴ 4 mosques did not have a leader.

⁵ 3 with no beard included in this category.

⁶ 3 had traditional beards with henna, and all were in the severe group. They were combined with this group for ease of reporting.

⁷ In 1 case it was not determined.

Hence, the pressure to over-report exists for self-reporting of prayer frequency but is not present in self-reporting of frequency of mosque attendance, which is a measure of both coalitional or group commitment and religious devotion.

Thus, there is a need for the study and corroboration of a relationship between high levels of Shari‘a adherence as a form of religious devotion and coalitional commitment, Islamic literature that shows violence in a positive light, and institutional support for violent jihad. By way of filling this lacuna, the authors of this article undertook a survey specifically designed to determine empiri-

cally whether a correlation exists between observable measures of religious devotion linked to Shari‘a adherence in American mosques and the presence of violence-positive materials at those mosques. The survey also sought to ascertain whether a correlation exists between the presence of violence-positive materials at a mosque and the promotion of jihadism by the mosque’s leadership through recommending the study of these materials or other manifest behaviors.

IDENTIFYING SHARI‘A-ADHERENT BEHAVIORS

Shari‘a is the Islamic system of law based primarily on two sources held by Muslims to be respectively direct revelation from God and di-

10 Daniel Winchester, “Embodying the Faith: Religious Practice and the Making of Muslim Moral Habitus,” *Social Forces*, June 2008, pp. 1753-80; Sayyid Sabiq, *Fiqh as-Sunna* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1991), vol. 2, pp. 67-74.

Table 3: Violence-positive Materials, Mosque Attendance, and Shari'a-based Worshiper Characteristics

	No material (n=19)	Moderate ¹ (n=30)	Severe ² (n=51)	Total	F test (unless otherwise noted)
Number of worshippers ³	Median 4 Mean 15	Median 25 Mean 60	Median 45 Mean 118	Median 28 Mean 81	Kruskal-Wallis, p<.002
Percentage of men with beards (SD) ⁴	14% (26.3) (n=17)	36% (25.4) (n=30)	48% (32.4) (n=51)	39% (31.7) (n=98)	F=8.61, df=2, 95 p<.001
Percentage of men with hats	16% (25.8) (n=17)	34% (26.2) (n=29)	47% (32.6) (n=51)	38% (31.3) (n=97)	F=6.54, df=2, 94 p=.002
Percentage of men with Western garb	73% (39.9) (n=16)	35% (30.7) (n=30)	34% (33.1) (n=51)	41% (36.2) (n=97)	F=8.79, df=2, 94 p<.001
Percentage of women with modern hijab (vs. traditional hijab/niqab) ⁵	57% (45.0) (n=7)	38% (37.5) (n=21)	42% (27.3) (n=37)	33% (32.9) (n=65)	F=0.92, df=2, 62, p=.40
Percentage of girls with hijab	29% (48.8) (n=7)	14% (32.2) (n=21)	36% (40.4) (n=37)	28% (43.8) (n=65)	F=1.87, df=2, 62, p=.16
Percentage of boys with head covering ⁶	14% (37.8) (n=7)	24% (37.6) (n=20)	32% (40) (n=36)	27% (38.8) (n=63)	F=0.72, df=2, 60, p=.49

¹ Has only *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* commentary on the Qur'an and/or *Fiqh as-Sunna* (n=20).

² Has *Riyadh as-Salaheen* (n=7) or more extreme *fiqh* material.

³ In 2 mosques only the imam was present.

⁴ Data in parentheses that follow percentage figures denote the standard deviation.

⁵ Women were present in 65 mosques.

⁶ Boys were present in 63 mosques.

vinely inspired: the Qur'an and the Sunna (sayings, actions, and traditions of Muhammad). There are other jurisprudential sources for Shari'a derived from the legal rulings of Islamic scholars. These scholars, in turn, may be adherents of differing schools of Islamic jurisprudence. Notwithstanding those differences, the divergence at the level of actual law is, given the fullness of the *corpus juris*, confined to relatively few marginal issues. Thus, there is general unity and agreement across the Sunni-Shiite divide and across the various Sunni *madh'habs* (jurisprudential schools) on core normative behaviors.¹¹

Surveyors were asked to observe and record selected behaviors deemed to be Shari'a-adherent. These behaviors were selected precisely because they constitute observable and measurable practices of an orthodox form of Islam as opposed to internalized, non-observable articles of faith. Such visible modes of conduct are considered by

traditionalists to have been either exhibited or commanded by Muhammad as recorded in the Sunna and later discussed and preserved in canonical Shari'a literature. The selected behaviors are among the most broadly accepted by legal practitioners of Islam and are not those practiced only by a rigid subgroup within Islam—Salafists, for example.

Among the behaviors observed at the mosques and scored as Shari'a-adherent were: (a) women wearing the *hijab* (head covering) or *niqab* (full-length shift covering the entire female form except for the eyes); (b) gender segregation during mosque prayers; and (c) enforcement of straight prayer lines. Behaviors that were not scored as Shari'a-adherent included: (a) women wearing just a modern *hijab*, a scarf-like covering that does not cover all of the hair, or no covering; (b) men and women praying together in the same room; and (c) no enforcement by the imam, lay leader, or worshippers of straight prayer lines.

The normative importance of a woman's hair covering is evidenced by two central texts, discussed at length below, *Reliance of the Traveller* and *Fiqh as-Sunna* (Law of the Sunna), both of which express agreement on the obligation of a woman to wear the *hijab*:

11 Ahmad ibn Naqib al-Misri, *Reliance of the Traveller and Tools for the Worshipper*, trans. Sheikh Nuh Ha Mim Keller, p. vii; Wael B. Hallaq, *Shari'a: Theory, Practice, Transformations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 72-8, 113-24.

Table 4: Shari‘a-based Mosque Prayer, Shari‘a-based Imam Characteristics, and Imam Recommended Violence-positive Material

	Did not recommend ¹ (n=15, 15%)	Recommended (n=82, 85%)	Total (n=97) ²	Chi-square (all df=1) p=
Prayer service				
Segregation in prayer				
No	12 (20%)	48 (80%)	60	3.77, p=.05
Yes	2 (6%)	34 (94%)	36	
Alignment of prayer lines				
No	12 (28%)	31 (72%)	43	11.10, p=.001
Yes	2 (4%)	51 (96%)	53	
Description of imam or lay leader				
Beard of imam or lay leader				
No	11 (22%)	39 (78%)	50	4.61, p=.03
Yes	3 (7%)	43 (93%)	46	
Imam wore head covering				
No	9 (20%)	37 (80%)	46	1.76, p=.18
Yes	5 (10%)	45 (90%)	50	
Imam wore traditional garb				
No	10 (23%)	34 (77%)	44	4.32, p=.04
Yes	4 (8%)	48 (92%)	52	
Imam wore watch on right wrist³				
No	14 (17%)	69 (83%)	83	2.37, p=.12
Yes	0 (0%)	12 (100%)	12	

¹ Ten imams did not recommend that a worshiper study any violence-positive materials and 4 imams instructed against the study of violence-positive materials. All 14 observations were included in the “do not recommend” category.

² In 4 mosques, neither an imam nor a lay leader was present. However, in 1 of these 4 cases the imam had made clear recommendations on the mosque’s webpage.

³ In 1 case it was not determined.

There is no such dispute over what constitutes a woman’s *aurah* [private parts/nakedness]. It is stated that her entire body is *aurah* and must be covered, except her hands and face ... God does not accept the prayer of an adult woman unless she is wearing a head covering (*khimar*, *hijab*).¹²

The nakedness of a woman (even if a young girl) consists of the whole body except the face and hands. The nakedness of a woman is that which invalidates the prayer if exposed. ... It is recommended for a woman to wear a covering over her head (*khimar*), a full length shift, and a heavy slip under it that does not cling to the body.¹³

In a similar fashion, Shari‘a requires that the genders be separated during prayers. While both *Reliance of the Traveller* and *Fiqh as-Sunna* express a preference that women should pray at home rather than the mosque,¹⁴ they agree that if women do pray in the mosque, they should pray in lines separate from the men.¹⁵ Additionally, authoritative Shari‘a literature agrees that the men’s prayer lines should be straight, that men should be close together within those lines, and that the imam should enforce prayer line alignment.¹⁶

SANCTIONED VIOLENCE

The mosques surveyed contained a variety of texts, ranging from contemporary printed pam-

phlets and handouts to classic texts of the Islamic canon. From the perspective of promoting violent jihad, the literature types were ranked in the survey from severe to moderate to nonexistent. The texts selected were all written to serve as normative and instructive tracts and are not scriptural. This is important because a believer is free to understand scripture literally, figuratively, or merely poetically when it does not have a normative or legal gloss provided by Islamic jurisprudence.

The moderate-rated literature was authored by respected Shari‘a religious and/or legal authorities; while expressing positive attitudes toward violence, it was predominantly concerned with the more mundane aspects of religious worship and ritual. The severe material, by contrast, largely consists of relatively recent texts written by ideologues, rather than Shari‘a scholars, such as Abul Ala Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb. These, as well as materials published and disseminated by the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood, are primarily, if not exclusively, aimed at using Islam to advance a violent political agenda.

Mawdudi (1903-79), for one, believed that it was legitimate to wage violent jihad against “infi-

12 Sabiq, *Fiqh as-Sunna*, vol. 1, p. 113.

13 Misri, *Reliance of the Traveller*, F5.3, F5.6.

14 Ibid., F12.4; Sabiq, *Fiqh as-Sunna*, vol. 2, pp. 50, 56.

15 Misri, *Reliance of the Traveller*, F12.32; Sabiq, *Fiqh as-Sunna*, vol. 2, p. 64a.

16 Misri, *Reliance of the Traveller*, F8.2; Sabiq, *Fiqh as-Sunna*, vol. 2, pp. 50, 56.

Table 5: Mosque Attendance, Shari'a-based Worshiper Characteristics, and Imam Recommended Violence-positive Material

	Did not recommend ¹ (n=15, 15%)	Recommended (n=82, 85%)	F test for significance
Number of worshippers	Median=4 Total=250	Median=39 Total=7864	Mann-Whitney U p<.001
Percentage of men with beards (SD) ²	13% (27.6) (n=13)	44% (30.3) (n=82)	F=11.99, df=1, 93, p=.001
Percentage of men with hats	15% (27.2) (n=13)	42% (30.4) (n=81)	F=9.07, df=1, 92, p=.003
Percentage of men with Western garb	87% (19.1) (n=12)	34% (32.6) (n=82)	F=30.17, df=1, 91, p<.0001
Percentage of women with modern hijab (vs. traditional hijab/niqab) ³	70% (44.7) (n=5)	41% (30.9) (n=59)	F=3.85, df=1, 62, p<.054
Percentage of girls with hijab	20% (44.7%) (n=5)	29% (41.6) (n=60)	F=.21, df=1, 63, p=.65
Percentage of boys with head coverings	0% (n=5)	30% (39.6) (n=58)	F=2.77, df=1, 91, p<.10

¹ Ten imams did not recommend the study of any materials and 4 imams instructed against the study of violence-positive materials. All 14 observations were included in the "do not recommend" category.

² Data in parentheses that follow percentage figures denote the standard deviation.

³ Women were present in 65 mosques. Data collected on percent women with niqab (rare), hijab, and modern hijab.

lemical works seeking to advance a politicized Islam through violence, if necessary. Nor are these authors recognized Shari'a scholars.

The same cannot be said for some classical works that are also supportive of violence in the name of Islam. Works by several respected jurists and scholars from the four major Sunni schools of jurisprudence, dating from the eighth to fourteenth centuries, are all in agreement that violent jihad against non-Muslims is a religious obligation.¹⁹ Such behavior is normative, legally-sanctioned

del colonizers" in order to gain independence and spread Islam. His *Jihad in Islam*, found in many of the mosques surveyed, instructed followers to employ force in pursuit of a Shari'a-based order:

These [Muslim] men who propagate religion are not mere preachers or missionaries, but the functionaries of God [so that they may be witnesses for the people], and it is their duty to wipe out oppression, mischief, strife, immorality, high handedness, and unlawful exploitation from the world by force of arms.¹⁷

Similarly, Qutb's *Milestones* serves as the political and ideological backbone of the current global jihad movement. Qutb, for example, sanctions violence against those who stand in the way of Islam's expansion:

If someone does this [prevents others from accepting Islam], then it is the duty of Islam to fight him until either he is killed or until he declares his submission.¹⁸

These materials differ from other severe and moderate-rated materials because they are not Islamic legal texts per se but rather are po-

violence not confined to modern writers with a political axe to grind. Nor does its presence in classical Muslim works make it a relic of some medieval past. While *Umdat as-Salik* (Reliance of the Traveler) may have been compiled in the fourteenth century, al-Azhar University, perhaps the preeminent center of Sunni learning in the world, stated in its 1991 certification of the English translation that the book "conforms to the practice and faith of the orthodox Sunni community."²⁰ While addressing a host of theological matters and detailed instructions as to how Muslims should order their daily routine to demonstrate piety and commitment to Islam, this certified, authoritative text spends eleven pages expounding on the applicability of jihad as violence directed against non-Muslims, stating for example:

19 Hallaq, *Shari'a: Theory, Practice, Transformations*, pp. 324-34; Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), pp. 42-137; Rudolph Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener Publications, 2005), pp. 1-57; David Cook, *Understanding Jihad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 13-92; Majid Khadduri, trans., *The Islamic Law of Nations: Shaybani's Siyar* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), pp. 1-22; Mary Haybeck, *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 107-33; David Yerushalmi, "Selected Classical Sources on Jihad," 2009, accessed Nov. 6, 2010.

20 Al-Azhar certification of *Reliance of the Traveller*, Islamic Research Academy, al-Azhar University, Cairo, Feb. 11, 1991.

17 Abul Ala Mawdudi, *Jihad in Islam*, Mar. 27, 2006.

18 Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, in *Studies in Islam and the Middle East*, 2005, p. 34.

Table 6: Violence-positive Materials and Promotion of Violent Jihad

	No material (n=19)	Moderate ¹ (n=30)	Severe ² (n=51)	Total (n=100)	Chi-square (all df=2)
Imam recommended studying texts promoting violence					70.7, p<.001
No	14 (82%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	15	
Yes	3 (18%) ³	28 (97%)	51 (100%)	82	
Promoted violent jihad					87.6, p<.001
No	18 (95%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	19	
Yes	1 (5%)	29 (97%)	51 (100%)	81	
Promoted joining terrorist organization					.49, p=.78
No	18 (95%)	28 (93%)	46 (90%)	92	
Yes	1 (5%)	2 (7%)	5 (10%)	8	
Promoted financial support of terror					81.9, p<.001
No	18 (95%)	1 (3%)	1 (2%)	20	
Yes	1 (5%)	29 (97%)	50 (98%)	80	
Collected money openly at mosque for known terrorist organization					.70, p=.70
No	18 (95%)	29 (97%)	47 (92%)	94	
Yes	1 (5%)	1 (3%)	4 (8%)	6	
Promotes caliphate in U.S.					81.9, p<.001
No	18 (95%)	1 (3%)	1 (2%)	20	
Yes	1 (5%)	29 (97%)	50 (98%)	80	
Praising terror against West					87.6, p<.001
No	18 (95%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	19	
Yes	1 (5%)	29 (97%)	51 (100%)	81	
Distributed memorabilia featuring jihadists or terrorist organizations					0.99, p=.61
No	18 (95%)	28 (93%)	45 (88%)	91	
Yes	1 (5%)	2 (7%)	6 (12%)	9	
Mosque invited imams or preachers who are known to have promoted violent jihad					28.9, p<.001
No	18 (95%)	12 (40%)	12 (24%)	42	
Yes	1 (5%)	18 (60%)	39 (76%)	58	

¹ Has only *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* commentary on the Qur'an and/or *Fiqh as-Sunna* (n=20).

