



Middle East Quarterly

FALL 2011

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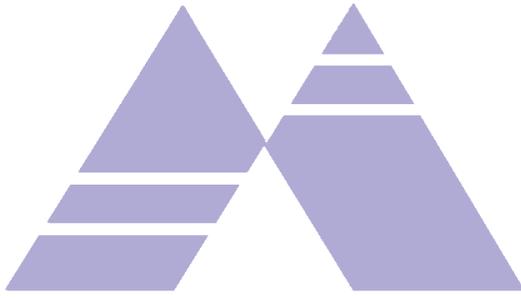
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September 11: A Decade Later

What 9/11 Has Wrought

by Dov S. Zakheim

Everyday American images of the war on terror—the legacy of 9/11: Government buildings surrounded by ugly concrete blocks. Pennsylvania Avenue, the street that the White House—once known as the “people’s house”—faces, no longer open to traffic. ID cards required everywhere. Airline passengers waiting patiently in line to take off their shoes, belts, jewelry—and to have their bags searched and perhaps their bodies as well. Fans searched as they enter football stadiums. People on the watch for suspicious characters—including those who might take photos of bridges and tunnels. People fearing to retrieve lost bags in case they are booby trapped. Increased government surveillance of individual Americans, including their telephone calls overseas.

Americans have become so inured to those inconveniences that they take them in stride. Economically, however, this impact has exceeded a trillion dollars if the cost of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq is added to that of domestic security measures and the primary, secondary, and tertiary effects of the losses incurred on 9/11 itself.¹ Prior to that date, the U.S. budget was in surplus; the national debt was declining. Ever since then, the debt has been climbing unceasingly while the budget has once again plunged into ever increasing deficits that have undermined the government’s ability to provide for infrastructure modernization, for upgrading the nation’s failing primary and secondary schools, and for the social security and health care expectations of its aging “baby boomer” population, the large cohort of Americans born soon after World War II.

TERRORISTS: A NEW KIND OF ENEMY

The years since the attack on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon have also resulted in major

changes in U.S. national security strategy. Having previously focused on the emergence of a new “peer competitor” akin to the Soviet Union—many analysts assigned that role to China—Washington now assigned top priority, in deed if not in word, to combating terrorism. From a nation at peace at the dawn of the new millennium, the United States became a nation at war,

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¹ “US Security Spending since 9/11,” National Priorities Project, Northampton, Mass., May 26, 2011. The direct impact of 9/11 on the U.S. economy in terms of business interruption was \$109 billion. See Adam Z. Rose, et al., “The Economic Impacts of the September 11 Terrorist Attacks: A Computable General Equilibrium Analysis,” *Peace Economics, Peace Science and Public Policy*, vol. 15, no. 2, art. 4.

fighting multiple wars from which it has yet to emerge.

The enemy that the United States faced was one that differed markedly from those of years past, and, as a result, posed a series of new moral dilemmas for U.S. policymakers, especially in the matter of captured enemy combatants. With the exception of the Iraqi army, which was soundly and quickly defeated in March and April 2003, the forces opposing the United States consisted of irregulars for whom Western notions of the laws of war and international law generally were completely meaningless.

On the other hand, the United States found itself under great pressure to apply those legal norms that were granted to uniformed prisoners of war. Washington became enmeshed in a ferocious debate over its ethical standards that evoked memories of the indignation over the 1968 My Lai massacre in Vietnam. While quick to acknowledge the outrages of the Abu Ghraib prison, once these were revealed in April 2004, many U.S. policymakers were far more divided over the appropriateness of maintaining an off-shore prison at Guantánamo. In fact, even those like President Barack Obama, who sought to close the Guantánamo facility, found them-

selves unable to do so. U.S. legislators opposed the trial of captured terrorists on U.S. soil. At the same time, foreign critics of Guantánamo, of the long imprisonment of terrorists without trial, and of the establishment of military tribunals outside the usual U.S. system of justice were reluctant to take any of these prison-

ers for trial inside their own borders.

There were some instances where the United States was able to house captured terrorists in the prisons of friendly states. The policy of renditions, which enabled Washington to avoid having to imprison all terrorists in Guantánamo, ran into trouble, however, in the face of allegations by human rights advocates that inmates were being subjected to torture in these secret

prisons.² Such allegations were also leveled at the United States³ and sparked a major debate over what constituted torture and what actions were within the bounds of the Geneva conventions. The debate has raged for almost as long as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and has been further fueled by the killing of Osama bin Laden, based on evidence of some terrorists who were subjected to measures that many observers described as torture.⁴ All in all, in the post-9/11 era, Washington has yet to find a balance between its security and intelligence requirements and the rights, or at least privileges, of those it has captured in the act of seeking to, or actually, doing it harm.

RESTRUCTURING THE GOVERNMENT

The 9/11 Commission, mandated to explore the background to the attacks, recommended a major reorganization of the U.S. government to address what it perceived as shortcomings that enabled the terrorists to carry out their mission.⁵ Among the recommended changes, adopted by the Bush administration, was the creation of a new Department of Homeland Security that incorporated twenty-two separate agencies into an integrated whole with responsibility for all aspects of “defense of the homeland.” Acting on the commission’s recommendation, the Bush administration also created a new Office of the Director of National Intelligence to coordinate the many intelligence agencies that, according to the commission, had failed to coordinate their activities in a manner that might have enabled them to provide warnings to forestall the 9/11 attacks. Finally, the administration created a National Counter-Terrorism Center (NCTC) to support the efforts of the new national intelligence office.

2 CBS News, Feb. 11, 2009.

3 *The Guardian* (London), Jan. 3, 2007.

4 CNN, May 4, 2011.

5 *9-11 Commission Report* (Washington, D.C.: The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, July 22, 2004).

Washington has yet to find a balance between security and intelligence requirements and the rights of those captured.

NEW COALITIONS, NEW PARTNERS

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have led the United States to expand its network of informal alliances while seeking ongoing support from long-standing allies and partners. During the Cold War, Washington had focused its attention and cooperative activities on at most thirty countries, including NATO, as well as Middle East, East Asian, and Australian partners. Africa south of the Sahara tended to receive short shrift; much of Latin America often merited little more than formulaic statements of U.S. interest. States in Southeast Asia, and sometimes even Japan, nominally close friends of the United States, would often complain of a lack of high level attention from Washington.

In fact, the breakup of the Soviet Union had already expanded the bandwidth of U.S. concerns to include many of the former Soviet states, as well as the Balkans. Nevertheless, it was only with the onset of what the Bush administration labeled “the war on terror” that states big or small became the subject of intense U.S. attention since any state could be a possible host for terrorist operations unless it committed itself to fighting on the side of the West. President Bush made that plain when he issued challenge to the world in his September 20, 2001 speech to the Congress: “Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists.”⁶

Virtually overnight, states such as those astride Africa or in central Asia became key cooperative actors in the war on terror. Indeed, the central Asian “stans” became critical nodes on the logistical supply chain from the United States to Afghanistan.⁷ At the same time, Washington searched worldwide for additional members of its “coalition of the willing” in the fight against the



In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, Americans have had to adjust to a host of changes in their lives, from more and more intrusive searches at airports to concrete barriers in front of public places to government sanctioned surveillance of overseas telephone calls.

Taliban, and later, in the war in Iraq. By 2011, there were forty-nine countries participating in the NATO-led (but U.S.-commanded) International Security Assistance Force for Afghanistan.⁸ At its peak, the coalition working alongside the United States and the United Kingdom in Iraq totaled twenty-one countries, including Albania, Armenia, Bosnia, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Macedonia, and Moldova, none of which had even existed as independent states during the Cold War. Afghanistan represented the first major NATO foray outside the continent of Europe⁹ (the Balkans were the first NATO operation outside its own boundaries¹⁰) and set the precedent for its taking charge of the 2011 Libya operation.

On the other hand, a number of NATO states either openly opposed or at least did not support the U.S. intervention in Iraq. Most prominent among these were France, Germany, and

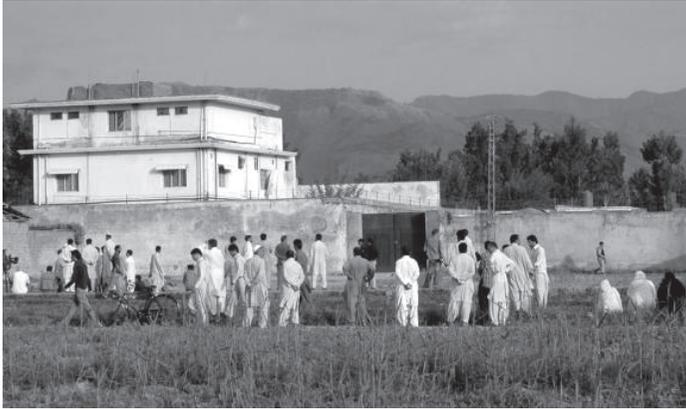
6 George W. Bush, address to joint session of Congress, Washington, D.C., Sept. 20, 2001.

7 MSNBC, Feb. 3, 2009; *The Washington Post*, Mar. 6, 2009.

8 Adm. James G. Stavridis, U.S. Navy, commander, United States European Command, testimony before the House and Senate Armed Services committees, Mar. 29, 2011, p. 36.