² Has *Riyadh as-Salaheen* (n=7) or more extreme *fiqh* material.

³ Denominator is 17, 2 in this column had no imam or leader.

The caliph ... makes war upon Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians ... provided he has first invited them to enter Islam in faith and practice, and if they will not, then invited them to enter the social order of Islam by paying the non-Muslim poll tax.²¹

The caliph fights all other peoples until they become Muslim ... because they are not a people with a book, nor honored as such, and are not permitted to settle with paying the poll tax.²²

The *Fiqh as-Sunna* and *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* are examples of works that were rated “moderate” for purposes of this survey. The former, which focuses primarily on the internal Muslim community, the family, and the individual believer and

not on violent jihad, was especially moderate in its endorsement of violence. Relatively speaking, the *Fiqh as-Sunna* expresses a more restrained view of violent jihad, in that it does not explicitly call for a holy war against the West even though it understands the Western influence on Islamic governments as a force that is destructive to Islam itself.²³

Nonetheless, such texts do express positive views toward the use of violence against “the other,” as expressed in the following:

Ibn Abbas reported that the Prophet, upon whom be peace, said, “The ties of Islam and the principles of the religion are three, and whoever leaves one of them becomes an unbeliever, and his blood becomes lawful: testifying that there is no god except God, the obligatory

21 Misri, *Reliance of the Traveller*, O9.8.

22 Ibid., O9.9.

23 Sabiq, *Fiqh as-Sunna*, vol. 3, p. 76.

prayers, and the fast of Ramadan.” ... Another narration states, “If anyone leaves one of [the three principles], by God he becomes an unbeliever, and no voluntary deeds or recompense will be accepted from him, and his blood and wealth become lawful.” This is a clear indication that such a person is to be killed.²⁴

Similarly in *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*:

The most Shari‘a-adherent mosques promoted the use of force, terror, war, and violence to implement Shari‘a.

Perform jihad against the disbelievers with the sword, and be harsh with the hypocrites with words, and this is the jihad performed against them.²⁵

The survey’s findings, explored in depth below, were that 51 percent of mosques had texts that

either advocated the use of violence in the pursuit of a Shari‘a-based political order or advocated violent jihad as a duty that should be of paramount importance to a Muslim; 30 percent had only texts that were moderately supportive of violence like the *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* and *Fiqh as-Sunna*; 19 percent had no violent texts at all.

SURVEY FINDINGS

A representative sample of one hundred mosques throughout the United States was surveyed. Table 1 (see page 60) presents the distribution of mosques by state. One quarter of the mosques had 10 or fewer worshippers; 50 percent had up to 28 worshippers; 75 percent had up to 70; the largest mosque had an estimated 1,700 worshippers.

The study found a statistically significant association between the severity of violence-positive texts on mosque premises and Shari‘a-adherent behaviors. As indicated in Table 2 (see page 61), mosques that segregated men from women

during prayer service were more likely to contain violence-positive materials than those mosques where men and women were not segregated. Mosques that did not segregate genders were also less likely to possess violence-positive materials (26 percent) but nonetheless did carry both moderate (27 percent) and severe materials (47 percent).

As was the case with gender segregation, those mosques that displayed strict alignment of men’s prayer lines were more likely than their less observant counterparts to contain materials from both the moderate and severe categories. Thus, 59 percent of such mosques contained severe texts as opposed to 42 percent of mosques that did not enforce strict prayer line alignment. Conversely, only 4 percent of mosques with strict prayer line alignment possessed no violence-positive texts while 36 percent of their less observant counterparts exhibited no such literature.

Whether the mosque’s imam or lay leader wore a traditional beard was also predictive of whether the mosque would contain violence-positive materials on premises. Of the mosques led by traditionally bearded imams, 61 percent contained literature in the severe category, 33 percent contained only moderate-rated materials, and 7 percent did not contain any. Forty-six percent of the mosques in which the imam did not wear a traditional beard contained severe materials, 28 percent had moderate-rated texts, and 26 percent contained none on site. Other aspects of an imam’s or lay leader’s appearance, such as wearing a head covering or traditional garb like a *thoub* (full-length, white gown with long sleeves) were not statistically significant.

Table 3 (see page 62) reveals another statistically significant finding associated with mosque attendance. Mosques that contained written materials in the severe category were the best attended, followed by those with only moderate-rated materials, trailed in turn by those lacking such texts. Mosques with severe materials had a mean attendance of 118 worshippers while mosques containing only moderate materials had a mean attendance of 60 worshippers; mosques that contained no violence-positive literature had a mean attendance of 15 worshippers.

The adoption or rejection of Western dress by male worshippers was yet another telling indica-

24 Ibid., vol. 1, p. 77b.

25 Hafiz Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* (Houston: Darussalam Publishers, 2000), vol. 4, p. 475.

tor of the presence of violence-positive materials. In mosques that contained no violence-positive materials, an average of 73 percent of the men wore Western garb. In those mosques in which only moderate literature was available, 35 percent of male worshippers wore Western clothing; almost the same figure (34 percent) was exhibited in mosques featuring Qutb, et al.

The survey was unable to find a statistically significant

indicator when it came to women wearing a modern *hijab* as opposed to the more conservative traditional *hijab*, which covers all of the hair, or the *niqab*, which covers the whole body other than the eyes. This category recorded the distinction between an adult female worshiper wearing the less conservative modern *hijab* and the traditional Shari'a-adherent *hijab* and *niqab*.

Perhaps more troubling than the correlation between jihadist literature and Shari'a-adherent behaviors within a mosque was the role played by imams in recommending that worshippers study material that promote violence. The more manifestly Shari'a-adherent a mosque, the more likely its imam was to recommend the study of violence-positive texts. Thus, as seen in Table 4 (see page 63), 96 percent of the imams in mosques that observed strict prayer line alignment recommended such reading material. Similarly, 93 percent of the imams who sported a traditional, full beard endorsed the study of such writings.

But while the presence of certain Shari'a-adherent behaviors correlated almost one-to-one with the promotion of the violence-positive texts, the absence of these attributes should not be construed as a sign of true moderation. In mosques that did not practice strict prayer line alignment, a striking 72 percent of imams nonetheless recom-



A comprehensive study of the relationship between Shari'a adherence and incitement to violence in American mosques found that mosques that segregated men from women during prayer service were more likely to contain violence-positive materials than those where men and women were not segregated.

mended violence-positive materials. Similarly, 78 percent of imams who did not wear a traditional beard were proponents of these texts.

Moreover, mosques where the imam recommended violence-positive materials for study were marked by a higher presence of worshippers—both men and women—who took on a Shari'a-adherent appearance and a lower percentage of worshippers of a more assimilative or Western appearance. (See Table 5, page 64.) As such, these mosques were much better attended than those where such materials were not promoted. Imams at 82 of the 100 mosques surveyed recommended that worshippers study violence-positive materials; these mosques experienced a mean attendance of 96 worshippers and a median attendance of 39. At the same time, at the 15 mosques surveyed where the imam did not recommend the study of such texts, the mean attendance was approximately 17 worshippers with a median attendance figure of 4.

The survey found a strong correlation between the presence of severe violence-promoting literature and mosques featuring written, audio, and video materials that actually promoted such acts. By promotion of jihad, the study included literature encouraging worshippers to engage in terrorist activity, to provide financial support to jihadists, and to promote the establishment of a caliphate in the

United States. These materials also explicitly praised acts of terror against the West; praised symbols or role models of violent jihad; promoted the use of force, terror, war, and violence to implement the Shari‘a; emphasized the inferiority of non-Muslim life; promoted hatred and intolerance toward non-Muslims or notional Muslims; and endorsed inflammatory materials with anti-U.S. views. As Table 6 (see page 65) demonstrates, of the 51 mosques that contained severe materials, 100 percent were led by imams who recommended that worshippers

study texts that promote violence.

For example, mosques containing violence-positive materials were substantially more likely to include materials promoting financial support of terror than mosques that did not contain such texts. A disturbing 98 percent of mosques with severe texts included materials promoting financial support of terror. Those with only moderate-rated materials on site were not markedly different, with 97 percent providing such materials. These results stand in stark contrast to the

METHODOLOGY

Sampling: The survey analyzed data collected from a random sample of 100 mosques. This sample size provided sufficient statistical power to find a statistically significant association between most of the selected Shari‘a-adherent behaviors and violence-positive variables. Most Shari‘a adherence and violence-positive variables exhibited a strong correlation while some exhibited a weak or no correlation. A sample size of 100 mosques also allowed the survey to extrapolate to all mosques in the United States at a 95 percent confidence interval with a margin of error of +/-9.6 percent.

The survey was developed by using state-by-state estimates of the Muslim population extracted from the only extant such survey.¹ This was then used to create a listing of all states whose Muslim population represented at least 1 percent of the estimated total United States Muslim population. Fourteen states and the District of Columbia (“15 randomly selected states”) were randomly selected from the final listing to accommodate limits on physical logistics and personnel resources for the actual survey.

For each of the fourteen states and D.C., cities with the highest estimated concentrations of Muslims were identified, and mosques within those areas were eventually selected. The survey combined the data on 1,209 mosques listed in “The Mosque in America: A National Portrait”² with the data on the 1,659 mosques obtained online from Harvard’s Pluralism Project,³ with duplicates eliminated. Mosques were excluded from the list if there were indications that they were no longer operating, with a final site list yielding a total of 1,401 potential mosques for the survey.

The dates and prayer times for visiting mosques were also randomly selected. If a mosque was found to be closed, abandoned, or not at the address listed, then the next mosque that appeared on the randomized list for that city was visited. When the dominant language of the subject mosque was determined to be other than English, such as Arabic, Urdu, or Farsi, the surveyor who visited the mosque was fluent in that language. Each mosque was visited twice, once between May 18, 2007, and December 4, 2008 (“Survey Period”), and then again between May 10, 2009, and May 30, 2010 (“Audit Period”). The results of the Audit Period confirmed the findings in the Survey Period in all but nine mosques.

Data Collection: A surveyor visited a subject mosque in order: (a) to observe and record 12 Shari‘a-adherent behaviors of the worshippers and the imam (or lay leader); (b) to observe whether the mosque contained the selected materials rated as moderate and severe; (c) to observe whether the mosque contained materials promoting, praising, or supporting violence or violent jihad; and (d) to observe whether the mosque contained materials indicating the mosque had invited guest speakers known to have promoted violent jihad.

Thus, the survey only examined the presence of Shari‘a-adherent behaviors, the presence of violence-positive materials in mosques, whether an imam would promote the study of violence-positive materials, and whether a mosque was used as a forum to promote violent jihad. Since there is no central body to which all mosques belong, it was difficult to ascertain that the sampling universe list was complete. This may have introduced bias into the sampling although the authors find no evidence of any systemic distortions.

1 Barry A. Kosmin and Seymour P. Lachman, *One Nation under God: Religion in Contemporary American Society* (New York: Harmony Books, 1993), pp. 96-7.

2 Ihsan Bagby, Paul M. Perl, and Bryan T. Froehle, “The Mosque in America: A National Portrait,” Council on American Islamic Relations, Washington, D.C., Apr. 26, 2001.

3 “Directory of Religious Centers,” Pluralism Project, Harvard University, Cambridge, accessed Oct. 30, 2010.

mosques with no violence-positive materials on their premises where only 5 percent provided materials urging financial support of terror.

These results were comparable when using other indicators of jihad promotion. Thus, 98 percent of mosques that contained severe-rated literature included materials promoting establishing an Islamic caliphate in the United States as did 97 percent of mosques containing only moderate-rated materials. By contrast, only one out of the 19 mosques (5 percent) that had no violence-positive literature advocated this. Similarly, mosques with severe or moderate materials invited speakers known to have promoted violent jihad (76 percent and 60 percent respectively) versus one mosque out of 19 (5 percent) which did not contain violence-positive texts.

Finally, three patterns of behavior indicating promotion of violent jihad did not strongly correlate to the presence of violence-positive literature. Despite the presence of severe texts in such mosques, only a small number actually encouraged joining a terrorist organization, openly collected monies for such organizations, or distributed memorabilia featuring jihadists or terrorist organizations. Although very few mosques engaged openly in these activities, a correlation between these activities and the presence and severity of violence-positive literature was shown to exist.

BROADER POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The conclusions to be drawn from this survey are dismal at best, offering empirical support for previous anecdotal studies on the connection between highly Shari'a-adherent mosques and political violence in the name of Islam. The mosques where there were greater indicators of Shari'a adherence were more likely to contain materials that conveyed a positive attitude toward employing violent jihad against the West and non-Muslims. The fact that spiritual sanctioners who help individuals become progressively more radicalized are connected to highly Shari'a-adherent mosques is another cause for deep concern.²⁶

In almost every instance, the imams at the mosques where violence-positive materials were available recommended that worshipers study texts that promoted violence.

The survey also demonstrates that there are mosques and mosque-going Muslims who are interested in a non-Shari'a-centric Islam where tolerance of the other, at least as evidenced by the absence of jihad-promoting literature, is the norm. Mosques where violence-positive literature was not present exhibited significantly fewer indicators of orthodox, Shari'a-adherent behaviors and were also significantly less likely to promote violent jihad or invite speakers supportive of violent jihad. These non-Shari'a-centric mosques may provide a foundation from which a reformed Islam and its followers can more completely integrate into liberal, Western citizenship.

Non-Shari'a-centric mosques may provide a foundation from which a reformed Islam can integrate into liberal, Western citizenship.

The results of this survey do not indicate the percentage of American Muslims that actually attend mosques with any regularity, nor does it reveal what relative percentage of American Muslims demonstrate Shari'a-adherent or non-adherent behaviors. Moreover, although this study shows that imams at Shari'a-adherent mosques recommend studying violence-positive materials and utilize their mosques for support of violent jihad, it does not capture the individual attendees' attitudes toward religiously sanctioned violence. However, it is at least reasonable to conclude that worshipers at such mosques are more sympathetic to the message of the literature present at those mosques and to what is being preached there. A follow-up survey of individual mosque attendees would provide insight regarding the relationship, if any, between Shari'a-adherence on the individual level and the individual's attitude toward violent jihad.