9 “Timeline: NATO,” *BBC News*, Mar. 25, 2011.

10 *Ibid.*



Strained relations with the government of Pakistan became even tenser as U.S.-led coalition forces took on Islamabad's erstwhile ally, the Taliban of Afghanistan. The relationship has seesawed between cooperation and exasperation, perhaps best exemplified by the recent discovery and killing of Osama bin Laden who had been hiding in the town of Abbottabad, only thirty-one miles outside of Pakistan's capital.

world. On the other hand, though Washington actively sought the support of Muslim states, a number of Arab governments normally friendly with Washington downplayed their support for U.S. wars, particularly against Iraq.

Relations with India.

Both sets of considerations affected Washington's relationship with New Delhi, which already had improved during Bill Clinton's presidency. India had suffered from terrorism far longer, and to a greater degree, than the United States; the "war on terror," therefore, added to the growing commonality of interests between the two democracies in mat-

Canada.¹¹ Their reluctance to assist the coalition underscored for many in the Bush administration the importance of focusing on new coalitions rather than traditional twentieth-century alliances. As Donald Rumsfeld famously put it, there was a difference between "old Europe"—long-time NATO member states who hesitated to support Operation Iraqi Freedom—and "new Europe"¹²—the many former Soviet and eastern bloc states that enthusiastically joined the 2003 coalition.

In addition to the NATO nay-sayers on Iraq, there were a number of other states that did not work overtly with the United States as it pursued its "war on terror," whether for reasons of their own or because Washington preferred to minimize their visibility. Israel provided a notable example of the latter circumstance. As had been the case during the 1991 Kuwait war, the United States preferred that Israel remain on the sidelines so as not to further enrage Muslim masses around the

terms of trade, technology, and military cooperation. Nevertheless, Washington was cool to New Delhi's desire to play a more active role in Afghanistan, out of deference to Pakistani concerns.¹³ At the same time, India was reluctant to accede to U.S. entreaties to send troops to the coalition in Iraq, requiring a special United Nations mandate, which was never forthcoming. India's ongoing purchases of gas and oil from Iran have further complicated the relationship between Washington and New Delhi.¹⁴

The changing role of Pakistan. The U.S. relationship with Pakistan represented another major outcome of 9/11. Prior to the attacks, the ties between the two countries could best be defined as strained. Beginning in the 1980s, Washington had imposed a series of sanctions against Islamabad, including those triggered by the Pressler amendment when Pakistan tested a

11 "Iraq: Foreign Contributions to Stabilization and Reconstruction," Congressional Research Service, Dec. 26, 2007, pp. 8, 12.

12 *BBC News*, Jan. 23, 2003.

13 Harsh V. Pant, "India's Changing Role: The Afghanistan Conflict," *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2011, pp. 31-9.

14 P. R. Kumaraswamy, "Delhi: Between Tehran and Washington," *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2008, pp. 41-7.

nuclear weapon, freezing the sale of F-16s to Pakistan in 1993¹⁵ although twenty-eight of the aircraft had already been completed and paid for. At the same time, as noted above, Washington began to develop a much closer relationship with Pakistan's arch rival India, despite the latter's having tested nuclear weapons as well.

The 9/11 attacks prompted the Bush administration to reconsider its ties to Islamabad, which had been a strong supporter of the Taliban. Faced with the choice of being "with or against" the United States in its war with the Taliban, Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf chose to be with. But he argued that his forces, even if redeployed from the Indian border—which he considered a major risk—could not conduct operations against the Taliban unless these were funded by Washington. By December 2001, the Pentagon developed a reimbursement plan for Pakistan and within a few months, in a complete reversal of the atmosphere generated by the sanctions, funds began to flow to the Pakistani army.¹⁶ Islamabad redeployed some of its forces from the Indian border, and, for the first time, launched operations with helicopters in the tribal areas. In addition, Washington began to employ drones in Pakistan's tribal areas since that country did not permit U.S. ground forces to operate in its territory.

Despite the transfer of billions of dollars to the Pakistani military and the initiation in 2009 of a new multi-year, multi-billion dollar aid program as well, relations between Washington and Islamabad remained tainted by mutual suspicion verging on outright hostility. It was not merely a matter of Pakistani resentment of the ever increasing drone attacks inside its territory. Islamabad feared that a U.S. defeat of the Taliban would open the door for greater Indian influence in Kabul, resulting in a kind of encirclement of Pakistan. As early as 2002, the Pakistanis refused to let Indian relief trucks carrying food to transit their territory

into Afghanistan, and vigorously protested the opening of two Indian consulates in Jalalabad and Kandahar the same year.¹⁷ As a result, while aiding the U.S.-led coalition in striking out at al-Qaeda units in Pakistan, Islamabad was far less assertive against the Taliban, to the point of distinguishing between the Afghan Taliban and its Pakistani counterpart, against which, after some hesitation, the Pakistani military lashed out in full force. In addition, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) organization nourished the Haqqani terror network,¹⁸ which by the end of the decade had become the coalition's most potent opponent.

Pakistani ambivalence toward the coalition's efforts in Afghanistan was matched by U.S. frustration with Islamabad. Washington's suspicions of Pakistani motives increased over time and were brought to a head with the Abbottabad operation that killed bin Laden, who had been hiding in plain sight of Pakistan's military academy.¹⁹ On the other hand, U.S. officials had not reached a second inflection point with Pakistan. Washington simply was not ready to reverse the sea-change in relations with that country that had taken place late in 2001; it continued to consider the relationship with Islamabad crucial to its success in Afghanistan.²⁰

Turkey after 9/11. Like the Indians and the Israelis, the Turks have long suffered from terrorist attacks, in this case from the Kurdish Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (PKK), based in northern Iraq. Turkey was an early member of the U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan and continues to deploy its troops to that country. Nevertheless, in March 2003 and much to Washington's surprise, the

Coalition partners were reluctant to reimburse the United States or finance ongoing Iraqi operations.

15 "India-Pakistan Sanctions Legislation Fact Sheet," Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, Washington, D.C., accessed June 17, 2011.

16 "Oversight of U.S. Coalition Support Funds to Pakistan," hearing before the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, June 24, 2008.

17 *SiliconIndia News* (Bangalore), Dec. 16, 2002.

18 Amitai Etzioni, "Mission Creep and Its Discontents: The Afghanistan Conflict," *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2011, pp. 3-15.

19 *ABC News*, May 1, 2011; *The New York Times*, May 1, 2011.

20 *PBS News Hour*, June 16, 2011.

Turkish parliament, dominated by the governing Justice and Development Party (AKP), refused to permit the transit of the U.S. 4th Infantry Division to Iraq, thereby obviating the possibility of an attack on that country from the north.²¹ Turkish-U.S. relations have remained somewhat strained, in part because of U.S., especially congressional, annoyance at Ankara's vocal attacks on Israel, its refusal to support U.S. sanctions against Iran, and its lifting of visa requirements for entrants from Syria and Libya.

The "Tin Cup" challenge. In addition to seeking military support for its operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, Washington also sought material assistance for its forces, as well as economic aid for both countries once their governments had fallen in the

Tehran now has more influence in Iraq than it has had in centuries.

face of coalition attacks. The Bush administration also entertained hopes for some reimbursement for its military operations, particularly in Iraq. These hopes were based on Washington's experience in the aftermath of Operation Desert Storm; they proved to be unrealistic.

Desert Storm cost the United States just over \$61 billion. Secretary of State James Baker's "Tin Cup" efforts in 1991-92 yielded \$52 billion, including \$36 billion from the Persian Gulf states, \$10 billion from Japan, and \$6.6 billion from Germany. In contrast, analogous fund raising exercises eleven years later amounted to a few tens of millions. Even coalition partners were notably reluctant to contribute cash to reimburse the United States or even to finance ongoing operations. Moreover, in many cases, Washington had to subsidize the deployment of coalition forces to the Iraqi theater since they could not pay for those deployments themselves.

Washington's fundraising efforts for the postwar reconstruction of both Afghanistan and Iraq were more successful, at least in the immediate aftermath of those wars. The process that

began with the December 2001 Bonn agreement, named after the city where the victorious coalition and the Afghans arranged for a new system of governance and planned for the country's reconstruction, yielded some \$13 billion in international pledges of financial assistance; the United States contributed an additional \$1.4 billion.²² Similarly, coalition partners, international financial institutions, and even other states who had opposed the Iraq operation, initially pledged more than \$13 billion at the October 2003 Madrid conference for the reconstruction of Iraq, in addition to which the United States voted a total of \$18.6 billion.²³ Over time, however, U.S. expenditures on the reconstruction of both countries dwarfed those of all other states combined. Thus, instead of receiving billions of dollars to offset its costs, Washington began to spend tens of billions on Afghan and Iraqi reconstruction beyond those it had already incurred for its military operations. These costs, too, could ultimately be traced back to the events of 9/11.

Iran: A major winner since 9/11. The U.S. military response to the 9/11 attacks did not initially intensify the hostility that already existed between Washington and Tehran. Herat and western Afghanistan were at times part of the Persian Empire and retain considerable Persian linguistic and cultural influences. Iran almost went to war with Pakistan over the Taliban's killing of Iranian diplomats in August 1998 and has supported the Hamid Karzai government with economic assistance, notably the rapid construction of the Herat-Dougan road. Tehran was also prepared to cooperate with Washington during the early years after 9/11, and in May 2003, danced around a po-

22 Rhoda Margesson, "United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan: Background and Policy Issues," Congressional Research Service, Washington, D.C., Dec. 27, 2010; Natalie Mychajlyszyn, "Afghanistan: Reconstruction and Development," Parliamentary Information and Research Service, Parliament of Canada, Ottawa, Nov. 20, 2007. For U.S. contributions, see "Afghanistan Reconstruction: Despite Some Progress, Deteriorating Security and Other Obstacles Continue to Threaten Achievement of U.S. Goals," U.S. Government Accountability Office, Washington, D.C., July 2005.

23 Dov S. Zakheim, *A Vulcan's Tale: How the Bush Administration Mismanaged the Reconstruction of Afghanistan* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2011), pp. 232, 234.

21 *BBC News*, Mar. 1, 2003.

tential “grand bargain” after the cessation of major hostilities in Iraq. In the end, cooperation in Afghanistan virtually ceased while the factional fighting in Iraq quickly pitted Iranian interests against those of the United States. With the emergence of a Shiite-led government in Baghdad, it is clear that Tehran now has more influence in that country than it has had in centuries. While it is unclear to what extent Iran will become even more influential after the withdrawal of U.S. forces by December 31, 2011,²⁴ there is no doubt that the defeat of Saddam removed the major Sunni Arab bulwark against Iran and has facilitated the expansion of its influence in Syria and Lebanon, making it in many ways the real beneficiary of post 9/11 changes.

AN EVOLVING U.S. MILITARY

Although the years since 9/11 have witnessed considerable changes in U.S. relations with other states, one of the attacks’ more pronounced national security effects has been on the military, which has been engaged in nonstop combat that began three weeks after New York’s Twin Towers and the Pentagon were hit by al-Qaeda terrorists. Prior to 9/11, the military had prided itself on its high-tech-driven speedy victory over Saddam Hussein in 1991 and its beating of Slobodan Milosevic into submission seven years later.

The 1991 Kuwait war, Operation Desert Storm, was waged with Cold War legacy systems and operational doctrine. This AirLand battle conceptual framework called for deep air strikes behind enemy lines coordinated with highly maneuver-



Engaged in fighting on multiple fronts and in asymmetric situations, U.S. war doctrine has been transformed from its previous Cold War configuration. The use of drones increased dramatically while insurgent attacks in Iraq led to the development and deployment of mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles such as these in Kandahar, Afghanistan, 2009.

able, armored forces that could smash through or around enemy formations. It was designed to offset massive Soviet forces arrayed across the inner German border.

The conditions that presented themselves to the U.S.-led coalition fighting to liberate Kuwait were admirably suited to the AirLand battle. Saddam’s forces were arrayed in a more or less linear fashion. Trained with Soviet equipment, they were a poor man’s version of the Red Army. Iraq’s cloudless skies were ideal for air operations while the flat terrain in Iraq’s south and west seemed designed for the coalition’s armor. Finally, though Iraq was situated half the world away from the United States, Desert Storm did not confront U.S. forces with a complicated logistical challenge. Fearing invasion itself, Saudi Arabia was an integral member of the coalition and became a willing host for Operation Desert Shield, the coalition’s 7-month build up of forces in 1990-91 in preparation for the attack on Iraq.

The U.S. foray into the Balkans did not call for ground forces, and its air operations as part of the anti-Serb coalition generally met with little resistance (though the Serbs did manage to down

24 *MSNBC News*, Feb. 27, 2009.



U.S.-Turkish relations following 9/11 suffered, especially after the Turkish parliament, dominated by the Justice and Development Party's Recep Erdoğan (left) and Abdullah Gül (right), refused to permit the transit of the U.S. 4th Infantry Division to Iraq.

an F-117 stealth fighter²⁵ and a small number of other fixed and rotary wing aircraft). U.S. and allied forces essentially bombed Serbia into submission, and NATO ground troops, including U.S. units, assumed a peacekeeping mission within three months of the start of the bombing campaign. There was, therefore, nothing in Washington's Balkan operation that called into question what had become its way of war: heavy reliance on expensive high technology weapons; land forces that emphasized speed and maneuver; and operational plans that forecast an enemy arrayed against a forward edge of battle that would have to be broken through or encircled. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq changed all that.

Had there been no 9/11, there would have been no U.S.-led coalition war in Afghanistan. That country had been at war for over two decades, first with the Soviet Union, then with itself. U.S. administrations had committed a small

number of CIA advisors, as well as weapons, notably man-portable Stinger anti-air missiles, to the anti-Soviet mujahideen.²⁶ Once the Soviets began to leave Afghanistan, Washington left that country to its fate, which meant endless conflict between warlords. Although Osama bin Laden had established his headquarters and training camps in Afghanistan, the Clinton administration went no further than to fire cruise missiles at al-Qaeda targets near Kandahar and Khost in August 1998.²⁷ It was only because the Taliban government refused to turn over bin Laden and shut down these and other al-Qaeda training camps in the days immediately following 9/11 that the United States went to war.

Even in its earliest days, the war in Afghanistan developed into a very different type of conflict than those with which U.S. forces were familiar. There was a line of battle of sorts since the Taliban ruled most of the country and had to be pushed out of it. But Afghanistan's rugged and mountainous terrain is inhospitable to armored formations as well as to artillery units, and the altitudes in large swathes of the country create difficulties even for heliborne operations. The primary U.S. military forces were, therefore, special operations forces. Indeed, the West became entranced with the image of these forces on horseback—a throwback to the era of cowboys and Indians.

These forces did more than ride horses, however. They trained and helped coordinate the operations of the Afghan Northern Alliance, which provided the bulk of the forces that attacked the al-Qaeda and Taliban positions on the ground. In addition, U.S. forces, whether on horseback or in

²⁵ *USA Today*, Oct. 26, 2005.

²⁶ "Afghanistan: Post-War Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy," Congressional Research Service, Washington, D.C., Mar. 16, 2005.

²⁷ *The Telegraph* (London), May 2, 2011.

more modern modes of transport, utilized the most advanced technologies, most notably satellite communications and reconnaissance systems. These systems linked them to bombers that launched coordinated strikes against the Taliban. While thousands of conventional forces were brought into Afghanistan to support the special operation forces, it was the latter that was credited as the primary factor in the Taliban's rapid defeat.²⁸

The coalition's air operations were considerably more conventional. As long as there were available targets, U.S. forces were able to employ attack aircraft to devastating effect. Air strikes were not only carried out by land-based attack aircraft, aircraft carriers also made significant contributions to the coalition's air operations. Often dismissed as white elephants and relics of a bygone era of major sea battles, the carriers proved their worth by supporting hundreds of F-18 sorties into landlocked Afghanistan.

When a revived Taliban began to seize parts of that country's southern and eastern regions, Washington and its coalition partners increased the number of troops but retained their basic force mix. Light forces predominated, transported by helicopters or air force C-130s. Coalition infantry and U.S. Marines and special forces from several states bore the brunt of the coalition's operations.

The AirLand battle doctrine was no more applicable to Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003) than it had been to Afghanistan. Once the initial fighting was over, the Iraqi army faded away in the face of the coalition's forces. There was no need for armor or artillery while the requirements for air strikes dropped sharply. When the conflict's aftermath did not produce stability but rather morphed into what became a sectarian civil war, Washington and its partners relied increasingly on infantry forces as well as on intelligence provided by special forces and unmanned aerial vehicles. On the other hand, armor and artillery became increasingly irrelevant to the task at hand.

Toward a lighter, more flexible force. The switch to lighter units and the increasing emphasis on unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs or drones as they are popularly known) began while Donald Rumsfeld was secretary of defense. Rumsfeld had preached "transformation" of the military prior to 9/11. He favored a lighter, more flexible army, arguing that the heavy armored forces that dominated the army were an artifact of the Cold War. For that reason as well, Rumsfeld also pushed for an increase in special operations force levels.

Rumsfeld felt that the air force likewise reflected the requirements of the Cold War rather than the emerging security environment of the twenty-first century. For this reason, he advocated increased funding and numbers of unmanned aerial vehicles. Yet just as his proposals for a more flexible land force encountered fierce resistance from the army leadership, so did his stress on UAVs lead to passive foot dragging by the air force. The war in Afghanistan enabled him to force through increased funding for both special forces and UAVs, however. Unmanned aerial vehicles, their counterparts for operations under the sea (termed unmanned underwater vehicles, or UUVs), as well as robotics more gener-

ally, such as those employed to defuse improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are now evolving into an integral part of U.S. force structure. U.S. forces employ thousands of robots of various kinds in operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and are likely to expand their reliance on unmanned systems in the years to come. As two U.S. naval officers have recently asserted, "We want to be ready when more advanced systems come on line—and many of the technologies are already available."²⁹

Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld argued that heavy armored forces were an artifact of the Cold War.

28 Frank L. Jones, "Army SOF in Afghanistan: Learning the Right Lessons," *Joint Force Quarterly*, National Defense University, Winter 2002–03.