²⁶ See, for example, *The New York Daily News*, Nov. 11, 2009.

A recent study by Andrew F. March examined whether Islamic doctrine would allow Muslims to cooperate socially with non-Muslims and sincerely affirm liberal citizenship as that term is understood in its Western, democratic sense. He argued that there were grounds for an overlapping consensus but also noted that present-day Salafists cite texts holding that Muslims are either at war with non-Muslims or, at best, are in a state devoid of any obligation to cooperate socially with them.²⁷ Additionally, March noted that the underpinnings of his theoretical consensus might be negated by empirical evidence showing that a large percentage of Muslims are unaware of [or reject] arguments that advocate for Western notions of liberal citizenship.²⁸

Although released before March's study, an April 2007 survey conducted by WorldPublicOpinion.org presented such empirical evidence. The survey found that majorities

in Morocco, Egypt, Pakistan, and Indonesia—ostensibly moderate Muslim countries—favored a strict application of Shari'a law in every Islamic country and keeping Western values out of Islamic counties.²⁹ How-

ever, that survey reports the attitudes of residents in non-Western countries that enforce Shari'a to varying degrees. It might be expected that Muslims in the West—who are immersed in Western culture, values, and democracy—would express different attitudes than their counterparts in the

Middle East, Far East, and North Africa.

Unfortunately, the results of the current survey strongly suggest that Islam—as it is generally practiced in mosques across the United States—continues to manifest a resistance to the kind of tolerant religious and legal framework that would allow its followers to make a sincere affirmation of liberal citizenship. This survey provides empirical support for the view that mosques across America, as institutional and social settings for mosque-going Muslims, are at least resistant to social cooperation with non-Muslims. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of mosques surveyed promoted literature supportive of violent jihad and a significant number invited speakers known to have promoted violent jihad and other behaviors that are inconsistent with a reasonable construct of liberal citizenship.

This survey suggests that, first and foremost, Muslim community leaders must take a more active role in educating their own faith community about the dangers associated with providing a safe haven for violent literature and its promotion—whether that safe haven is the mosque or the social club. These results also suggest that researchers and counterterrorist specialists should pay closer attention to the use and exploitation of classic Islamic legal doctrine and jurisprudence for recruiting and generating a commitment to violence against the perceived enemies of Islam. Finally, these findings should engender at least an interest among researchers to begin to study carefully Muslim attitudes toward citizenship and violence but one that differentiates between those who are Shari'a-adherent and those who are not. And, among Shari'a adherents, this future survey data must be sensitive to the distinction between traditionalism, orthodoxy, and Salafism, along with the more obvious sect distinctions, such as between Sunnis and Shiites.

The majority of mosques promoted literature supportive of violent jihad.

27 Andrew F. March, *Islam and Liberal Citizenship: The Search for an Overlapping Consensus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 266.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 274.

29 "Muslim Public Opinion on U.S. Policy, Attacks on Civilians, and Al Qaeda," The Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland, WorldPublicOpinion.org, Apr. 24, 2007.



Shari'a-Adherent Behaviors¹

<u>List</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Observation: Yes/No; or Count</u>	<u>Subject to Secondary Review</u> ²
Gender segregation during prayer service	Shari'a-adherent communal prayer occurs when men and women are segregated during prayer service. The segregation could occur by virtue of men and women praying in different buildings or different rooms. The segregation could also occur when men and women were in the same room, but were separated either with or without the use of a physical divider. Non-Shari'a-adherent communal prayer occurs when men and women are not segregated during the prayer service and the genders mix.	Yes/No	No
Alignment of men's prayer lines	Shari'a-adherent alignment of men's prayer lines occurs when either the imam, lay leader, or the worshipers inspect and enforce the straightness of the men's prayer lines. Non-Shari'a-adherent alignment of men's prayer lines occurs when there is no observable attention paid to strict alignment of the men's prayer lines.	Yes/No	No
Imam's or lay leader's beard ³	An imam's or lay leader's beard is a Sunna-style (i.e., full) beard, whether trimmed or not and either with or without henna dye coloring the beard. A non-Sunna style beard is either limited to a chin-beard or if the imam or lay leader wears no beard at all.	Yes/No	No
Imam or lay leader wore head covering	Shari'a-adherent behavior is that the imam or lay leader wore a religious head covering. Non-Shari'a-adherent behavior is that the imam or lay leader did not wear a religious head covering	Yes/No	No
Imam's or lay leader's clothing	Shari'a-adherent garb is any of the following: (a) short thoub; (b) pants rolled up above the ankles; or (c) ankle-length thoub. Non-Shari'a-adherent garb is Western-style clothing such as modern-style dress or casual pants and shirt.	Yes/No	No
Imam or lay leader wore watch on his right wrist ⁴	Certain Salafists wear the watch on the right wrist. Wearing the watch on the left wrist or not wearing a watch at all.	Yes/No	No
Percentage of men with beards	Shari'a-adherent behavior is for an adult male worshiper to have a beard (full or not). Non-Shari'a-adherent behavior is for an adult male worshiper to have no beard.	Count	No
Percentage of men with hats	Shari'a-adherent behavior is for an adult male to wear a religious hat. Non-Shari'a-adherent behavior is for an adult male to not wear a religious hat.	Count	No
Adult male worshipers' clothing	Shari'a-adherent behavior is to wear either: (a) short thoub; (b) pants rolled up above the ankles; or (c) ankle-length thoub or similar Muslim attire. Non-Shari'a-adherent behavior is to wear Western-style clothing such as pants not rolled up above the ankles.	Count	No
Adult female worshipers' clothing	Shari'a-adherent behavior is to wear either the traditional hijab (covering the hair) or the niqab (covering the entire female body except the eyes). Non-Shari'a-adherent behavior is to wear the modern hijab (a scarf that does not completely cover the hair) or to not wear any hair covering.	Count	No
Girls (age 5-12) wear hijab	Shari'a-adherent behavior is to wear the traditional hijab. Non-Shari'a-adherent behavior is to not wear the hijab.	Count	No
Boys (age 5-12) wear head covering	Shari'a-adherent behavior is to wear a religious head covering. Non-Shari'a-adherent behavior is to not wear a religious head covering.	Count	No
Presence of violence-positive Shari'a legal and religious texts or presence of violence-positive Islamic political literature	If the surveyor found the <i>Fiqh as-Sunna</i> or <i>Tafsir Ibn Kathir</i> , but not more extreme materials, then the mosque was categorized as containing moderate-rated material. If the surveyor found the <i>Riyadh as-Salaheen</i> , works by Qutb or Mawdudi, or similar materials, then the mosque was categorized as containing severe-rated materials. If the surveyor found no violence-positive materials or if the violence-positive materials constituted less than 10% of all available materials, then the mosque was categorized as containing no materials.	Yes/No	No, unless the surveyor found materials promoting <i>Fiqh as-Sunna</i> , <i>Tafsir Ibn Kathir</i> , <i>Riyadh as-Salaheen</i> , or works by Qutb or Mawdudi. Other materials were subject to a secondary review.

Imam recommended studying texts promoting violence	Following the prayer service, the surveyor asked the following question: “Do you recommend the study of: (a) only the Qur’an and/or Sunna; (b) <i>Tafsir Ibn Kathir</i> ; (c) <i>Fiqh as-Sunna</i> ; (e) <i>Reliance of the Traveller</i> ; or (f) the works of Qutb, such as <i>Milestones</i> , and Maududi, such as <i>The Meaning of the Qur’an</i> ?” If the imam or lay leader recommended studying any of the materials mentioned above except the Qur’an and/or Sunna, then the imam or lay leader was recorded as having recommended the study of texts promoting the rated material.	Yes/No	No
Promoted joining terrorist organization ⁵	If materials available on mosque premises promoted joining a known terrorist organization, such as “mujahideen” engaged in jihad abroad, then the mosque was recorded as having promoted joining a terrorist organization.	Yes/No	Yes
Promoted financial support of terror	If materials available on mosque premises promoted the financial support of terrorism, jihadists, or terrorist organizations, then the mosque was recorded as having promoted the financial support of terror. Examples include materials that made explicit calls to support mujahideen abroad or families of Palestinian suicide bombers.	Yes/No	Yes
Openly collected money at the mosque for a known terrorist organization	If materials available on mosque premises indicated that speakers came to the mosque to raise money for specific terrorist organizations, then the mosque was recorded as having openly collected money at the mosque for a known terrorist organization.	Yes/No	Yes
Promoted establishment of the Islamic caliphate in the U.S.	If materials available on mosque premises promoted establishing the Islamic Caliphate in the United States, then the mosque was recorded as having promoted the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate in the U.S.	Yes/No	Yes
Praised terror against the West	If materials available on mosque premises praised engaging in acts of violence against the West or praised acts of terrorism previously committed against the West, then the mosque was recorded as having praised terror against the West.	Yes/No	Yes
Mosque invited guest imams or preachers known to have promoted violent jihad	If materials available at the mosque indicated that the mosque had invited a guest imam or other guest speaker who is known to have promoted violent jihad, then the mosque was recorded as having invited guest imams or preachers known to have promoted violent jihad.	Yes/No	Yes
Promoted violent jihad	If any of the materials featured on mosque property promoted engaging in terrorist activity; promoted the financial support of terrorism or jihadists; promoted the use of force, terror, war, and violence to implement Shari’a; promoted the idea that oppression and subversion of Islam should be changed by deed first, then by speech, then by faith; praised acts of terrorism against the West; or praised suicide bombers against Israelis, then the mosque was recorded as having promoted violent jihad.	Yes/No	Yes

1 According to Islamic jurisprudence, Shari’a-adherence can be measured across several normative axes, such as obligatory-prohibited, recommended-discouraged, and simply permissible. In theory, every act of a Shari’a-adherent Muslim falls within one of the normative categories—that is, there is no behavior outside of Shari’a. For purposes of this survey, the authors have chosen, except where indicated by notation, the obligatory-prohibited and the recommended-discouraged or recommended-permissible axes, which we have demarcated Shari’a-adherent/non-Shari’a-adherent, respectively.

2 If a mosque, on the basis of materials observed by the surveyor, was recorded as having: (a) promoted violent jihad; (b) promoted joining a terrorist organization; (c) promoted financial support of terror; (d) collected money openly at the mosque for a known terrorist organization; (e) promoted establishing the caliphate in the United States; (f) praised terror against the West; (g) distributed memorabilia featuring jihadists or terrorist organizations; or (h) invited imams or preachers who are known to have promoted violent jihad, then the materials that the surveyor relied on to record the presence of this material were subject to a secondary review by a committee of three subject-matter experts. This secondary review was collected and reviewed by the experts evaluating the materials independently of one another. A consensus view of two of the three experts was required to confirm the surveyor’s observation. In 63 percent of the cases, the materials were so explicit in their promotion, praise, or support for the above behaviors that the

committee’s decision was unanimous. In no instance was there not a consensus and agreement with the surveyor’s observation.

3 The different legal schools vary on whether a beard is obligatory or preferable; they also differ on whether the beard for purposes of *fiqh* is only the chin hairs or also the lateral hairs of the sideburns and cheeks; and they differ on the minimum required length before trimming is permitted. The majority view, taking into account all schools and the Salafist opinions, is that a full beard is Sunna (following the behavior of Muhammad) and if not obligatory, preferable. For purposes of this survey, the full beard, trimmed or not, was considered Shari’a adherent and a chin beard or no beard, was considered as non-Sunna, and in the survey’s lexicon, non-adherent.

4 While wearing a watch on the right hand is not strictly speaking a Shari’a requirement, during the preparation of the methodology of this survey, the authors identified literature at several mosques attended by Salafists advocating the wearing of a watch on the right hand for two reasons: not to wear jewelry on the left hand to follow the mode of dress of Muhammad, who, based upon certain Sunna, did not wear jewelry on his left hand; and to avoid dressing in the way of non-Muslims. The authors decided to add this observation to determine whether this behavior translated into observance by the more fundamentalist Salafists. They also observed that the 12 imams who wore the watch on the right hand were right-handed.

5 All of the materials characterized from this point to the end of the survey were dated or produced prior to September 11, 2001 but were still available or sold by the mosque in prominent fashion.

How Anti-Semitism Prevents Peace

by David Patterson

Despite the obsessive preoccupation with Israeli building activities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, the greatest obstacle to peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians is almost never mentioned in media accounts: virulent, jihadist hatred of Jews. Contrary to what many assume, however, jihadism in its current form is not a throwback to some medieval mindset but a confluence of traditional Islamic teachings and the anti-Semitism and extermination goals of Nazism.

Without understanding how the latter has influenced the former, it would be difficult to identify how modern jihadists find a basis for some of their pronouncements. For example, a faithful Muslim could arguably support a Jewish presence in historic Palestine since the Qur'an designates the Land of Israel as a dwelling place for the Jews, to which they will be returned as the last days approach.¹ Clearly this viewpoint runs counter to the jihadists' agenda as well as their rhetoric. But it is through their rhetoric that the deadly adaptation of Nazi views surrounding an Islamic core is seen most clearly.

SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

Muslim Brotherhood founder Hassan al-Banna (1906-49) said he learned a great deal from the Nazis about the effectiveness of propaganda in spreading hatred of Jews.² Hitler himself makes two basic points in this connection: (1) "something of the most insolent lie will always remain and stick,"³ and (2) the aim of propaganda is not to inform but to incite "wrathful hatred."⁴ Hence, like the Nazis, modern jihadists, who derive much

of their inspiration from the writings of Banna and others of the Brotherhood, often invoke such discredited works as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, an anti-Semitic tract fabricated by the Russian secret police at the turn of the twentieth century, as evidence of a world Zionist conspiracy. They have resurrected the medieval blood libel and have accused the Jews of every evil, from spreading cancer to dispensing aphrodisiacs to Muslim women.⁵ When jihadists are not

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1 Qur. 17:105.

2 Hassan al-Banna, *Five Tracts of Hassan al-Banna: A Selection from the Majmuat Rasail al-Imam al-Shahid Hassan al-Banna*, trans. Charles Wendell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 45-6.

3 Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), p. 232.

4 Ibid.

5 See Bernard Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites: An Inquiry into Conflict and Prejudice* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), pp. 265-6.



Muslim Brotherhood founder, Hassan al-Banna, an unabashed admirer of Hitler and Mussolini, boasted to having learned a great deal from the Nazis about the effectiveness of propaganda in spreading hatred of Jews.

busy denying the Holocaust, they take their cue from Hitler and blame the Jews for the outbreak of World War II and its bloody consequences.⁶ Thus, for example, Palestinian Authority (PA) president Mahmoud Abbas argued in his book, *The Other Side: The Secret Relationship between Nazism and the Zionist Movement*, that less than a million Jews had been killed in the Holocaust and that the Zionist movement was a partner in the mass slaughter of the Jews.⁷

Alfred Rosenberg, perhaps the Nazis' most influential ideologue after Hitler, argued that Jews must be annihilated because the Aryan race had

been "poisoned by Judaism" and not merely by Jewish blood: The essence of Jewish evil, he maintained, found its expression in Judaism, and both the "ism" and the essence were in the blood.⁸ All Jews, thus, were essentially evil and must, therefore, be eliminated. Such notions are echoed by Sayyid Qutb, the most influential of the modern jihadist ideologues after Banna, who held that "Jews were by nature determined to fight God's truth and sow corruption and confusion,"⁹ and that "the deeper cause of the Jewish hatred of Islam was the malevolent Jewish nature."¹⁰

As with the Nazis, the jihadists' aim is to eliminate this source of evil that threatens all of humanity. "Jihad and Jew-hatred belong together," German academic Matthias Küntzel correctly observes.¹¹ What drives this hatred is not the Jewish presence in the Middle East—it is the Jewish presence in the world. A televised diatribe delivered by the Egyptian cleric Muhammad Hussein Yaqub epitomized the jihadists' ideological position:

If the Jews left Palestine to us, would we start loving them? Of course not. ... They are enemies not because they occupied Palestine. They would have been enemies even if they did not occupy a thing. ... Our fighting with the Jews is eternal, and it will not end until the final battle ... until not a single Jew remains on the face of the earth.¹²

The jihadist invocation of God to justify the murder of Jews echoes the inscription on the belt buckles of the Nazi SS: *Gott Mit Uns*—"God [is] with us." Hatred of the Jew is a holy hatred, pleasing to God and incumbent upon the pious Mus-

6 Adolf Hitler, speech before the Reichstag, Jan. 30, 1939, *Speeches and Proclamations*, vol. 3, trans. Chris Wilcox (Würzburg: Domarus Verlag, 1996), pp. 1443-54.

7 Mahmoud Abbas, *Al-Wajh al-Akhar: al-Alaqaq as-Sirriya bayna an-Naziya wa-l-Sihyuniya* (Amman: Dar Ibn Rushd, 1984), quoted in *Holocaust Denial in the Middle East: The Latest Anti-Israel Propaganda Theme* (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 2001), pp. 5-6.

8 Alfred Rosenberg, *Race and Race History and Other Essays*, ed. Robert Pais (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), pp. 131-2.

9 Quoted in Ronald L. Nettle, *Past Trials and Present Tribulations: A Muslim Fundamentalist's View of the Jews* (Oxford, Eng.: Pergamon, 1987), p. 35.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 44.

11 Matthias Küntzel, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred: Islamism, Nazism, and the Roots of 9/11*, trans. Colin Meade (New York: Telos Press, 2007), p. 149.

12 Muhammad Hussein Yaqoub, "We Will Fight, Defeat, and Annihilate Them," al-Rahma TV, Jan. 17, 2009, Middle East Media Research Institute, Washington, D.C., Special Dispatch No. 2278, Mar. 12, 2009.

lim or the loyal Nazi. Both groups portray their struggle as adhering to God's will but in effect take on the role of substituting for God. It is no coincidence that the charter of Hamas, the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, is called the "Charter of Allah": Hamas is Allah.¹³

Like the Nazis, the Islamist jihadists have formulated an ideology of absolutes rooted in a will to power that deems anything outside *Dar al-Islam*, the "realm of Islam," to be either illegitimate or evil. Absolutes allow no room for negotiation with "evil." For a jihadist to acknowledge the political legitimacy of the Jewish state would be to acknowledge the existential legitimacy of evil. Both the Nazi and jihadist forms of hatred of Jews are driven by a will to extermination. Thus Bernard Lewis writes that the era of murderous anti-Semitism that "began with the rise of Hitler did not end with his fall."¹⁴ More than any other, the jihadist who embraced the Nazis' loathing of Jews and their extermination goals was Hajj Amin al-Husseini, leader of the Palestinian Arabs from the 1920s to the late 1940s.

JERUSALEM'S MUFTI PREPARES THE SOIL FOR THE PLO

Husseini's entry into the politics of jihadism came in the wake of the signing of the Weizmann-Faisal agreement in January 1919, articles III and IV of which assured the Jews a homeland in Palestine.¹⁵ After inciting riots in Jerusalem in 1920 with cries of "Kill the Jews. There is no punishment for killing Jews,"¹⁶ Husseini fled the country and was sentenced in absentia to ten years in prison. When elections to select a new mufti were

held in April 1921, the British High Commissioner for Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, bypassed the official process and appointed Husseini to the position in an effort to secure the domestic peace. This had the opposite effect: One of Husseini's first acts as mufti was to declare a jihad against the British and the Jews.¹⁷ In August 1929, in a response to the mufti's cry that "he who kills a Jew is assured a place in the next world," Arabs went on a rampage throughout Palestine, leaving 133 Jews dead and 339 wounded.¹⁸ On April 19, 1936, again at Husseini's incitement, rioting against the Jews erupted in Jaffa in what subsequently evolved into a three-year Arab revolt but not before the mufti had begun building his alliances with the Nazis.

In March 1933, Husseini had his first meeting with Nazi general consul Heinrich Wolff in Jerusalem, having earlier established connections with the Muslim Brotherhood. Husseini arranged for the Brotherhood to receive support from the Nazis in the 1930s and 1940s and later indicated that the Germans made it possible for him to engineer the Arab revolt of 1936-39.¹⁹ On October 2, 1937, he met with Adolf Eichmann and Herbert Hagen, one of Eichmann's colleagues in the Gestapo's Department of Jewish Affairs:

Eichmann wrote glowingly of "the national and racial conscience" that he observed while amongst the Arabs. He reported that "Nazi flags fly in Palestine, and they adorn their houses with swastikas and portraits of Hitler."²⁰

The jihadist invocation of God to justify the murder of Jews echoes the Nazi SS.

13 "Hamas Covenant 1988," Yale Law School Avalon Project, accessed Mar. 14, 2011; "The Charter of Allah: The Platform of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) 1988," Palestine Center, accessed Mar. 14, 2011.

14 Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites*, p. 13.

15 Weizmann-Faisal agreement, Jan. 1919, Jewish Virtual Library, accessed Mar. 14, 2011.

16 David G. Dalin and John F. Rothman, *Icon of Evil: Hitler's Mufti and the Rise of Radical Islam* (New York: Random House, 2008), p. 13.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 131.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 30.

19 Kuntzel, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred*, p. 31.

20 Chuck Morse, *The Nazi Connection to Islamic Terrorism* (New York: iUniverse, 2003), p. 46. It should be noted that, according to Klaus Gensicke, Eichmann and Hagen were unable to set up a meeting with Husseini. See Klaus Gensicke, *Der Mufti von Jerusalem: Amin el-Husseini und die Nationalsozialisten* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang, 1988), p. 52.

The meeting took place during the Arab “re-volt,” just months after the Peel Commission’s report of July 7, 1937, which recommended a two-state solution to the tensions between Palestinian Jews and Arabs. That was not the solution that Husseini wanted, and Eichmann knew it.

Days later, on October 13, the mufti again fled Palestine for Lebanon to avoid arrest and possible deportation for inciting violence against the British Mandate government. Two years later, he set up his base of operations in Baghdad and joined with Rashid Ali al-Gaylani to lead a Nazi-backed takeover of the Iraqi government on April 1, 1941. By May 31, the British had successfully suppressed the coup but not before Husseini had issued a *fatwa* (religious edict) announcing a jihad against Britain and the Jews. Months later, on November 28, 1941, the mufti, whom the Nazis now deemed the “champion of Arab liberation,” sat opposite Adolf Hitler, who assured him that the Nazis and the Arabs were engaged in the same

struggle, namely, the extermination of the Jews.²¹

By the end of the year, Husseini had met again with Eichmann, by now tasked with executing the “Final Solution”; his deputy Dieter Wisliceny later testified that Eichmann had informed the mufti “of the plan concerning the ‘Final

Solution of the Jewish Question in Europe.”²² Eichmann’s deputy also claimed that “the mufti was one of the initiators of the systematic extermination of European Jewry and had been a collaborator and advisor of Eichmann and Himmler in the execution of this plan.”²³ Authors David Dalin and John Rothman have argued along these lines that “of the major Nazi leaders, Heinrich Himmler was the one with whom al-Husseini collaborated most actively and consistently ... One

of the common goals shared by al-Husseini and Himmler, who was the architect of the Nazis’ ‘Final Solution,’ was the extermination of the Jews.”²⁴ Indeed, in his memoirs, the mufti had no qualms about boasting of his intimate friendship with Himmler.²⁵

Husseini had at his disposal six radio stations from which he issued regular Arabic language broadcasts urging Muslims in service to God to kill Jews everywhere. On December 11, 1942, he called Muslims to “martyrdom” as Germany’s allies against the English and the Jews. “The spilled blood of martyrs,” he cried, “is the water of life.”²⁶ A week later, at a meeting of the Islamische Zentral-Institut, he recited verses from the Qur’an teaching that the Jews were the “most implacable enemies of the Muslims.”²⁷ On November 2, 1943, he declared at a rally in the Luftwaffe Hall in Berlin, “The Germans know how to get rid of the Jews ... They have definitely solved the Jewish problem. [This makes] our friendship with Germany not a provisional one, dependent on conditions, but a permanent and lasting friendship.”²⁸

The mufti’s actions were as murderous as his words. As early as January 1942, Husseini had begun recruiting Muslims to serve in German SS killing units, the most infamous of which was the Mountain Handschar Division of 21,065 men.²⁹ Other Muslim SS killing units included the Skanderberg Division in Albania and the Arabisches Freiheitskorps in Macedonia. These murderous Muslim units played a major role in rendering the Balkans *Judenrein* (free of Jews) during the winter of 1943-44. As these units were doing their work, the mufti was taking other measures to hasten the slaughter of the Jews. According to Wisliceny and Hungarian Jewish leader Rudolf Kastner, Husseini wrote letters to

The elimination of the Jews is not merely a political issue but an existential, ontological issue.

21 Joseph B. Schechtman, *The Mufti and the Fuehrer: The Rise and Fall of Haj Amin el-Husseini* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1965), pp. 110, 121, 306.

22 Gensicke, *Der Mufti von Jerusalem*, p. 165.

23 Schechtman, *The Mufti and the Fuehrer*, p. 160.

24 Dalin and Rothman, *Icon of Evil*, p. 50.

25 Efraim Karsh, *Palestine Betrayed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 66-7.

26 Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 173.

27 Gensicke, *Der Mufti von Jerusalem*, pp. 135-8.

28 Quoted in Morse, *The Nazi Connection to Islamic Terrorism*, p. 60.

29 Dalin and Rothman, *Icon of Evil*, p. 55.

the governments of Bulgaria (May 6, 1943), Italy (June 10, 1943), Romania and Hungary (June 28, 1943) demanding that their Jews be exterminated without delay.³⁰

In a broadcast aired on January 21, 1944, Husseini continued to blend Nazism with jihadism, asserting that “the Koran says, ‘You will find that the Jews are the worst enemies of the Moslems.’ There are also considerable similarities between Islamic principles and those of National Socialism.”³¹ In fact, he enumerated seven points that Nazis and Muslims had in common:

“(1) monotheism—unity of leadership, the leadership principle; (2) a sense of obedience and discipline; (3) the battle and the honor of dying in battle; (4) community, following the principle: the collective above the individual; (5) high esteem for motherhood and prohibition of abortion; (6) glorification of work and creativity: ‘Islam protects and values productive work, of whatever kind it may be’; (7) attitude toward the Jews—‘in the struggle against Jewry, Islam and National Socialism are very close.’”³²

Two months later, Husseini enjoined his followers to “kill the Jews wherever you find them. This pleases God, history, and religion.”³³ If “Is-



The Jerusalem mufti Hajj Amin Husseini (left, with Adolf Hitler, Berlin, November 28, 1941), leader of the Palestinian Arabs from the early 1920s to the 1940s, was a rabid Jew-hater who mixed Islam’s millennial disparagement of Jews with modern themes of European anti-Semitism (notably The Protocols of the Elders of Zion) in indoctrinating his subjects.

lamic jihad blends religion and nationalism in its endeavor to annihilate Israel,” as Ziad Abu-Amr says,³⁴ this statement not only echoes his incitement of the Arabs’ anti-Jewish riots of 1920 and 1929 but also exemplifies Husseini’s jihadist stance.

As the fighting that year dragged on, Husseini grew afraid that the war might end before the prime directive of the extermination of the Jews could be achieved. Twice he wrote to Himmler, urging him to use every means possible to complete the extermination of the Jews.³⁵

When the war ended, Husseini became a Nazi war criminal. Nonetheless, he received a hero’s

30 Lukasz Hirszcwicz, *The Third Reich and the Arab East* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 312.

31 Schechtman, *The Mufti and the Fuehrer*, p. 139.

32 Kuntzel, *Jihad and Jew Hatred*, pp. 34-5.

33 Quoted in Morse, *The Nazi Connection to Islamic Terrorism*, p. 62.

34 Ziad Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza: Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Jihad* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 103.

35 Serge Trifkovic, *The Sword of the Prophet, Islam: History, Theology, Impact on the World* (Boston: Regina Orthodox Press, 2002), p. 187.

welcome when he turned up in Egypt on June 20, 1946, thanks to the assistance of the French authorities. Ten days later, the Muslim Brotherhood newspaper *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn*

PLO chief Khalaf: An “independent state on the West Bank and Gaza is the beginning of the final solution.”

announced, “The Arab hero and symbol of al-jihad and patience and struggle is here in Egypt.”³⁶ This paragon of jihadism soon met with Banna and Qutb to continue “the same struggle that Hitler and Germany—and Hussein himself—had been waging during the war,” according to American academic Jeffrey Herf.³⁷

With the Nazis’ extermination goals in mind, he also took under his wing a promising young man: Yasser Arafat.

YASSER ARAFAT AND THE PLO’S JIHADIST AGENDA

In his Nazi mufti mentor, the future Nobel Peace Prize laureate discovered a true soul mate. Arafat expressed his admiration for the mufti until the end of his days, describing him in an interview published in the Palestinian newspaper *al-Quds* as his “model and hero.”³⁸ This mentor enlisted him in the Muslim Brotherhood where he received his first military training at the hands of former Nazis.³⁹ In October 1959, Arafat and some of his colleagues founded Fatah, a word that means “conquest” and is a reverse acronym for *Harakat at-Tahrir al-Filastini* (The movement for the liberation of Palestine). Fatah’s ultimate

aim, as stated in its platform, is “the annihilation of the Zionist entity in all of its economic, political, military, and cultural manifestations.”⁴⁰ In late May 1964, a gathering of 422 Palestinian activists in East Jerusalem established the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and approved its two foundation documents—the organization’s Basic Constitution and the Palestinian National Covenant.⁴¹ By the end of the decade, the PLO had been overtaken by Fatah with Arafat appointed as chairman.