29 Lt. Cdr. Brent Johnston and VADM John Richardson, USN, "Unmanned, Unseen, and under the Sea," *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, June 2011, p. 43.

It is noteworthy that Rumsfeld ordered that a relatively small ground force be employed to carry out Operation Iraqi Freedom. For this, he was bitterly criticized when it became clear that efforts in Iraq would require a long-term commitment with increased troop levels. In fact, Rumsfeld had anticipated a rapid departure from Iraq with power returned to a post-Saddam local leadership. It was the creation of the Coalition Provisional Authority—essentially a U.S. operation—and its dismantlement of the Iraqi military and

The Coalition Provisional Authority's dismantlement of the Iraqi military and the Baathist bureaucracy resulted in the U.S. ensnarement in Iraq.

the country's Baathist bureaucratic structure, that resulted in the U.S. ensnarement in Iraq. In any event, the Iraq conflict afforded Rumsfeld yet another opportunity to demonstrate that his program was relevant to the kinds of conflicts against irregular forces that the United States was likely to face. When Robert Gates replaced Rumsfeld in late 2006, he laid even greater emphasis

on the need to fund lighter, flexible forces as well as unmanned systems not only for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance but also as strike systems, targeting terrorist leaders.

The changing "total force": reserves and contractors. The post-9/11 wars transformed the role of U.S. reserve forces from units that trained for a major war that few expected ever to take place to absorption in the active military's regiments of exhausting, multiple rotations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Reserve civil affairs, military police, engineering, and other units became critical to the ongoing military effort in both states. In addition, due to the paucity of civil servants who were either able or willing to deploy overseas, reservists worked alongside the active forces in providing reconstruction support for both countries. In fact, reservists often took the lead in reconstruction, bringing to bear civilian skills such as agricultural expertise, in the highly dangerous environments that characterized both states.

Contractors also became a major element in

U.S. efforts to rebuild both Afghanistan and Iraq, in what has been erroneously termed "nation building" (it is actually state rebuilding). Since 9/11, the number of contractors engaged in everything from providing food and other logistics support to the military, to training local militaries, to assisting governments to establish their bureaucracies, dwarfed the efforts of contractors in previous wars. Overseeing the operations of these private companies has become a major challenge for U.S. officials: As the Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan has demonstrated, Washington has spent about \$200 billion on contractors and may have wasted tens of billions in the process.³⁰ Like the reserve forces, it is anticipated that contractors will remain a critical element in all future U.S. military operations; the challenge facing Washington is how to integrate them properly into U.S. force posture.

Organizational changes. In parallel with the Bush administration's other organizational changes, Rumsfeld implemented a number of key changes within the Department of Defense. He created a major, new four-star military command, the Northern Command, with primary responsibility for the military aspects of homeland defense. He also created a new office of the undersecretary of defense for intelligence,³¹ tasked with better coordination of both the department's own intelligence components as well as its activities within the new construct under the director of national intelligence.

**NEW ENEMIES,
NEW THREATS**

The post 9/11 world underscored the new threats that terrorists posed to the United States and the West. Motivated by Islam, utilizing cell phones and other relatively cheap technologies, terrorists were able to coordinate two types of attacks—those by suicide bombers and those

30 "At What Risk? Correcting Over-reliance on Contractors in Contingency Operations," report to Congress, Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan, Feb. 24, 2011.

31 *The Washington Post*, Nov. 14, 2006; *The Christian Science Monitor* (Boston), May 18, 2006.

from ever more lethal IEDs. The rash of IED attacks prompted the U.S. military first to undertake a rapid arming of its utility jeeps, known as HMMWVs, or Humvees, and, when that proved insufficient, to develop and acquire large numbers of mine-resistant ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicles. Neither the “up-armored” Humvees nor the MRAPs were anticipated, much less acquired, prior to 9/11.

In the years since 9/11, al-Qaeda has spawned a number of offshoots, particularly al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (which appears to be playing a major role in the ongoing Yemeni insurrection) and al-Qaeda in the Maghreb. Al-Shabab in Somalia, a homegrown terrorist group, also appears to have links to al-Qaeda. The proliferation of these groups has underscored the U.S. military’s concern for revamping its force posture along the lines described above. Whether its doing so is an overreaction to current circumstances—and is, therefore, another manifestation of “fighting the last war”—remains to be seen. Certainly the seeming irrelevance of al-Qaeda-type groups to the ongoing Arab upheavals, far more than bin Laden’s killing, would seem to indicate that fighting irregulars may not be the major preoccupation of the U.S. military once it departs from Iraq and draws down in Afghanistan.

WHERE DOES THE UNITED STATES GO FROM HERE?

The 9/11 attacks have transformed the United States. They have had a major impact on

the American psyche, much as the attack on Pearl Harbor had on the America of a half century earlier; in particular, they have led to a preoccupation with homeland security that evokes the World War II era. In the aftermath of 9/11, Washington has become enmeshed in the two longest

wars it has ever fought and from which it has yet to emerge. The federal budget has gone from a surplus to massive annual deficits. The “war on terror” in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere, funded for years with non-budget items, has added approximately a trillion dollars to the national debt. The deficit has exacerbated the difficulties the United States faces in recovering from the severe recession of 2008-09.

The U.S. economy is still the strongest in the world. So, too, is the U.S. military. The 9/11 attacks have certainly taken a toll and continue to do so. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that despite setbacks and frustration, the resilience, patience, and determination of Americans led to the successful hunt for bin Laden. These are the same qualities that, in spite of all that has taken place since the Twin Towers fell and the Pentagon was hit, will serve the country in good stead as its population seeks again to enjoy peace abroad and prosperity at home.



Fighting irregulars may not be the major preoccupation of the U.S. military once it departs from Iraq and draws down in Afghanistan.

Democracy Not Furthered by Foreign Aid

Eurocrats have squandered nearly £12 billion of taxpayers’ money on failed overseas aid projects to promote democracy in Arab nations, a scathing report concluded last night. Researchers found cash pumped into North Africa and the Middle East by the European Union over the last 15 years to encourage “good governance” has made little impact.

And much of the money was handed to tyrannical regimes, including that of Colonel Qaddafi’s Libya and the now ousted dictatorships in Egypt and Tunisia, while doing nothing to help the “Arab Spring” series of revolts this year.

The Daily Express, May 9, 2011

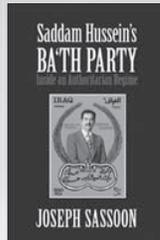
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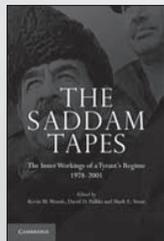
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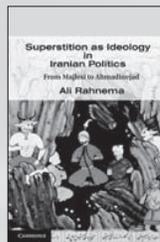
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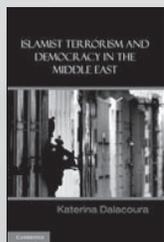
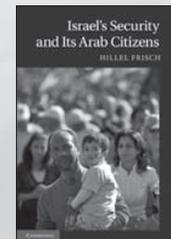
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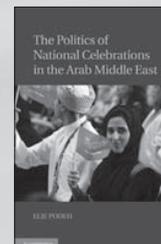
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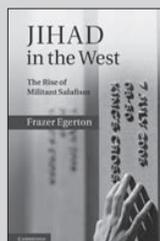
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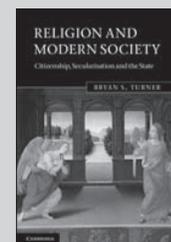
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September 11: A Decade Later

Early Warnings Ignored

by Jonathan Schanzer

In its final report of July 22, 2004, the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States (commonly known as the 9/11 Commission) charged that Congress had failed America. In the commissioners' judgment, Congress had "adjusted slowly to the rise of transnational terrorism as a threat to national security. In particular, the growing threat and capabilities of [Osama] bin Laden were not understood in Congress ... To the extent that terrorism did break through and engage the attention of the Congress as a whole, it would briefly command attention after a specific incident, and then return to a lower rung on the public policy agenda." Indeed, the commission was unequivocal about "Congress's slowness and inadequacy in treating the issue of terrorism in the years before 9/11."¹

The commission was not alone in its indictment. Richard A. Clarke, former White House coordinator for counterterrorism under President Bill Clinton, asserted that "only after 9/11 did Congress muster the political will to strengthen the U.S. laws to fight terrorist financing and money laundering."² Paul Pillar, a former CIA official, noted that congressional interest in terrorism merely mirrored the public's interest, spiking after major terrorist incidents but waning shortly thereafter.³

But these critics were not entirely accurate. One small group of congressmen was undeserving of these admonishments. Working under the obscure banner of the Republican Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare, a handful of legislators consistently warned of jihadist terrorism for more than a decade before the 9/11 attacks.

TASK FORCE ORIGINS

The story of U.S. aid to the Afghan mujahideen in the 1980s is well known. As author George Crile detailed in his book, *Charlie*

Wilson's War, Rep. Charlie Wilson (Democrat, Texas) of the House Appropriations Committee

Jonathan Schanzer is vice president of research at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

1 *The 9/11 Commission Report* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2004), pp. 104-6.