Anyone who wants to know what stands in the way of peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians need only read the Palestinian National Charter, which assumed its final form in July 1968.⁴² Reminiscent of the Nazis’ focus on blood purity, article 4 sets a similar tone, stating that “Palestinian identity is a genuine, essential, and inherent characteristic; it is transmitted from parents to children.” The covenant allows no room either for negotiations or for a peaceful means of attaining their ends (articles 9, 10, and 21). Just as the Jews threatened the existence and the essence of the Aryan nation, so they threaten the existence and the essence of the Arab nation because “the destiny of the Arab nation and, indeed, Arab existence itself depends upon the destiny of the Palestine cause” (article 14); the elimination of the Jews is not merely a political issue but, most fundamentally, an existential, ontological issue.

Anything that might legitimize Jewish existence, then, must be debunked, which is the point of article 20: “Claims of historical or religious ties of Jews with Palestine are incompatible with the facts of history.” The Jews simply have no place in Palestine, which must be made *Judenrein*. Furthermore, the implication of article 22 is that there is no place for the Jew anywhere: “Israel is the instrument of the Zionist movement and geo-

36 Jeffrey Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 242.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 244.

38 *Al-Quds* (Jerusalem), Aug. 2, 2002; Shlomo Ben-Ami, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace: The Israeli-Arab Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 214.

39 Küntzel, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred*, p. 114.

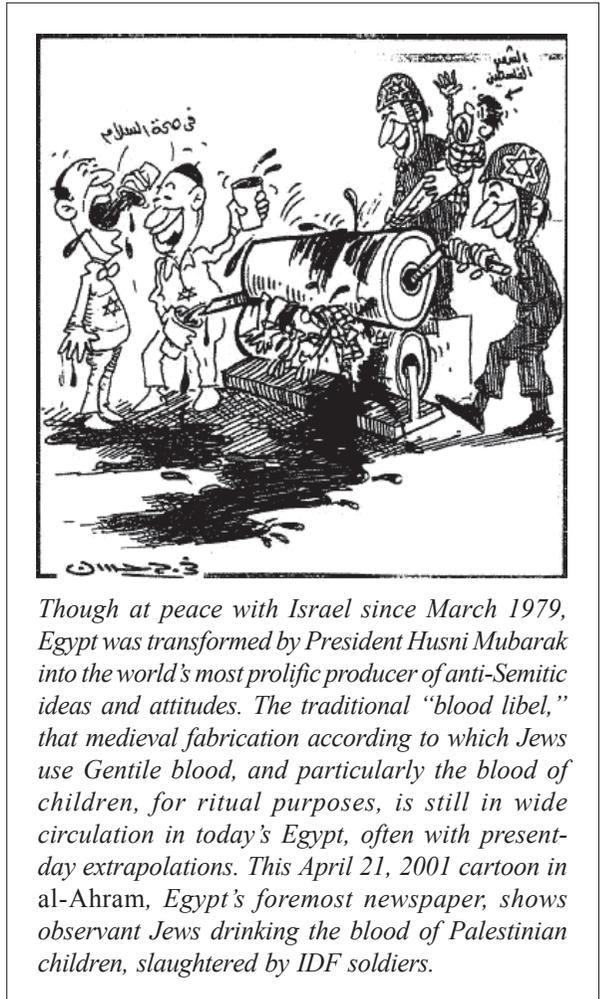
40 Leila S. Kadi, ed., *Basic Political Documents of the Armed Palestinian Resistance Movement* (Beirut: Palestine Research Centre, Dec. 1969), pp. 137-141, accessed Mar. 14, 2011, on Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, Jerusalem.

41 Efraim Karsh, *Arafat’s War: The Man and His Battle for Israeli Conquest* (New York: Grove Press, 2003), pp. 23, 36; Palestinian National Charter of 1964, Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, accessed Mar. 14, 2011.

42 Kadi, *Basic Political Documents of the Armed Palestinian Resistance Movement*.

graphical base for world imperialism ... Israel is a constant source of threat vis-à-vis peace in the Middle East and the whole world.” Just as the Nazis would deliver humanity from the Jewish evil, so the PLO would save humankind; and just as the Nazis were willing to give the appearance of negotiations in the run up to World War II, winning Czechoslovakia without a single shot through the notorious Munich agreement,⁴³ so the PLO adopted in July 1974 the “phased strategy,” stipulating that the Palestinians should seize whatever territory Israel is prepared or compelled to cede to them and use it as a springboard for further territorial gains until achieving the “complete liberation of Palestine.”⁴⁴ Even as Arafat shook Yitzhak Rabin’s hand on the White House lawn on September 13, 1993, he informed the Palestinians in a prerecorded, Arabic-language message broadcast by Jordanian television, that the Israeli-Palestinian declaration of principles, also known as the Oslo accords, was merely the implementation of the PLO’s “phased strategy.”⁴⁵

Despite Arafat’s declaration after the September 1972 massacre of eleven Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic games that every Jew was a target and his subsequent proclamation that the “end of Israel is the goal of our struggle, and it allows neither compromise nor mediation ... Peace for us means the destruction of Israel and nothing else,”⁴⁶ the United Nations welcomed the PLO as the representative of the Palestinians⁴⁷ and



Though at peace with Israel since March 1979, Egypt was transformed by President Husni Mubarak into the world’s most prolific producer of anti-Semitic ideas and attitudes. The traditional “blood libel,” that medieval fabrication according to which Jews use Gentile blood, and particularly the blood of children, for ritual purposes, is still in wide circulation in today’s Egypt, often with present-day extrapolations. This April 21, 2001 cartoon in al-Ahram, Egypt’s foremost newspaper, shows observant Jews drinking the blood of Palestinian children, slaughtered by IDF soldiers.

granted it observer status.⁴⁸ Small wonder that following that recognition, PLO chief Salah Khalaf had no qualms about asserting that an “independent state on the West Bank and Gaza is the beginning of the final solution,”⁴⁹ intentionally echoing the Nazi code word for the extermination of European Jewry that informed the PLO’s own outlook.

In February 1979, just days after the Iranian

43 Munich Pact, Sept. 29, 1938, Yale Law School Avalon Project, accessed Mar. 14, 2011.

44 “Political Program for the Present Stage Drawn up by the 12th PNC, Cairo, June 9, 1974,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Summer 1974, pp. 224-5.

45 Efraim Karsh, “Arafat’s Grand Strategy,” *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2004, p. 3.

46 Laurent Murawiec, *The Mind of Jihad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 34, 41.

47 “Question of Palestine,” U.N. General Assembly res. 3236, Nov. 22, 1974.

48 “Observer status for the Palestine Liberation Organization,” U.N. General Assembly res. 3237, Nov. 22, 1974.

49 Quoted in Barry Rubin, *Revolution until Victory? The Politics and History of the PLO* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 47.



Established as part of the Oslo accords to lay the groundwork for both Palestinian statehood and peace with Israel, the PLO-dominated Palestinian Authority launched a sustained campaign of racial hatred and political incitement portraying Israelis, and Jews more generally, as the source of all evil, synonyms for iniquity, corruption, and decadence. This cartoon from the PA's newspaper, al-Hayat al-Jadida, August 6, 2008, courtesy of Palestinian Media Watch.

Islamic revolution, Arafat was welcomed in Tehran⁵⁰ where he declared to the founding father of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, "The path we have chosen is identical."⁵¹ This embrace of the Iranian revolution, as well as Arafat's roots in the Muslim Brotherhood to which others of Fatah's founding fathers belonged, indicates that the PLO was not as secular as many claimed. In 1987, Arafat affirmed that "the religious trend is an integral part of the PLO," and Khalaf averred, "The beginning of the Islamic awakening lay in sanctified jihad, which was started by Fatah."⁵²

Just a year prior to signing the Oslo accords,

Arafat vilified the Jews—not the Israelis—using strongly religious imagery: "Damn their [the Jews'] fathers. The dogs. Filth and dirt ... Treachery flows in their blood, as the Qur'an testifies."⁵³ In order to inculcate such a view in Palestinian children, Arafat saw to it that the agreement would allow the Palestinians to retain control over the curricula in their schools. Historian Efraim Karsh argues that "Arafat's indoctrination of hatred among Palestinian children was unparalleled since Nazi Germany."⁵⁴ In the years attending the Oslo accords, Arafat repeatedly compared his strategy to the one used by the Prophet Muhammad, who signed the Treaty of Hudaibiya with the people of Mecca in 628, only to break it when the situation shifted to his advantage.

The confluence between Nazi aims and jihadist thought continued unabated. Shortly after gaining control of the Gaza Strip and Jericho in accordance with the dec-

laration of principles, Fatah leader Sakhr Habash stated that once the Palestinians had control of Gaza and the West Bank, they would proceed to the "final solution."⁵⁵ In October 1994, Arafat appointed Ikrima Sabri as mufti of Jerusalem; Sabri preached a rabid hatred of the Jews, using Qur'anic phrasing to denounce them as "descendants of pigs and apes," accusing them of involvement in a "world Zionist conspiracy," and blaming them in another confluence with Nazi imagery for every ill that had befallen humanity. On January 30, 1996, Arafat showed his hand and his indebtedness to Nazi thought when he told a group of Arab diplomats in Stockholm, "We plan to eliminate the State of Israel and establish a

50 Said K. Aburish, *Arafat: From Defender to Dictator* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), p. 164.

51 Murawiec, *The Mind of Jihad*, p. 318.

52 Rubin, *Revolution until Victory?* p. 66.

53 *Ibid.*, p. 180.

54 Karsh, *Arafat's War*, p. 247.

55 *Ibid.*, p. 62.

purely Palestinian state.” Another Fatah-appointed religious leader, Ahmad Abu Halabiya declared in an October 2000 Friday sermon, “Have no mercy on the Jews, no matter where they are, in any country,”⁵⁶ making abundantly clear that for Fatah, like the Nazis and Hussein before them, the evil to be overcome was not a Jewish state but the presence of Jews in the world.

Arafat’s death in November 2004 by no means changed Fatah’s views on the extermination of the Jews. On August 4, 2009, after a lapse of twenty years, Fatah’s Sixth General Assembly convened in Bethlehem where it reaffirmed the hatred of Jews that had fuelled its drive for the destruction of the Jewish state. The assembly called for a continued “armed struggle” against the Jews—as “a strategy, not tactic”—adding that the “struggle will not stop until the Zionist entity is eliminated and Palestine is liberated.”⁵⁷ By this time, however, Fatah was in the midst of a power struggle with the Islamist group Hamas—not over the ultimate goal but over who would control its attainment. That power struggle continues to unfold.

HAMAS’S JIHADIST ANTI-SEMITISM

It is in the words of Hamas activists and leaders, and especially the organization’s 1988 charter, that the link between Nazi ideology and triumphalist jihadism in the Palestinian “resistance” movements can be seen most clearly. As indicated in article 2 of its charter, Hamas is an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood;⁵⁸ its chief founder, Ahmad Yassin, grew up in awe of Nazi ally Hajj Amin Hussein.⁵⁹ Yassin’s views on eliminating the Jews can be seen clearly in a 2000 Pal-

estinian television broadcast where he proclaimed that Jews “must be butchered and killed, as Allah the Almighty said: ‘Fight them: Allah will torture them at your hands, and will humiliate them and will help you to overcome them.’”⁶⁰

Hamas makes “no distinctions between Jews, Zionists, and Israelis,”⁶¹ which means their war is not about ending the Jewish “occupation” of Palestine but rather ridding the planet of Jews. As British academic Beverley Milton-Edwards noted, “The Hamas view of the Jewish people is not drawn solely from the pages of the Qur’an and Hadith [sayings and actions by Muhammad]. Its myopia is also the product of

Western anti-Semitic [primarily Nazi] influences.”⁶² As a modern Islamist, jihadist movement, Hamas is defined by a distinctively modern mutation of Islamic hatred of Jews as exemplified in the writings of the Muslim Brotherhood’s most influential jihadist ideologue, Sayyid Qutb. Qutb was known for quoting Islamic sources in his diatribes against the Jews to show that they are rejected by God and that on judgment day they shall “taste suffering through fire.”⁶³ In his infamous essay “Our Struggle with the Jews,” he quotes passages from the Qur’an, including, “You will surely find the worst enemies of the Muslim to be the Jews and the polytheists” (5:82), to show that “the Jews have confronted Islam with enmity from the moment that the Islamic state was established in Medina.”⁶⁴ He con-

The jihadist’s ticket to paradise must be purchased not with his own blood but with Jewish blood.

56 Ibid., pp. 57, 103-5.

57 “Fatah’s Sixth General Conference Resolutions: Pursuing Peace Options without Relinquishing Resistance or Right to Armed Struggle,” The Middle East Research Institute (MEMRI), Aug. 13, 2009.

58 “Hamas Covenant 1988”; Yonah Alexander, *Palestinian Religious Terrorism: Hamas and Islamic Jihad* (Ardsey, N.Y.: Transnational Publishers, 2002), pp. 47-69.

59 Dalin and Rothman, *Icon of Evil*, p. 139.

60 “PA TV Broadcasts Call for Killing Jews and Americans,” MEMRI, Special Dispatch, no. 138, Oct. 13, 2000.

61 Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 26.

62 Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Politics in Palestine* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999), p. 188.

63 Sayyid Qutb, *Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview*, trans. Rami David (North Haledon, N.J.: Islamic Publications International, 2006), p. 25.

64 Sayyid Qutb, “Our Struggle with the Jews,” in Ronald L. Nettler, *Past Trials and Present Tribulations: A Muslim Fundamentalist’s View of the Jews* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1987), p. 81.

tinues with: “Everywhere the Jews have been they have committed unprecedented abominations.”⁶⁵ Qutb’s invocation of scripture and his use of a revisionist history are in keeping with a modern current in anti-Semitism, particularly when combined with his claim that the aim of world Jewry is to “penetrate into the body politic of the whole world and then . . . be free to perpetuate their evil designs.”⁶⁶ This fear of a world Jewish conspiracy is distinctively modern, and the Muslim Brotherhood has bought into it.

The preamble of Hamas’s charter quotes Muslim Brotherhood founder Hassan al-Banna’s statement that “Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it.”⁶⁷ When Banna made his assertion, the Jewish state did not yet exist, so the reference to Israel is a reference to the Jewish people.

Hamas understands itself to be functioning not merely as a political or religious movement but as the incarnation of God’s governance of the universe. Article 1 in its charter states that Hamas is “based on the common coordinated and interdependent conceptions of the laws of the universe.” Accordingly, Hamas’s deeds and aspirations are a reflection of God’s laws of the universe. The organization extends its reach into a realm beyond that of the Nazis: Whereas the Nazis insisted on the purity of blood, the jihadists insist

on the purity of their very being since what is at stake is the ultimate annihilation of the Jewish presence in the world.⁶⁸ As Banna put it, in its pure form, Islam regulates all of being—“the affairs of men in this world and the next”⁶⁹—so that “the mission of the Muslim Brotherhood is

pure and unsullied, unblemished by any stain.”⁷⁰ Relying upon a famous *hadith*, article 7 of the charter states, “The Prophet, Allah bless him and grant him salvation, has said: ‘The Day of Judgment will not come about until Muslims fight the Jews [killing the Jews], when the Jew will hide behind stones and trees. The stones and trees will say, ‘O Muslims, O Abdulla, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him.’” Nature itself rebels against the existence of the Jews: Natural law, therefore, requires the eradication of the Jews. Thus there can be no compromise, no peace with the Jewish state which, by definition, is an evil and unnatural entity.

For Hamas then, the issue of Palestine is not about land or the “right of return” or what shall be the capital of the future state, it is about universal, revealed truth and is beyond negotiation. This explains why

initiatives, and so-called peaceful solutions and international conferences, are in contradiction to the principles of the Islamic Resistance Movement. Abusing any part of Palestine is abuse directed against part of religion. Nationalism of the Islamic Resistance Movement is part of its religion. . . . There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through jihad.⁷¹

Article 15 states that “it is necessary that scientists, educators and teachers, information and media people, as well as the educated masses, especially the youth and sheikhs of the Islamic movements, should take part in the operation of awakening [the masses].” Thus it ends with the refrain from the famous collection of *hadith* by the renowned, ninth-century Muslim scholar al-Bukhari: “I will assault and kill, assault and kill, assault and kill [the Jews].”⁷² Hamas also echoes Hitler’s assertion that “only the greatness of the sacrifices will win new fighters for the cause”⁷³ when it proclaims that a good Muslim mother must indoctrinate her children for “religious duties in

In Hamas’s worldview, evil is rooted not only in the Jews but in Judaism itself.

65 Ibid., p. 78.

66 Sayyid Qutb, *Maalim fi al-Tariq* (Damascus: Dar Al-Ilm, 2006), p. 111.

67 “Hamas Covenant 1988.”

68 Quoted in David Aaron, *In Their Own Words: Voices of Jihad* (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2008), p. 117.

69 Banna, *Five Tracts of Hassan al-Banna*, pp. 46-7.

70 Ibid., p. 57.

71 “Hamas Covenant 1988,” art. 13.

72 Alexander, *Palestinian Religious Terrorism*, p. 57.

73 Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 103.

preparation for the role of fighting awaiting them.”⁷⁴ Such a call to arms has, in recent years, transformed murder into martyrdom: The jihadist’s ticket to paradise must be purchased not with his own blood but with Jewish blood.

Hamas’s view of the Jew as a pervasive, all-powerful presence that threatens humanity echoes Hitler’s insistence that the Jew is an “invisible wire puller” who by stealth conspires to rule the world.⁷⁵ It also underlies their view of the Jew as a threat not only to the Arabs of Palestine but to all of humanity, as stated in article 22: Jews “were behind the French Revolution, the communist revolution, and most of the revolutions . . . They formed secret societies . . . They were able to control imperialistic countries and instigate them to colonize many countries . . . There is no war going on anywhere without having their finger in it.” The Jew is behind every war—a belief shared by Hamas and Hitler. Therefore, the Jews are the source of every evil, a point reiterated in article 28: “The Zionist invasion [of the world] is a vicious invasion. It does not refrain from resorting to all methods, using all evil. . . They aim at undermining societies, destroying values, corrupting consciences, deteriorating character, and annihilating Islam . . . Israel, Judaism, and Jews challenge Islam and the Muslim people.”

Article 32 takes the theme a step further: “When they will have digested the region they overtook, they will aspire to further expansion, and so on. Their plan is embodied in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* . . . Leaving the circle of struggle with Zionism is high treason, and cursed be he who does that.” The invocation of the *Protocols* as a proof text is, of course, a method also employed by the Nazis bringing to mind Banna’s assertion that he had learned much from the Nazis about the use of propaganda.

In Hamas’s worldview, evil is rooted not only in the Jews but in Judaism itself. Unlike the rest of humanity, the Jew can be neither redeemed nor rehabilitated, any more than one could make Satan into a saint. The only way to liberate human-

ity is to cast the satanic Jew into hell, and, as the embodiment of God on earth, Hamas takes the lead in that endeavor: Hamas is humanity’s savior. To abandon its mission would be to renounce its followers’ place in paradise.

CONCLUSION

Politicians who are entrusted with securing the peace in the Middle East fail to see reality. Inasmuch as negotiators will not name the evil they confront, they remain blind to it. Enjoying the complicity of the media, leaders in the Obama administration and elsewhere refuse to refer to Islamist fascists as either Islamists or as fascists.

Such a position reflects an inexcusable, willful ignorance of the history, religion, culture, and languages that go into the making of modern jihadism. What must be understood above all is this: Hamas and Fatah have developed a theological and ideological justification that precludes any negotiations that would lead to a lasting peace with a Jewish state. At best, one can expect an application of the PLO’s phased strategy, which gives the illusion of peace without renouncing its goal of Jewish extermination. Neither Hamas nor Fatah can agree in good faith to any peace with the Jews since in their eyes to do so would amount to treason or apostasy or both. What then is to be done beyond naming the evil? Simply stated, Islamist jihadism must be eliminated, and given their ideological stances, neither Hamas nor Fatah can be a viable partner in peace; therefore, their removal from power is a prerequisite to any future for Israelis and Palestinians alike. Whether the present revolutionary turmoil sweeping the Arab world will produce such a result remains to be seen.

The PLO’s strategy gives the illusion of peace without renouncing its goal of Jewish extermination.

74 “Hamas Covenant 1988,” art. 18.

75 Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 493.



UNRWA's Anti-Israel Bias

by Arlene Kushner

On October 22, 2010, the outgoing director of the New York office of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), Andrew Whitley, stunned his listeners at a Washington conference by arguing that “the right of return is unlikely to be exercised to the territory of Israel to any significant or meaningful extent,” and that UNRWA should help resettle the refugees rather than perpetuate their refugee status.¹

Confronted with a barrage of criticism from the Palestinian Authority and many Arab states, Whitley quickly backed down, claiming, “It is definitely not my belief that the refugees should give up on their basic rights, including the right of return.”

Middle East analyst Daniel Pipes commented: “That UNRWA might contemplate going out of business and helping end the Arab-Israeli conflict ... was too good to be true.”²

Indeed it was, especially when taking into account that UNRWA was established more than sixty years ago on December 8, 1949, as a temporary humanitarian organization: “To carry out in collaboration with local governments the direct relief and works programs” and to “consult with the interested Near Eastern governments concerning measures to be taken by them preparatory to the time when international assistance for relief and works projects is no longer available.”³

With the passage of time, this modest, transient outfit has evolved into a permanent feature of the Middle Eastern sociopolitical landscape with tentacles spreading well beyond its origi-

nally mandated relief operations to virtually all walks of Palestinian life from education, to health, to community-based services, to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The propensity for senior UNRWA staff to make inappropriate, incendiary, and highly politicized statements—in stark contrast to the organization’s mandate—has long been documented by the Jerusalem-based Center for Near East Policy Research.⁴ The case made by UNRWA staff, that such statements are a necessary element of protecting the Palestinian refugees, can be seen to be without justification: Nowhere is “protection” in the political sense part of the UNRWA mandate; UNRWA was originally charged with providing direct relief and work programs, and this was later expanded to include education. Moreover, even if political protection had been mandated, it would not warrant misrepresentations of fact, let alone incitement.

This document tracks that trend during the course of 2010 with a special emphasis on the agency’s statements concerning the Gaza situation with the author’s rebuttals in italics.

WHITEWASHING HAMAS

In a Sky TV News interview from Gaza, John Ging, director of UNRWA Operations in Gaza, said:

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1 “Hamas Is in Contact with Most Foreign Countries,” *The Jerusalem Post*, Oct. 23, 2010.

2 Daniel Pipes, “UNRWA Official Calls on Palestinians to Accept Reality,” danielpipes.org, Oct. 23, 2010.

3 “Assistance to Palestine Refugees,” A/RES302 (IV), United Nations General Assembly, New York, Dec. 8, 1949.

4 See, for example, Arlene Kushner, “UNRWA: A Hard Look at an Agency in Trouble,” *The Center for Near East Policy Research*, Jerusalem, Sept. 2005; idem, “UNRWA: Its Role in Gaza,” *The Center for Near East Policy Research*, Jerusalem, Aug. 2009.

The announcement [regarding Israeli intentions in Operation Cast Lead] was that this whole war was about demolishing the infrastructure of terrorism. But we look around and see that this was not the case. The infrastructures of the economy and education were destroyed. And the infrastructure of the government—ministries and the president’s compound. These are not the infrastructures of terror, these are the infrastructures of peace—the infrastructures of a state ... the parliament building, the infrastructure of democracy.⁵

This protestation of innocence is highly disingenuous for it is inconceivable that Ging was unaware of Hamas’s propensity for operating from within civilian infrastructure, housing terrorists and weapons in private homes and public buildings (mosques, hospitals, schools, etc.), and using such sites for rocket and missile attacks.⁶ By alluding to the parliament building—used by the Hamas terror group, the governing entity of Gaza—as an “infrastructure of democracy,” Ging willfully distorted the oppressive reality in the strip.

In early April 2010—ignoring the years of radicalization of the Gaza population under the influence of Hamas-controlled UNRWA schools⁷—Ging laid the blame for the dismal state of Gaza youngsters at Israel’s feet:

If you have no reason to live, you will seek a glorious death. It’s worse now than it ever was before. A whole generation of Palestinians will have never got out of the besieged strip, never interacted with foreigners, or even met Israelis except as enemy soldiers intent on killing and destruction. Their violent behavior and disrespect to their parents is symptomatic of the desperation they are growing up in.⁸

5 “UNRWA’s John Ging and Children’s Psychiatric Hospital in Gaza,” YouTube, Jan. 4, 2010.

6 See, for example, Jonathan Figchel, “Hamas in Gaza—Urban Warfare Strategy,” International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya, Jan. 11, 2009; *The Jerusalem Post*, Mar. 15, 2010.

7 Kushner, “UNRWA: Its Role in Gaza,” pp. 10-2; author e-mail correspondence with Lt. Col. (ret.) Jonathan D. Halevi, spring 2009.

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On December 27, 2010, John Ging, director of UNRWA operations in Gaza, gave a talk at the Limmud Conference in Britain. He claimed that the situation in Gaza was deteriorating. But less than two minutes further into the talk, he contradicted the deterioration claim by saying that “we’ve now turned the corner ... since the new Israeli government decision [June 2010] on adjusting the blockade, every day is better than yesterday.”

On April 22, Ging gave a major press conference at the U.N. where he claimed that the people of Gaza were “struggling to survive” because of the “political situation,” ignoring altogether the underlying causes of their plight:

There is a distance between the mischaracterization of Gaza, as a so-called “hostile entity,” and the scale of the civility of the people who populate the Gaza Strip in these very uncivilized circumstances. They are very civilized people who manifest very clearly interact[ion] with visitors.⁹

8 “Guns n’ teddy bears,” Journey to Gaza: A Journalist’s Diary Blog, Apr. 3, 2010.

9 Kuwait News Agency, Apr. 22, 2010.

Ging implies that Gaza residents are devoid of associations with Hamas and are totally innocent bystanders.

The denial of Gaza's position as a "hostile entity" is a highly politicized and totally false statement. When thousands of rockets have been fired from the strip at Israeli population centers for nearly a decade, and its governing party Hamas is openly sworn to Israel's destruction,¹⁰ Gaza cannot but be considered a hostile entity by any political, legal, or moral criterion. Ging implies that the Gaza residents are devoid of associations with Hamas—which he never mentioned—and totally innocent bystanders.

Additionally, Ging insisted:

All [UNRWA] teaching staff is closely vetted by the U.N. in order to provide a non-political education.¹¹

This is perhaps Ging's most outrageous misrepresentation of the facts at this press conference. The reality is that Hamas, via its affiliate Islamic Bloc, has dominated the UNRWA teachers' union in Gaza for fifteen years, and, in 2006, gained full control of the union's executive council. Hamas enormously influences the education in the classroom.¹²

PROMOTING THE FLOTILLA

On May 3, in an interview in his Gaza office with the Norwegian paper *Aftenposten*, Ging urged international intervention in Gaza since "Israel refuses to act reasonably":

Therefore we ask the international community: Bring us the supplies we need to rebuild schools and run them; bring us the supplies we need [for] hospitals and medical centers. Everybody knows how desperate the situation [in the

Gaza Strip] is after almost three years of blockade. We need action now.

And who would stop the ship with such things as teaching materials and materials to [build] schools? In that case, we would get a new reality for the international community. Then the purpose of the blockade would be to destroy Gaza, not to protect Israel.¹³

We believe that Israel will not intercept these vessels because the sea is open, and human rights organizations have been successful in similar, previous operations proving that breaking the siege of Gaza is possible. Where there is a political will, there is always a way.¹⁴

The blatant incitement for action against Israel, hardly a part of UNRWA's mandate, made news internationally and was repeated in a variety of media sources. Not only does it inflate the severity of the humanitarian situation in Gaza and ignore its real causes, but it arguably helped inspire the so-called "Freedom Flotilla" launched later that month. A May 6 flotilla video from the "Free Gaza Movement"—which begins by citing Ging—provides prima facie documentation of this.¹⁵

MISREPRESENTING THE GAZA SITUATION

On July 7, 2010, a British member of the European parliament, Chris Davies, sent a letter to the British foreign secretary in which he said that he had met with Ging, who had "confirmed the view that... Israel's blockade of the territory [Gaza] is profoundly counterproductive ... Ging emphasized that although Israel

10 "Hamas Covenant 1988," Yale Law School Avalon Project, accessed Mar. 30, 2011.

11 Talk Radio News Service, Apr. 22, 2010.

12 Kushner, "UNRWA: Its Role in Gaza"; *The Jerusalem Post*, Mar. 29, 2009.

13 *Aftenposten* (Oslo), May 3, 2010.

14 *Al-Jazeera: Cross-Cultural Understanding* (Dalton, Ga.), June 15, 2010.

15 "John Ging Gaza," YouTube, accessed Mar. 30, 2011; *Aftenposten* (Oslo), May 3, 2010.

was now allowing all foodstuffs through its checkpoints, it was not allowing anything for construction, commerce, and industry.”¹⁶

Ging ignored the Israeli concern about letting into Gaza materials that would enable Hamas to build bunkers and storage areas for rockets or otherwise strengthen the organization’s infrastructure. Also ignored was the Israeli government’s announcement on June 20, 2010, of the loosening of restrictions and of plans to meet with international agencies to discuss advancing such projects as the construction of schools and hospitals.¹⁷ In fact, three months earlier in March 2010, U.N. secretary-general Ban Ki-moon announced that Israel would be launching a housing project in the Gaza Strip town of Khan Younis, which would involve the rebuilding of 150 housing units, a mill, an UNRWA school, and sewage infrastructure.¹⁸ This alone refutes the statement that Israel was not permitting construction.