2 Richard A. Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (New York: Free Press, 2004), p. 195.

3 Paul R. Pillar, *Terrorism and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2001), pp. 20, 204-5.

championed an initiative to arm and fund these forces and repel the Soviet invasion.⁴

A lesser-known story was the supply of non-military aid, thanks to the efforts of Rep. Bill McCollum (Republican of Florida). With the help of his chief of staff, Vaughn Forrest, McCollum airlifted medical supplies to El Salvador, Thailand, Cambodia, Chad, Angola, Vietnam, and other conflict zones. The success of these “McCollum Airlifts” prompted the U.S. Agency for International Development to request in 1985 that a similar program be developed for Pakistan.⁵

Forrest also found a legal loophole that enabled the Pentagon to give away military surplus goods as humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan. He further discovered that Air Force reserve pilots could maintain flight proficiency levels by flying transport planes to Afghanistan.⁶

As McCollum’s staff worked in Afghanistan and Pakistan, they cultivated a network of locals and expatriates, some of whom reported on radical, anti-Western elements,⁷ alerting McCollum to new dangers among the mujahideen.⁸

By the end of 1988, the tide of the war had turned. Amid heavy losses, the Soviets began to withdraw from Afghanistan, and by May 15, 1989, they were gone. McCollum, however, did not join in the celebration. In a *Washington Post* op-ed, he boldly proclaimed that “something has gone terribly wrong with the war in Afghanistan.”⁹ Drawing from continuing reports on radi-

calism among the mujahideen, McCollum sought to warn the West. To this end, together with Rep. Duncan Hunter (Republican of California), the head of the Republican Research Committee, he created the ad-hoc Republican Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare.¹⁰

The aims of the task force were not immediately apparent. Congress did not fund it or provide it with offices. McCollum put Forrest in charge of the group and soon hired as its director Yossef Bodansky, a part-time academic from Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies, who provided additional research.

In its first known report, issued on July 28, 1989, task force letterhead listed its members as Republican representatives Michael DeWine (Ohio), David O’Brien Martin (New York), Porter Goss (Florida), Jim Lightfoot (Iowa), Bob Livingston (Louisiana), Jack Buechner (Missouri), John G. Rowland (Connecticut), and Olympia Snowe (Maine). Also listed as cochairman was Dana Rohrabacher (California).¹¹ By the following year, the roster had changed so that only Goss, Livingston, and Snowe remained from the original letterhead. Joining them were Republican representatives William Broomfield (Michigan), Benjamin Gilman (New York), Robert Doman (California), and Christopher Cox (California).¹²

Membership changed frequently in the early years. Inclusion simply signaled an active interest in the subject.¹³ Members also contributed funds from their budgets for task force operations and reports.

The task force faxed its reports to more than 400 people, including members of the intelligence community, the White House, the State Department, Congress, and the media.¹⁴

A 1991 report on “Emerging Trends and Threats” emphasized the threat posed by Afghan mujahideen.

4 George Crile, *Charlie Wilson’s War: The Extraordinary Story of How the Wildest Man in Congress and a Rogue CIA Agent Changed the History of Our Times* (New York: Grove Press, 2003), pp. 33-114.

5 Author’s interview with Peter Leitner, Pentagon City, Va., June 9, 2009.

6 Ibid.

7 *The Hill* (Washington, D.C.), Nov. 26, 2003.

8 Phone interview with Bill McCollum, Sept. 29, 2005.

9 Bill McCollum, “Afghan Endgame: The CIA Has Bungled It,” *The Washington Post*, Sept. 10, 1989.

10 *The Hill*, Nov. 26, 2003.

11 “Trends in Afghanistan,” Republican Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare, July 28, 1989, Hoover Institution library, Stanford University, Stanford, Calif.

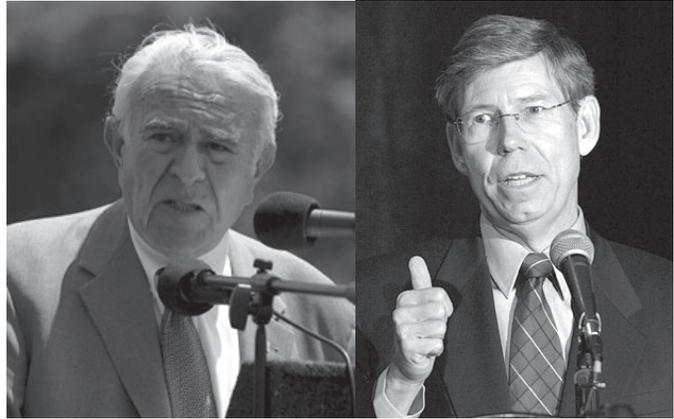
12 “National Security Advisory,” Republican Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare, Jan. 29, 1991, Hoover Institution library.

13 Author interview with Donald Morrissey, Washington, D.C., June 19, 2009.

14 Author interview with James Geoffrey, Washington, D.C., June 12, 2009.

Staffers recall going from one member's office to another begging for boxes of paper to print the reports because the task force lacked funds, but even when the group printed enough reports, they often went unread.¹⁵

Part of the problem was the tone of the research. Analysis by the task force conveyed a sense of absolute certainty. Indeed, the reports rarely included caveats or even attributions. It was as if the task force was conveying immutable facts—a style typically avoided in intelligence reports, think tank analyses, and journalism.



Reps. Benjamin Gilman (left) and Bill McCollum (right) were two of the leading figures in the Republican Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare, which sought to alert Congress to the threat of “radical-revivalist Islamists” beginning in 1989.

EARLY PRESCIENCE

The task force reports, without exception, contained errors. But, if one can look past the errors, some of the early reports had remarkably prescient information.

The first report, titled “Trends in Afghanistan,” warned that the “radical-revivalist Islamists, (the fundamentalists), who are the recipients of the bulk of U.S. aid, are actually involved in international terrorism aimed at the United States and its allies throughout the Islamic world.” Should Washington fail to take note, the task force warned, “there will be unleashed a wave of terrorism aimed at the U.S.”¹⁶

In another early report of February 28, 1990, titled “Saudi Arabia,” the task force warned that “Afghan mujahideen and Arab Wahhabi activists, financed by Saudi money, have attempted to enforce their way of life ... on rural populations in Afghanistan.”¹⁷

15 Author interview with Scott Brenner, Washington, D.C., June 22, 2009.

16 “Trends in Afghanistan,” July 28, 1989.

A separate 1990 task force report titled “A Question of Trust,” drew attention to Gulbaddin Hekmatiyar, the leader of the Islamist faction Hezb-i-Islami. It noted that he had received U.S. assistance in the 1980s and that his faction now posed a threat to U.S. interests in Afghanistan.¹⁸ The task force was nearly thirteen years ahead of its time; in 2003, the U.S. Treasury designated Hekmatiyar for terrorist activity with al-Qaeda and the Taliban.¹⁹

A 1991 report on “Emerging Trends and Threats” emphasized the threat posed by Afghan mujahideen but also provided intelligence not acted on for more than a decade by fingering “Sami ar-Rayan” as a U.S.-based Islamist who attended an “Islamic Conference for Palestine” in 1989.²⁰

17 Richard J. Leitner and Peter M. Leitner, *Unheeded Warnings: The Lost Reports of the Congressional Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare*, vol. II (Washington, D.C.: Crossbow Books, 2009), pp. 166-8.

18 “A Question of Trust,” Republican Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare, Mar. 1, 1990, private library of Rosanne Klass, New York City.

19 “Alphabetical Listing of Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons” (SDN list), Department of the Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control, Washington, D.C., accessed July 11, 2011.

20 Leitner and Leitner, *Unheeded Warnings*, vol. 1, p. 336.

This was a reference to Sami al-Arian, a Palestinian professor in Florida who pleaded guilty in 2006 to a charge of conspiring to provide services to the Palestinian Islamic Jihad.²¹

Additionally, in July 1992, the task force issued a report alleging that Tehran and Damascus were printing “nearly perfect” counterfeit U.S. currency to destabilize the U.S. economy while easing Iran’s deficit. McCollum even displayed the currency at a press conference,²² driving Iran’s U.N. mission to lash out at the task force and its “wild hallucinations of the extreme right.”²³ Later, however, the Treasury confirmed the task force’s report, noting that, “excellent forgeries have turned up in the Middle East.”²⁴

On February 1, 1993, McCollum submitted an 80-page report for the *Congressional Record* titled “The New Islamist International.”²⁵ It was an attempt to provide an overview of the jihadist movement, including an analysis of the “leadership and high command” of terrorists in Sudan where “the pan-Islamist movement has taken

hold.” While the report did not mention al-Qaeda, it did note the existence of an “international jihad organization.” It identified the “most important figure” within that organization as the late Abdullah Azzam—later identified as al-Qaeda’s cofounder—and also mentioned Ayman al-Zawahiri (al-Qaeda’s future deputy leader), and Abdul Majid

al-Zindani (finally designated by the U.S. Treasury in 2004 for “working with bin Laden, notably serving as one of his spiritual leaders. In this lead-

ership capacity, he ... played a key role in the purchase of weapons on behalf of al-Qaeda and other terrorists”).²⁶

Remarkably, the February report also warned of Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, “the spiritual guide of the most radical branch of Islamic Jihad in Egypt,” who “arrived in the U.S. in the fall of 1990 and established an Islamist center ... in Brooklyn, New York.” It noted that Abdel Rahman was exploring the “possibility of terrorist operations” in the United States.²⁷ Although he was largely unknown at the time, Abdel Rahman would soon be arrested and later convicted for his role in a plan to plant five bombs in the New York City area.²⁸

Task force member Benjamin Gilman is worthy of special mention. Even before the creation of this group, he demonstrated an abiding interest in counterterrorism legislation. He was among the most vocal advocates of the Domestic Antiterrorist Reward Act (HR 1241) in March 1993, raising the reward for leads in domestic terrorism cases from \$500,000 to \$2 million.²⁹ The program led to, among others, the 1995 capture of senior al-Qaeda operative Ramzi Yousef in Islamabad, Pakistan.³⁰

Gilman also relentlessly pushed the State Department to reform. He hammered it for allowing Abdel Rahman into the United States on a tourist visa in 1990 and campaigned to have the department update its antiquated microfiche system.³¹

Finally, one cannot discuss the early years of the task force without addressing Yossef

Bodansky’s 1993 book alleged that Tehran was training jihadists to “crash the airliner ... into a selected objective.”