In mid-September Ging claimed that much of the water in Gaza was polluted and that 90 percent of it was not drinkable.¹⁹

What Ging neglects to acknowledge is that Israel continues to send water into Gaza even though there is no requirement to do so according to international law: Every year Israel provides five million cubic liters of water to Gaza, transferred through three pipes—one in the center of the Gaza Strip and two in the south-



A Gaza mall bustles in July 2010. On November 11, 2010, Ging complained of persistent supply problems attending the Israeli blockade. Yet two weeks later, he rebutted this assertion, as well as the claim by UNRWA’s commissioner-general Filippo Grandi that Israel had not allowed the entry of a single truckload of construction materials, by acknowledging that “the shops were full of consumer goods.”

ern part of the strip—in addition to the shipment of bottled mineral water via the Kerem Shalom crossing.

As to water sources within Gaza, they are administered exclusively by the Palestinian water board with no Israeli interference. The entire water infrastructure (including water processing) that belonged to the Israeli communities in the Gaza Strip was left intact and ready for use when Israel disengaged from Gaza in 2005.²⁰

At that time, Israeli and Palestinian officials toured the Israeli water processing facilities to ensure their proper operation. The Palestinians were given documentation to allow them to use the facilities the Israelis built to process sewage water for reuse in agriculture. Whether the facilities have been used efficiently is another question: It was noted at the time of the tour that chlorine that was being held by the Israelis for use in the water plant was not

16 Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA, Tehran), July 7, 2010.

17 “The Civilian Policy towards the Gaza Strip: The Implementation of the Cabinet Decision (June 2010),” Coordinator for Government Activities in the Territories (CoGAT), Israel Ministry of Defense, Jerusalem.

18 *ShalomLife* (Concord, Ont.), Mar. 24, 2010.

19 *The Voice* (Leuven, Belg.), Sept. 20, 2010.

20 Author e-mail correspondence with Guy Inbar, CoGAT, Jan. 3, 2011.

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Commissioner-general Filippo Grandi's politicized statements regarding Palestinians who are not refugees and comments regarding Israel's activities in the disputed territories are well beyond the purview of UNRWA.

promptly claimed for use by the Palestinian Authority (PA).²¹ On September 13, 2010, Jerusalem allowed 250 tons of construction materials into the strip to upgrade a major sewage plant in Gaza City.²²

On May 18, 2010, an Olympic-sized swimming pool was opened in Gaza.²³ As recently as summer 2010, a "Crazy Water Aqua Fun Park," featuring three swimming pools, a canal 100 meters long, and ponds, was held in Gaza.²⁴

21 Shlomo Dror, CoGAT, "Israel Turns over Gaza Water Processing Facility to Palestinians," Jewish Virtual Library, Nov. 21, 2005.

22 "Construction Equipment to Upgrade Gaza Sewage Treatment Facilities," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sept. 13, 2010.

23 Ma'an News Agency (Bethlehem), May 18, 2010; Israel Matzav blog, May 25, 2010.

24 "Crazy Water Park—Gaza," PhotoCamel.com, accessed Mar. 31, 2011. The park was closed by Hamas and subsequently burned down by vandals.

Whatever water resources are available in the strip were sufficient for these projects and activities.

On October 16, 2010, welcoming the international group calling itself "The Elders," a group of global leaders brought together by Nelson Mandela,²⁵ in their visit to Gaza, Ging said:

I am delighted that the Elders come again to Gaza to witness and speak of simple and obvious truths that go untold. The truth that every one of the 800,000 children in Gaza knows is that we are in the fourth year of an illegal, inhumane, and counterproductive blockade on 1.5 million innocent civilians.²⁶

Leaving aside Ging's cavalier use of figures to exaggerate the Gaza situation—four months earlier he spoke of 750,000, rather than 800,000 children allegedly "paying the toll" of the Israeli blockade²⁷—Israel has not been contravening international law and has actually exceeded its requirements with regard to the extent of humanitarian assistance permitted into Gaza.²⁸ Moreover, while Ging uses the term "blockade" broadly, in actuality the only blockade is at sea as hundreds of trucks carrying humanitarian and commercial goods are allowed into Gaza weekly via land crossings from Israel.²⁹

On November 11, Ging complained of persistent problems attending the Israeli blockade:

There's been no material change for the people on the ground here in terms of their status, the aid dependency, the absence of any recovery or reconstruction, no economy ... The

25 "About the Elders," The Elders website, accessed Mar. 19, 2011.

26 "Gaza: the Simple Truths that Go Untold," The Elders, Oct. 16, 2010.

27 Ma'an News Agency, June 27, 2010.

28 *The Jerusalem Post*, Aug. 27, 2010; Abraham Bell, "Is Israel Bound by International Law to Supply Utilities, Goods, and Services to Gaza?" Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, Feb. 28, 2008.

29 See, for example, "Gaza Strip—Land Crossing Activities: Crossing Status Weekly Report," CoGAT, Mar. 13-19, 2011.

Grandi has framed his Gaza concerns as veiled threats.

easing, as it was described, has been nothing more than a political easing of the pressure on Israel and Egypt.³⁰

Yet three weeks later Ging rebutted his own claim by acknowledging that “the shops were full of consumer goods.”³¹

Still in December, addressing a Gaza festival promoting a reduction in gender violence, Ging blamed Israel for the prevalence of this phenomenon by claiming that the “blockade” had devastated the economy and made daily life more difficult. Consequently, domestic violence had increased due to escalating levels of stress and unemployment.³²

On December 27, Ging gave a talk at the Limmud Conference in Britain—an annual broad-based, Jewish community learning week featuring lectures and workshops. He acknowledged that matters were not dire—infant mortality figures, for example, were those of the first world; and while there were hungry children, “they’re not emaciated.” Yet he claimed that “we should not wait until they are emaciated” as the situation was deteriorating.

But less than two minutes further into the talk, he contradicted the deterioration claim by saying that “we’ve now turned the corner ... since the new Israeli government decision [June 2010] on adjusting the blockade, every day is better than yesterday.”³³

NEW COMMISSIONER, SAME OLD STORY

In January 2010, Filippo Grandi succeeded Karen Abu Zayd as UNRWA commissioner-general. His inauguration statement

to the organization’s staff, posted on the UNRWA website, promoted the theme of Israeli injustices against the Palestinians of Gaza:

I need not tell you how difficult this period is for the Palestinian people. We are all painfully aware of the counterproductive policies collectively punishing the people of the Gaza Strip; conscious decisions that have caused untold suffering and a dramatic deterioration in the lives of the population, in contravention of international law.³⁴

Like Ging, Grandi takes a highly politicized view of the Gaza situation, ignoring altogether its underlying causes—the years of continuous missile attacks on Israel’s cities and villages—and misrepresenting both the nature and scope of the Israeli reaction and its legality.

On May 31, Grandi issued a joint statement with Robert Serry, U.N. Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, about the flotilla incident, which laid the blame for the event solely on Israel:

We are shocked by reports of killings and injuries of people on board boats carrying supplies for Gaza, apparently in international waters. We condemn the violence and call for it to stop ... We wish to make clear that such tragedies are entirely avoidable if Israel heeds the repeated calls of the international community to end its counterproductive and unacceptable blockade of Gaza.³⁵

Referring yet again to the flotilla incident on June 6, Grandi argued that

It is terrible to say this, but I hope that the tragedy could be a turning point, a watershed in terms of the blockade. I hope that world

30 *BBC News*, Nov. 11, 2010.

31 John Ging, UNRWA, U.N. press briefing, Nov. 30, 2010; idem, presentation, Limmud Conference of Jewish Learning, London, Dec. 27, 2010.

32 “Gazans Rally Together at Festival to Combat Gender Violence,” U.N. Women, New York, Dec. 9, 2010.

33 Ging, Limmud Conference of Jewish Learning, Dec. 27, 2010.

34 “Commissioner-General’s Inaugural Letter to Staff,” UNRWA, Jan. 26, 2010.

35 Robert Serry and Filippo Grandi, joint statement, Office of the U.N. Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Jerusalem, May 31, 2010.

**UNRWA's Guinness fails
to acknowledge Israel's
legitimate need to prevent
weapons from reaching Gaza.**

leaders, those who make decisions, open their eyes to the suffering of the Palestinians.

This time, however, he included a veiled threat: "If you have one and half million Palestinians affected 60 kilometers from Tel Aviv, it is not a healthy situation for Israel's security," he said,³⁶ describing Gaza as the "largest open-air prison in the world."³⁷ At the beginning of July, during a visit to Japan, Grandi again framed his Gaza concerns as a veiled threat:

Frustration among refugees in Gaza has reached a bursting point with further unrest likely unless Israel lifts its blockade against them immediately. There is mounting disturbance among the refugees because they do not see their problems solved ... this commotion will pose a risk to the peace process.³⁸

In the fall of 2010, Grandi was still echoing the same themes. Calling for an end to Israel's "siege" of Gaza, he maintained that children enrolled in UNRWA schools would be studying in 186 shipping containers³⁹ since Israel had not allowed the entry of one single truckload of construction materials requested by UNRWA.

Grandi's claim that Israel has not allowed entry of a single truckload of construction materials is not only false but the inverse of the truth. As the October 2010 report by the Israeli Coordinator of Government Assistance in the Territories (COGAT) makes clear:

Materials were transferred, via crossings from Israel into Gaza, in October

for the follow UNRWA projects:

Riad school in Rafah, 32 truckloads.

Eight classrooms being constructed in the Za'arah school, one truckload.

Rehabilitation of a medical center in Nutzirat, 21 truckloads,

Five housing units in Um-Nazer, seven truckloads,

Seven housing units in Khan Younis, nine truckloads.⁴⁰

On November 30, Grandi released a statement to the UNRWA Advisory Commission meeting that was held in Jordan, which included the following:

In the West Bank, there were signs of continuing economic growth. However, the context of occupation, human rights violations, and a variety of related factors conspired to deny many Palestinians and Palestine refugees the material benefits of economic revival. These factors included the construction of Israeli settlements on Palestinian land; the separation barrier; and the associated regime of movement restrictions ... unacceptable and growing restrictions are replicated throughout the West Bank and are incompatible with the objective of Palestinian statehood as affirmed by the international community, and as embodied in the plan of the Palestinian Authority in that regard.⁴¹

Grandi's politicized statements regarding Palestinians who are not refugees and the objectives of Palestinian statehood as embodied in the PA plan, on the one hand, and regarding

36 Ma'an News Agency, June 8, 2010.

37 *All Voices News* (San Francisco), June 8, 2010; Stephen Lendman, "End the Gaza Siege," *MWC News*, June 15, 2010.

38 *The Daily News Egypt* (Giza), July 2, 2010; *Now Lebanon*, July 2, 2010; Agence France-Presse, July 2, 2010.

39 "Alternative Report Submitted to UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Response to Israel's Third Periodic Report" (E/C.12/ISR/3), The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, Gaza City, Oct. 18, 2010.

40 "Humanitarian and Civilian Activities vis-à-vis the Gaza Strip – Monthly Report, October 2010," CoGAT, Nov. 10, 2010.

41 "Commissioner-general's Statement on the UNRWA Advisory Committee Meeting," Mövenpick Hotel, Dead Sea, Jordan, Nov. 30, 2010.

Israel's activities in the disputed territories, on the other, are well beyond the purview of UNRWA.

POLITICIZING UNRWA

On June 18, 2010, in response to Israel's pronounced intention to ease restrictions on materials allowed into Gaza, Christopher Guinness, UNRWA spokesperson, demanded the complete "lifting [of] the siege and blockade, which is regarded as a violation of international law," adding that the "collective punishment of 1.5 million" people in Gaza was illegal.⁴² Four days later, in a widely cited statement, he argued that nothing short of the full lifting of Israel's blockade would allow Gaza to be rebuilt:

The Israeli strategy is to make the international community talk about a bag of cement here, a project there. We need full unfettered access through all the crossings ... Israel's blockade became a blockade against the U.N.⁴³

Masterful for its public relations effect, this statement is a blatant distortion of reality in that it pits Israel against the U.N., which wants school construction materials brought into Gaza, rather than against the strip's actual ruler—Hamas—which seeks to smuggle weapons to destroy Israel and building materials for weapons bunkers. Needless to say, Guinness fails to acknowledge Israel's legitimate need to prevent weapons or potential war materials targeting its civilian population from reaching Gaza. In referring to an Israeli strategy of making the international community talk about "a

bag of cement here, a project there"—a phrase that caught on with the media—Guinness obscured the fact that Jerusalem had reasons for what was being done (which he surely knew) and created the false impression that it was being arbitrarily negative.

In a highly politicized article, run by the Palestinian Ma'an News Agency on December 16, Guinness commented on political issues well beyond his purview as a representative of UNRWA, or for that matter beyond UNRWA's mandate, and further promoted the organization's involvement in political matters. The article included the following:

The arrival of that day [when UNRWA can fold its operations], however, is contingent upon a real peace process that bears tangible results for Palestine refugees in line with United Nations resolutions and with international law and practice ...

UNRWA recognizes that the API [Arab Peace Initiative] is an important element in the pursuit of peace.

The responsibility to ensure a negotiated end to the conflict lies with states and other political actors. That said, UNRWA is a stakeholder in the outcomes of any peace process. The agency is obligated to advocate for the realization and protection of the human rights of Palestine refugees ... In keeping with UNRWA's mandate and its focus on promoting the well-being of refugees, the agency could serve as a facilitator and advisor to refugees, the United Nations and other entities engaged in formulating and implementing a future dispensation.⁴⁴

⁴² BBC World Service, June 18, 2010; Ma'an News Agency, June 18, 2010.

⁴³ Reuters, June 26, 2010.

⁴⁴ Ma'an News Agency, Dec. 16, 2010.



Brief Reviews

The Ghosts of Martyrs Square: An Eyewitness Account of Lebanon's Life Struggle. By Michael Young. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010. 254 pp. \$26.

Young, a Lebanese-American journalist, turns his memories of assassinated friends and humbled dreams into an emotional tale of Lebanon's political meanderings since 2005.

The good news, Young argues, is that at least part of the puzzle of Lebanon is a form of liberalism at its core. Whereas the region's autocrats are easy to read, Lebanon thrashes around with a "paradoxical" liberalism, in which "illiberal institutions tend to cancel each other out in the shadow of a sectarian system that makes the religious communities and sects more powerful than the state [which is] ... the main barrier to personal freedom in the Middle East." Lebanese politics may be the haunt of swindlers and stomach churning deals with the devil, but there is an invisible hand at work here, one that works against the totalitarian machinations of all confessions jockeying for power.

But in this book about Lebanon, the bad news overpowers the good news. Lebanon is a small state in a shady neighborhood where whatever invisible hand may exist is no match for the foreign hand. Young describes a dazed Lebanon in the fresh ruins of "Pax Syriaana" where Syrian president Bashar al-Assad can shamelessly threaten to "break Lebanon" to the U.N. secretary general.¹

Young finds Hezbollah's role within the Lebanese army growing and worrisome. In the weeks after Rafiq Hariri's assassination in 2005, the army was given the delicate task of quelling protests but not too vigorously. Young remarks that "the soldiers murmured to us to push be-

cause the quicker we pushed, the quicker the absurdity would end for them. And as we pushed, they gave way, making it seem like a struggle." The August 3, 2010 border clash with Israel may indicate, however, that the army's dance is over with the citizens it is sworn to protect.

But Young, too, is not immune from Lebanon's selective amnesia. Where in his book is the Lebanon where the most common reaction to seeing Israeli civilian casualties, according to a 2010 Zogby poll, is "Israelis brought it upon themselves" with "empathy" not even registering a percentage?² The Beirut that closed its windows and drew the curtains when journalist Christopher Hitchens was nearly beaten to death two years ago for defacing a swastika is also missing.³

All in all, though, Young sees Lebanon as a liberal wonder on a rough street. Readers are lucky to have his insider account to guide them through this confusing country, as there appears to be little time to spare before the dark returns.

Patrick Knapp

Maryland Army National Guard

The Grand Jihad: How Islam and the Left Sabotage America. By Andrew McCarthy. New York: Encounter Books, 2010. 453 pp. \$27.95.

Former federal prosecutor McCarthy's latest book, *The Grand Jihad: How Islam and the Left Sabotage America*, is a grand tour of Islam's threat to the United States. It takes direct aim at the well-funded, well-coordinated, and seemingly unrelenting efforts to insinuate Islamic law, or Shari'a, into the fabric of American society and to weaken America's will to resist these attempts.

1 Peter Fitzgerald, *Report of the U.N. Fact-Finding Mission to Lebanon* (New York: United Nations, Feb. 25- Mar. 24, 2005), p. 5.

2 "The 2010 Arab Public Opinion Poll," Zogby International, Aug. 5, 2010.

3 Michael Totten, "Christopher Hitchens and the Battle of Beirut," Feb. 25, 2009.



ANDREW McCARTHY

THE GRAND JIHAD

HOW ISLAM AND THE LEFT
SABOTAGE
AMERICA

The author became schooled in radical Islam through on-the-job training. As a federal prosecutor, McCarthy led the team of U.S. lawyers that obtained the conviction of “Blind Sheik” Omar Abdel Rahman for involvement in multiple terror activities. After spending years in the legal trenches, McCarthy became an accomplished author and regular commentator on Islamism.

The scope of the book is ambitious. McCarthy describes the Islamist threat in the United States with a special focus on the leftist-Islamist alliance. Many readers might be perplexed initially that leftists and Islamic ideologues would sup together, let alone pool their efforts. McCarthy skillfully unravels their twisted partnership; despite the vast divisions in their social and political agendas, Islamists and leftists are united in hate against the world’s capitalist and Christian colossus.

While some commentators on discord between Muslims and the United States place the

onus on U.S. policy, McCarthy will have none of it. He dispenses with myths about jihad being a form of spiritual yoga; that Islam is a religion of peace; that those who protest the expansion of Islam in the United States are “Islamophobes”; and that those Muslims who wish Americans harm are confined to an isolated, small nucleus of marginalized hotheads. McCarthy captures full scope of the Islamic threat, which alone makes the book worth the read.

He goes beyond the broad sweep of American Islamism to get down to details. One subchapter, for example, exposes a dangerous and shameful incident in the Department of Defense. U.S. Army Maj. Stephen Coughlin, an expert on the security implications of Shari‘a in the United States, was forced out of his job by Hesham Islam, a higher-level advisor in the DOD, with dubious qualifications and suspicious connections. McCarthy deploys his prosecutorial skills to make a case for the major.

McCarthy has much to say on a subject he has mastered. Not all of his arguments are original, but all support his broad and updated account arguing that Americans are engaged in a long struggle with a determined enemy.

Mark Silinsky
U.S. Department of the Army

Hebron Jews: Memory and Conflict in the Land of Israel. By Jerold S. Auerbach. Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009. 223 pp. \$34.95.

It takes a careful and measured historian to do justice to the long history of Jewish life in Hebron and its restoration after the terrible 1929 Arab pogrom that decimated the community. Auerbach, a professor of history at Wellesley College, has succeeded.

Hebron is the cradle of Judaism, the resting place of the biblical patriarchs and matriarchs, and was the capital of Israel under King David before Jerusalem came to occupy that historic role. Auerbach takes the reader through the story of the re-creation of the Jewish communities in the territories, established under both Labor and Likud governments. He presents a history in which successive Israeli governments failed to

provide adequate protection when these communities were increasingly subjected to both random and calculated attacks by neighboring Arabs. In the Oslo and post-Oslo era, as neighboring hillsides were transferred to Palestinian control and with armed Palestinian forces in close proximity, the travails and tragedies of Hebron's Jews have only increased.

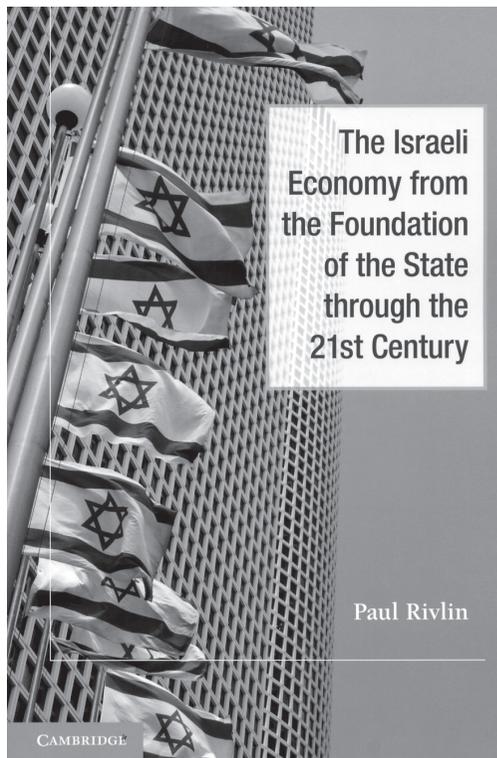
Auerbach takes pains to explain the competing viewpoints of his protagonists. It is not often, for example, that one reads such a scrupulous account of the circumstances surrounding the 1994 killing of twenty-nine Muslims in Hebron's Tomb of the Patriarchs by Baruch Goldstein. Auerbach convincingly debunks widespread notions of messianic settlers, ideologically driven to terror, which collectively damn all Jews who live in these disputed territories. Instead, he locates Goldstein's acts within the man's personal history and amid rumors of an impending Arab assault on Jews. Goldstein, who, as a physician had tended to Israeli victims of terrorist attacks, including personal friends, had heard the calls for the murder of Jews rise from neighboring mosques. On the morning in question, he had been urged to prepare himself for treating a large number of anticipated casualties and decided to preempt a pogrom with a tragic and ill-conceived massacre of his own.

Auerbach has written with proper dispassion on a subject close to his heart, providing an unusually useful history that can benefit anyone who wishes to acquaint themselves with an explosive subject that normally produces supercharged, one-sided prose.

Morton Klein
Zionist Organization of America

The Israeli Economy from the Foundation of the State through the 21st Century. By Paul Rivlin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 288 pp. \$90 (\$31.99, paper).

Rivlin, a senior research fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, provides an introduction to Israeli economic history for those unfamiliar with the subject. His book covers both the economy and society of the pre-state and post-independence



periods with emphasis on its early years. Separate chapters are focused on Israel and the Palestinians, on Israeli Arabs, and on socioeconomic inequality in the Jewish state.

Rivlin is a prolific writer who has done interesting work on economic history, but economic policy analysis is not his forte. Hence the volume is weak when it comes to asking and answering why certain financial policies were pursued. Additionally, Rivlin's ideological biases occasionally creep through, such as in his chapters on Palestinians or Israeli Arabs. For example, he fails to mention how Israel's large cash, underground economy helps explain the higher unemployment rate among Arabs who often work without reporting income.

The book has other weaknesses. Much of its prose is "talking statistics" where tables of numbers are presented, and the author talks his reader through them. But Rivlin should give readers credit that they can understand a simple table or graph and concentrate instead on the implications of the statistics. It is also weak in ana-

lyzing the more interesting economic policy challenges and problems, both micro and macro, that Israel's economy faces and has faced. For instance, there is no discussion of the long-standing Israeli policy of exchange rate distortion and of capital market semi-nationalization. Also missing is a look at the "pro-trust" policy that once produced a proliferation of monopolies and cartels, the later privatization campaigns, nor of the implications of the very high levels of concentration of ownership of capital and nationalization. Early attempts at subordinating the Israeli economy to rigid central planning are mentioned only in passing as is Israeli protectionism and the accompanying inefficiencies that resulted from that set of policies. Balance of payments issues are raised only superficially, and this is unfortunate because Israel's growth was made possible thanks to imaginative utilization of foreign direct investment and importation of capital.

Rivlin relies too heavily on sociologists while ignoring most serious economic histories of Israel, such as those by Assaf Razin, Efraim Sadka, and Nadav Halevi. Despite this, he misses significant sociological insights that would help explain important economic issues. His discussion of income inequality misses the point that much of it is a reflection of differences in age and schooling. He frequently tosses out the term "discrimination" when he really means heterogeneity and tries too hard to explain income differences that have nothing to do with discrimination.

Readers interested in Israel's economic history will need to supplement Rivlin's effort with other materials.

Steven Plaut
University of Haifa

The Left in Iran: 1905-1940. Edited by Cosroe Chaqueri. London: Merlin Press, 2010. 458 pp. £19.99, paper.

The role of communist parties and movements in the Middle East and in Muslim territories outside the USSR has been a subject of indifference in regional studies during recent years. This is an understandable outcome of the end of Russian communism and the rise of radical Islam. In *The Left in Iran*, the first of a projected

two-volume, English-language study, Iranian historian Chaqueri sets out to remedy this lacuna, making use of the wealth of documentary resources on communism increasingly available for analysis. He has assembled an impressive collection of materials translated from Persian and Russian, as well as from other languages used by the international Left, to create an authoritative work on the subject.

Chaqueri makes it clear that the trajectory of modern-day Iran has been significantly influenced at different times by Iranian communists and Marxists. They were prominently involved in the partition of Iran by the British and Russians during World War II, the Mossadegh prime ministries of the early 1950s, and in the events surrounding the Islamic revolution of 1979. The Iranian Left remains actively opposed to the clerical regime both in émigré communities and underground in the Islamic Republic.

The author also highlights the role played by the Russian communist party alongside domestic supporters. Early on, Lenin himself had decided to sacrifice the cause of world revolution in such neighboring eastern countries as Turkey and Iran for the interests of the Soviet state. In February 1921, an Irano-Soviet friendship treaty was signed with Reza Khan, the military leader who took control of the Iranian government and who proclaimed himself shah in 1925. But "the republic, on which both the Soviet authorities and the [Iranian communists] had counted" never materialized. Chaqueri indicates that a republican outcome was a conception based on Russian and Iranian communist theories about the presumptive course of political development in the eastern nations rather than any evidence derived from Reza Khan's own actions.

Chaqueri's work shows that the Iranian communist movement remained marginal within the country's internal politics before World War II for two main reasons. First, many of the Iranian communists were ethnic Armenians and other non-Persians. Second, Soviet Russia viewed Iran as an economic colony of Britain and subordinated Moscow's strategy in Iran to the larger context of Soviet confrontation with Western

influence, rather than addressing Iranian social conditions. The latter disposition would remain historically consistent for the Soviet-subsidized component of the Iranian Left.

Stephen Schwartz
Center for Islamic Pluralism

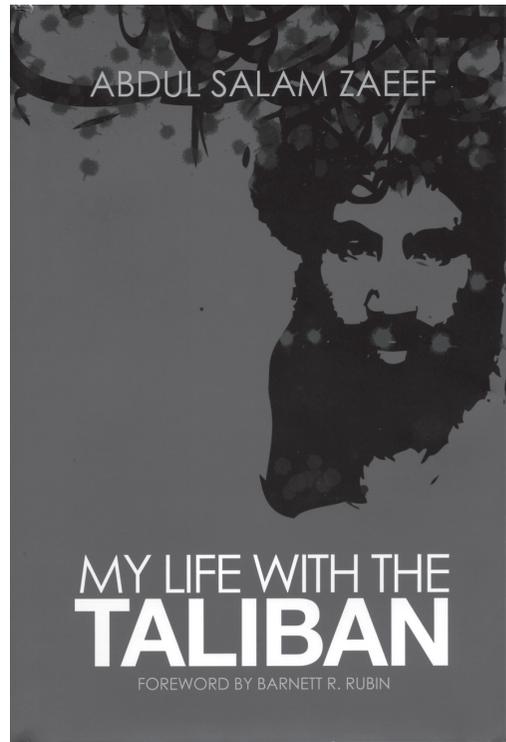
My Life with the Taliban. By Abdul Salam Zaeef. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010. 331 pp. \$29.95.

Zaeef, a former Taliban ambassador to Pakistan, provides a valuable contribution to the literature on the current conflict in Afghanistan with his autobiography. He offers an unrepentant Taliban perspective on Afghan events and, as such, provides useful insights on a range of topics.

For instance, his description of immediate post-Soviet, inter-Afghan power struggles shows that Taliban antipathy toward other mujahideen—even those not directly involved—started early. He is dismissive of international efforts to save the famous Bamiyan Buddha statues from destruction and recounts that shortly after the 9/11 attacks, a senior Pakistani intelligence official assured him that the Taliban “will not be alone in this jihad against America. We will be with you.”

But Zaeef’s account is perhaps most notable for what he chooses to ignore. No mention is made of the Afghan Hazaras and other ethnicities who suffered massacres during the Taliban’s reign or of the Taliban’s draconian bans on everything from kite flying to female education and employment. Zaeef is busy criticizing international funding for coeducational schools in Afghanistan but has no time to condemn those Taliban who throw acid in the faces of school-girls or target mosque attendees with suicide attacks.

Against this backdrop, it is hard to take seriously Zaeef’s occasional outbursts of political correctness. For instance, he asserts that tolerance “is the most necessary quality on earth; it can make the world into one home” and that “Afghanistan is the home of each Afghan, a family home in which we all have the right to live.” Such unintended irony may help outsiders un-



derstand how those driven by ideological monomania reconcile such laudable opinions with the most reprehensible acts. For Taliban like Zaeef, there is only one interpretation of the proper way to live, and anyone who rejects it is righteously killed.

Yet however abhorrent Zaeef’s ideology, it is hard not to be disturbed by his grim account of his experiences in U.S.-run prisons in Afghanistan and Guantanamo, assuming, of course, that this or any other part of the book is true and not simply deliberate misinformation. That being said, Zaeef offers little support for those who seek to bring so-called “moderate” Taliban into the government of Afghanistan. He insists that “the thought of dividing [the Taliban] into moderates and hardliners is a useless and reckless aim.” On this, we should heed him at his word.

Julie Sirrs and Owen L. Sirrs
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