21 “Sami al-Arian Pleads Guilty to Conspiracy to Provide Services to Palestinian Islamic Jihad,” Department of Justice, Washington, D.C., Apr. 17, 2006.

22 Author interview with Scott Brenner, June 22, 2009.

23 *The Independent* (London), July 3, 1992.

24 *Moneyclips* (San Angelo, Tex.), July 2, 1992.

25 Leitner and Leitner, *Unheeded Warnings*, vol. I, pp. 102-91; excerpts at “The New Islamist International,” The Republican Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare, Feb. 1, 1993.

26 “United States Designates bin Laden Loyalist,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, Washington, D.C., Feb. 24, 2004.

27 Leitner and Leitner, *Unheeded Warnings*, vol. I, pp. 102-91; excerpts at “The New Islamist International,” The Republican Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare, Feb. 1, 1993.

28 *The New York Times*, Jan. 18, 1996.

29 Gerald Solomon, speaking in support of the “Domestic Antiterrorist Reward Act of 1993,” H1035, House of Representatives, *Congressional Record*, Mar. 4, 1993.

30 CNN, Mar. 1, 2003; for more on Yousef, see Simon Reeve, *The New Jackals: Ramzi Yousef, Osama bin Laden and the Future of Terrorism* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1999).

31 Benjamin Gilman, “Time to Slam the Door on Terrorists,” U.S. House of Representatives, *Congressional Record*, 103rd Congress (1993-94), Washington, D.C., May 11, 1993, p. E1207.

Bodansky's 1993 book, *Target the West: Terrorism in the World Today*, in which he argued that a new terror network, the Armed Islamic Movement, had emerged with "operational centers in Sudan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan."³² Bodansky was clearly struggling to understand the nascent al-Qaeda network.

Perhaps the most notable passage appeared on page 15, which alleged that Tehran was training jihadists "to seize (or hijack) a transport aircraft. Then, trained air crews from among the terrorists would crash the airliner with its passengers into a selected objective."³³ This, of course, was a chilling description of the 9/11 plot eight years later.

EARLY FAILURES

But, as noted above, the task force reports were riddled with errors, some of which were spectacular. One example is the wildly inaccurate analysis of the 1990 crisis with Iraq. One report, "Some Speculations on Desert Warfare," erroneously predicted that war would "almost certainly cover the entire region" and that Saddam Hussein's forces would "defeat U.S.-led forces piecemeal."³⁴ Another falsely stated that "Iraq had already developed other nuclear weapons."³⁵ After U.S.-led forces routed Saddam, the task force erroneously warned of "spectacular strikes, including suicide attacks" in the United States.³⁶

The task force released a 1992 report titled "Terrorism in the U.S.: Emerging Trends and the Florida Connection." It claimed, without attribution, that "Disney World ... would make a visually spectacular and socially meaningful target" for terrorists.³⁷

In 1993, the task force warned that a "new

phase in an Islamist, terrorist campaign in the United States and overseas has been initiated." A report warned of attacks "by the Iranians and their Islamist allies" between March 17 and March 23, and then from March 25 through the end of the month, as the "most likely period for some terrorist attack to occur."³⁸ The attack, of course, never occurred.

In what may have been its most spectacular failure, the task force released a May 1993 report alleging that a terrorist network existed

within a "radical [native] American Indian movement." It alleged that Libya provided aid to Native American allies, who in turn provided "shelter and hiding places to terrorist operatives on various reservations."³⁹

These are just a few of the task force's many errors in the early years.

UNDER FIRE

The task force also quickly began to accumulate enemies. In 1994, the Qur'anic Open University published a book titled *Target Islam: Exposing the Malicious Conspiracy of Zionists against the World of Islam and Prominent Muslim Leaders*. The book rebuked the task force for attempting to "maliciously link American Muslim organizations and individuals" with the January 1993 World Trade Center attack. The Qur'anic Open University, by way of background, was headed by Sheikh Mubarak Ali Shah Gilani, who was later implicated—but not convicted—in the kidnapping and murder of *Wall Street Journal* journalist Daniel Pearl in Pakistan in 2002.⁴¹

A November 1994 report was one of Congress's earliest warnings about Osama bin Laden.

32 Yossef Bodansky, *Target the West: Terrorism in the World Today* (New York: S.P.I. Books, 1993), pp. xv.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

34 Leitner and Leitner, *Unheeded Warnings*, vol. 1, pp. 312-7.

35 "Iraq's Other Bomb," Republican Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare, Nov. 28, 1990, Hoover Institution library.

36 Leitner and Leitner, *Unheeded Warnings*, vol. 1, pp. 42-4.

37 *Ibid.*, pp. 380-9.

38 *Ibid.*, pp. 403-5.

39 *Ibid.*, pp. 429-33, report titled, "Terrorism and the Radical American Indian Movement: The Unexpected Connection."

40 *The New York Times* News Service, Jan. 10, 2002; *The Baltimore Sun*, Jan. 10, 2002.

41 Mira L. Boland, "Sheikh Gilani's American Disciples," *The Weekly Standard*, Mar. 18, 2002.

Other Muslim groups lashed out at the task force for a report titled “Iran’s European Springboard,” which claimed that Tehran sent fighters to Bosnia to launch a European Islamist revolution and that Bosnian Muslims were slaughtering their own people as a ploy for world sympathy. The report alleged that “several key events, mostly strikes against civilians, that had galvanized public opinion and governments in the

West to take bolder action in Bosnia-Herzegovina, were in fact ‘staged’ for the Western media by the Muslims themselves in order to dramatize the city’s plight.”⁴²

In response to the report, in 1993, American Muslim Council director

Abdurahman Alamoudi accused the group of “Muslim-bashing.”⁴³ Eleven years later, Alamoudi would be sentenced by a federal court to twenty-three years in jail for plotting to assassinate the King of Saudi Arabia with financing and assistance from Libya.⁴⁴ At the time, however, his criticism was taken seriously. Rohrabacher resigned from the task force, registering his dissatisfaction with the report.⁴⁵ Representatives Snowe and Cox left shortly afterward.⁴⁶

The task force soon stopped listing members on the letterhead. Listed beneath the seal of Congress and the title of the Republican Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare were only the names of Bill McCollum (chairman), Vaughn Forrest (chief of staff), Yossef Bodansky (director), and Donald Morrissey (legislative director).

The task force drew the ire of CAIR, a Muslim group later tied to terrorism.

The Alamoudi controversy did not help when task force members approached Rep. Charlie Rose (Democrat of North Carolina), then-House administration chairman, to create the Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare Caucus. This was an effort to transform the group into a recognized and bipartisan institution with a congressional budget.⁴⁷ In addition to the fallout from the Alamoudi scuffle, the intelligence community and the State Department reportedly bristled at the task force’s attempts to challenge their authority. Rose eventually denied the request in July 1994.⁴⁸

EARLY ATTEMPTS TO IDENTIFY AL-QAEDA

Despite its setbacks, the task force continued doggedly to try to understand the evolution of the jihadist movement. One 1994 report, titled “Islamist Terrorism and the Geneva Connection,” identified Ayman al-Zawahiri as “one of the senior leaders of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad,” who relocated “to Pakistan where he joined a fledgling international Islamist group in Peshawar.”⁴⁹

The task force produced another important report, which McCollum submitted for the *Congressional Record*, noting that “Arab volunteers continued to arrive in Peshawar” and that the “main Ikhwan [Muslim Brotherhood] facility is Maktaba-i-Khidamat (services offices), which was originally established by the late Shaykh Abd Allah Azzam.”⁵⁰ Here the task force had fingered (using the Urdu spelling) the central clearinghouse for al-Qaeda in its early years—Maktab al-Khidamat.

Then, on November 2, 1994, the task force released a report titled “The Persian Gulf Redux.”

42 Yossef Bodansky and Vaughn S. Forrest, “Iran’s European Springboard?” Republican Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare, Sept. 1, 1992.

43 Greg Noakes, “Republican Task Force Faces Backlash on Bosnia Report.” *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, July/Aug. 1993, p. 30.

44 “Abdurahman Alamoudi Sentenced to Jail in Terrorism Financing Case,” U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C., Oct. 15, 2004.

45 Author telephone interview with Dana Rohrabacher, June 26, 2009.

46 Noakes, “Republican Task Force Faces Backlash on Bosnia Report,” p. 30; *National Catholic Reporter*, Mar. 19, 1993.

47 *Roll Call* (Washington, D.C.), Jan. 20, 1994.

48 *Ibid.*, July 11, 1994.

49 “Islamist Terrorism and the Geneva Connection,” Republican Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare, Mar. 14, 1994, accessed Aug. 13, 2010. This link has since been removed.

50 Bill McCollum, “Pakistan Supports Terrorist Rebels in Kashmir—By Yossef Bodansky and Vaughn S. Forrest,” House of Representatives, *Congressional Record*, June 22, 1994, p. E1296.

Though it did not identify him as a central figure, the report was one of Congress's earliest warnings about Osama bin Laden:

the Committee for Advice and Reform, a Saudi Islamist group closely affiliated with Khartoum, specifically condemned the establishment of the Higher Council for Islamic Affairs. In a statement signed by Osama bin Laden, the Committee accused Riyadh of "trying to deceive the public"... Bin Laden further accused Riyadh of attempting "to put an end to genuine Islam."⁵¹

NEW LEADERSHIP, SAME INCONSISTENCY

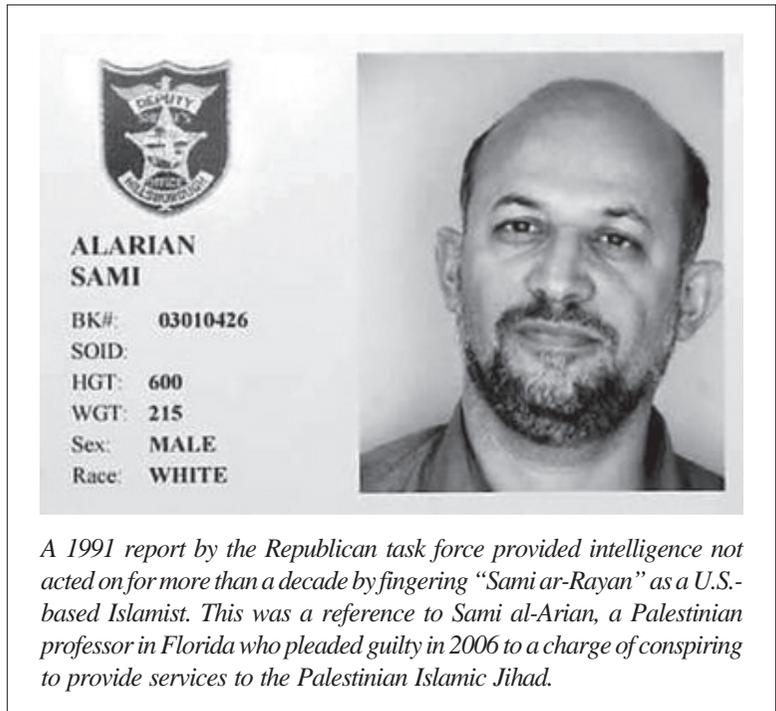
On January 4, 1995, the 104th Congress was sworn in, marking the first time Republicans controlled both houses since 1953.⁵² The task force also underwent dramatic change. McCollum was appointed to the House Intelligence Committee, which prompted him to relinquish his chair. "I had access to secure things that I couldn't talk about," McCollum later said.⁵³ Task force members agreed that McCollum could assist the group's work from the inside.⁵⁴

51 Leitner and Leitner, *Unheeded Warnings*, vol. 2, pp. 364-5.

52 Laurence M. Vance, "What a Republican Majority Has Not Meant," Future of Freedom Foundation, Fairfax, Va. Sept. 29, 2004.

53 Author telephone interviews with Bill McCollum, Sept. 29, 2005, Jan. 16, 2010.

54 Author telephone interview with Vaughn S. Forrest, Jan. 13, 2010.



Rep. Jim Saxton (Republican of New Jersey) became the new chairman.⁵⁵ He approached his new position with vigor and took a more active interest in the research and writing involved in producing task force reports.⁵⁶

The task force also drew interest from new members, including former actor and musician Sonny Bono (Republican of California), who was elected to represent California's 44th district in November 1994, and quickly became one of the members who contributed funds for task force salaries from their congressional budgets.⁵⁷ Gilman, who continued to press for State Department reform, had become chairman of the House International Affairs Committee.

The task force, despite these changes, continued to issue questionable reports. In February 1995, the group warned that "Iran-sponsored Is-

55 Author interview with James Geoffrey, June 12, 2009.

56 Author telephone interview with Mark O'Connell, July 22, 2009.

57 Author telephone interview with Gary Gallant, July 16, 2009; *Report of the Clerk of the House, 1996* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997).

lamist terrorists may soon strike in Washington D.C.—specifically the U.S. Congress and the White House.”⁵⁸ As was the case with previous warnings, no such attack took place.

The group also issued questionable research

In 1997, the task force warned that “bin Laden and his allies have accelerated their preparations for ... terrorist attacks against U.S. forces.”

following the April 19, 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, alleging that Islamists had carried out the attack when, in reality, the attack was homegrown. But on May 24 of that year, it also released a report titled “Recent Terrorist Conferences,” warning of the activities of

both bin Laden and Zawahiri.⁵⁹

The task force also issued two responses to the bombings in the Saudi cities of Riyadh (1995) and Dhahran (1996) where it struggled to grasp the extent of al-Qaeda’s involvement. However, it continued to call it the “Armed Islamic Movement” in one report,⁶⁰ and the “International HizbAllah” in another. The latter report unequivocally warned of the “rise in prominence of Osama bin Laden.”⁶¹

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE YEARS

In 1997, Saxton was named chairman of the Joint Economic Committee, whose primary task was to recommend improvements in economic policy. He only had until the end of 1998, as the chairmanship rotates between Democrats and Republicans every two years, but he inquired about putting his two task force staffers—Bodansky and Forrest—on the committee payroll under the assumption that “terror can have a significant impact on the economy.”⁶²

In the end, he only secured sufficient funds for Forrest.⁶³ Bodansky continued to receive a salary pooled by task force members.⁶⁴

On March 12, 1997, the task force issued “The Dhahran Bomb: Update,” warning that “bin Laden and his allies have accelerated their preparations for the resumption of terrorist attacks against U.S. forces in the Middle East and elsewhere.” It questionably described bin Laden’s network as being wholly controlled by Iran but also cited an *al-Quds al-Arabi* article describing bin Laden’s “fortified bases and headquarters in the mountains ... in the Tora Bora military base of Nangarhar province.”⁶⁵ Tora Bora was, of course, the scene of heavy fighting after the U.S.-led coalition invaded Afghanistan in December 2001 and where bin Laden escaped via underground caves.⁶⁶

At around this time, the task force came under attack again from an American Muslim group. An April 10 article in an Arab newspaper quoted Nihad Awad of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) as stating that “the congressmen who provide public funds to support this task force need to explain to their constituents why hard-earned tax dollars are being wasted on inflammatory reports.” He claimed that Bodansky had made “a career out of bashing Islam and Muslims.”⁶⁷ Thus, the task force had again drawn the ire of a Muslim group later tied to terrorism. Indeed, the U.S. government identified CAIR in 2007 as an “un-indicted coconspirator” in *United States vs. Holy Land Foundation*, a Hamas terrorism finance case.⁶⁸

Gilman, in the meantime, had become fixated on the threat of the Taliban. He and former task force member Dana Rohrabacher publically and repeatedly challenged the Clinton administration’s official policies toward the Taliban.⁶⁹ He was cen-

58 Leitner and Leitner, *Unheeded Warnings*, vol. 1, pp. 509-12.

59 *Ibid.*, pp. 245-52.

60 *Ibid.*, pp. 533, 547, 567.

61 *Ibid.*, pp. 573-8.

62 Author telephone interview with Jim Saxton, July 24, 2009.

63 Author telephone interview with Vaughn Forrest, Jan. 14, 2010.

64 Author telephone interview with anonymous Joint Economic Committee staffer, Sept. 3, 2009.

65 Leitner and Leitner, *Unheeded Warnings*, vol. 1, pp. 579-83. 66 *The Washington Post*, Apr. 17, 2002.

67 *Al-Nashra* (Fairfax, Va.), Dec. 23, 1998.

68 *The New York Sun*, June 4, 2007.

69 Dana Rohrabacher, “9/11 Represented a Dramatic Failure of Policy and People,” House of Representatives, June 21, 2003.

tral in the congressional effort to condemn the Taliban. In 1998, he warned of a “new kind of adversary, one that draws its power from a convergence of the destructive tactics of international terrorism and radical Muslim extremism with one of the world’s largest heroin empires.” He warned that “bin Laden is only the tip of the iceberg and removing him will not end the threat . . . from Muslim terrorist extremists.”⁷⁰

BODANSKY’S BOOK

Following the 1998 twin embassy bombings in Africa, bin Laden had unquestionably become a household name in the United States. Capitalizing on Americans’ interest in the Saudi-born terrorist, Bodansky released *Bin Laden: The Man Who Declared War on America*.⁷¹ He, however, declined to provide source footnotes for his text of more than 400 pages. Thus, as one reviewer later noted, “Bodansky leaves the veracity of many of his claims to ride on his name alone.”⁷² This, coupled with the lack of caveats and qualifiers (similar to the style of task force reports), weakened the book’s credibility.

Still, no other analyst had attempted what Bodansky had done. His book described bin Laden as a “cog, albeit an important one, in a large system that will outlast his own demise.”⁷³ He further identified the existence of what is now recognized as al-Qaeda, though referred to it by the name used in task force reports: the “Armed Islamic Movement.” He noted that “under the leadership of bin Laden, Zawahiri, and their colleagues, the Islamist terrorist system continues to expand.”⁷⁴ In the end, Bodansky’s book was filled with both errors and worthwhile analysis, but it came out at a time when the public knew precious little about Islamist terrorism.

70 Benjamin Gilman, “The Taliban: Protectors of Terrorists, Producers of Drugs,” H. Con. Res. 336, House of Representatives, *Congressional Record*, Oct. 8, 1998, p. E1989.

71 New York: Prima Publishing, 1999.

72 Ali Asadullah, “Book Review: Bin Laden: The Man Who Declared War on America,” *Islam Online*, Nov. 4, 2001.

73 Bodansky, *Bin Laden*, p. 406.

74 *Ibid.*, p. 404.

By this time, in early 1999, Saxton had rotated out of the position of chairman of the Joint Economic Committee. Forrest attempted to stay on as a staffer, but he recalled that “the chairman was opposed to having me continue.”⁷⁵ Forrest left and founded the Higgins Counterterrorism Center along with defense analyst Peter Leitner. After Forrest’s departure, the task force continued to operate on a shoestring budget. Bodansky, according to staffers, worked out of a tiny room, a converted broom closet, down the hall from Saxton’s office.⁷⁶

SPECIAL PANEL (1999-2000)

In May 1999, House Speaker Dennis Hastert (Republican of Illinois) named Saxton as chair to a new Special Oversight Panel on Terrorism. Saxton expressed his delight in presiding over “an official entity.”⁷⁷ Bodansky, however, did not receive an official position on the special panel; he remained an advisor to Saxton and the sole employee of the task force.⁷⁸

Saxton’s panel held its first hearing on the threat of biological, nuclear, and cyber terrorism. It included testimony on the threat of an electromagnetic pulse attack, in which a nuclear warhead could be detonated high above the Earth’s surface, causing permanent damage to electrical systems on the ground. The panel also featured an expert on cyber terrorism, a new and growing field in the age of the Internet.⁷⁹ Saxton, the

In 1999, an oversight panel chaired by Jim Saxton held its first hearing on biological, nuclear, and cyber terrorism.

75 Author telephone interview with Vaughn Forrest, Jan. 14, 2010.

76 Author telephone interview with Mark O’Connell, July 22, 2009.

77 Author telephone interview with Jim Saxton, Dec. 15, 2009.

78 Author telephone interview with Jim Saxton, Sept. 4, 2009.

79 “Terrorist Threats to the United States,” Special Oversight Panel on Terrorism, House Committee on Armed Services, Washington, D.C., May 23, 2000.

ambitious chairman, held five more panels on terrorism-related topics in subsequent weeks.⁸⁰ One, titled “Terrorism and Threats to U.S. Interests in Latin America,” featured Elliott Abrams, who later served as deputy national security advisor during President George W. Bush’s second term.⁸¹

As Saxton enjoyed his newfound success, however, his task force predecessor fell on hard times. In November 2000, the founder of the task force, Bill McCollum, relinquished his House seat to run for the Senate but lost.⁸² After two decades of service (he began in 1981), McCollum’s time in Congress had ended.

COUNTDOWN TO 9/11

In the lead up to the September 11, 2001 attacks, terrorism remained a relatively high-profile subject in Congress after the lingering shock of the 1998 twin embassy bombings in Africa and the 2000 attack on the U.S.S. *Cole*. Senior intelligence officials provided regular briefings on Capitol Hill, and Saxton continued to raise awareness

through the newly created Special Oversight Panel.

Gilman, for his part, continued to warn of the Taliban. The Islamist government had destroyed two ancient statues of Buddha and forced Hindus to wear a yellow symbol on their clothes as a means to identify them as non-Muslim.⁸³ Other leg-

islators, alarmed by a tactic used by the Nazis

The task force issued a statement calling for the “destruction of international terrorism’s supportive infrastructure.”

80 “Terrorism and Threats to U.S. Interests in the Middle East,” Special Oversight Panel on Terrorism, House Committee on Armed Services, Washington, D.C., July 13, 2000.

81 “Terrorism and Threats to U.S. Interests in Latin America,” Special Oversight Panel on Terrorism, House Armed Services Committee, Washington, D.C., June 29, 2000.

82 *The Hill*, Nov. 26, 2003.

83 “Afghan People vs. The Taliban,” hearing before the House Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, House Committee on International Relations, Washington, D.C., Oct. 31, 2001.

in World War II, joined him in his campaign.

The task force, according to staffers, continued to operate but did so primarily in the form of briefings. Saxton and Bodansky reportedly met with various decision-makers and analysts around Washington to generate awareness, but the analytical output had slowed.

Finally, seeking to devote more time to the oversight panel, Saxton handed off the chairmanship of the task force to Eric Cantor (Republican of Virginia) on April 1, 2001. Cantor, not yet forty years old, was a freshman representative with a vivid interest in counterterrorism.⁸⁴ According to the public record, Bodansky’s salary that year came from the budgets of representatives Cantor, Hunter, and Tom DeLay (Republican of Texas), then House majority whip, among others.⁸⁵

THE ATTACK AND ITS AFTERMATH

On the morning of September 11, 2001, Jim Saxton got to work early and received a telephone call informing him that his father had passed away. The grieving Saxton called his longtime colleague, Duncan Hunter, who came to the office to console him.

That same morning, nineteen al-Qaeda operatives hijacked four commercial airliners filled with passengers and carried out the most devastating terrorist attack in U.S. history. Predictably, the congressional record on September 12 is filled with fiery reactions even from legislators with little understanding of who had attacked Americans, or why.

The task force, now under Cantor, issued a release stating that “the terrorist attacks are an act of war. Therefore, retribution must be swift, sure, and overwhelming. But retribution is not enough. In war, one must destroy the enemy’s ability to wage war ... It is only through the destruction of international terrorism’s supportive infrastructure that attacks like this can be pre-

84 Author telephone interview with Jim Saxton, Sept. 4, 2009.

85 “Yossef Bodansky, Congressional Staffer — Salary Data,” LegiStorm, Washington, D.C., accessed July 1, 2011.

vented and terrorists emasculated.”⁸⁶

Saxton asked how the United States could prevent this from ever happening again. He offered five specific suggestions, including restructuring the intelligence community. Gilman called for similar reforms, calling on Congress to “review all of our policies toward international terrorism, our airport security, and our intelligence capability.”⁸⁷ He later joined President George W. Bush to view the wreckage at Ground Zero.

Bodansky was soon in high demand. Television, radio, and newspaper audiences wanted to hear about this Saudi, who had engineered the most devastating terrorist attack in the country’s history. Bodansky, author of *Bin Laden: the Man Who Declared War on America*, was uniquely positioned to fit that role.

In 2002, Duncan Hunter was named chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. He, in turn, created the Terrorism, Unconventional Threats, and Capabilities Subcommittee, and placed it in Saxton’s hands.⁸⁸ Saxton recalled that “after 9/11, some members [of Congress] quietly came up to me and gave us credit for what we did in the hallway.” He was also invited to Vice President Dick Cheney’s office, which sought information about bin Laden’s potential use of weapons of mass destruction.⁸⁹

SHIFTING SANDS

On November 26, 2002, the 9/11 Commission first met to prepare a report on the September 11 attacks, the lapses in intelligence that enabled them to take place, and the role of the various arms of the government to prevent terrorism in the future. Its members, headed by former New Jersey governor Thomas Kean, included former representatives Lee Hamilton (Democrat of Indiana) and Timothy Roemer

(Democrat of Indiana), along with former senators Bob Kerrey (Democrat of Nebraska) and Slade Gorton (Republican of Washington).⁹⁰ Notably, the commission invited not one member of the task force.

Gilman, after three distinguished decades in Congress, retired in January 2003. Saxton and Hunter, however, continued to bring attention to the threat of terrorism through the hearings of the House Armed Services Committee. Saxton’s role as chairman of the Subcommittee of Terrorism, Unconventional Threats, and Capabilities kept him particularly busy. He traveled to Iraq in 2003 and Afghanistan in 2005. As one staffer recalled, his passion was funding the elite counterterrorism

forces of the U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM).⁹¹

The task force survived, but with institutes specializing in terrorism popping up all over Washington, members were losing interest. Cantor, Hunter, Saxton, and DeLay pooled their funds, but the records show that the amount dropped each year.⁹² Bodansky lists his last year on the task force as 2004.⁹³

Thus, after fifteen years, the Republican Task Force effectively dissolved. Cantor still proudly noted his affiliation with the group, stating that it was “composed of members of Congress who study the threat of international terrorism on the United States and develop policy proposals and legislative recommendations regarding the fight against terrorism.”⁹⁴ However, the task force today does not maintain an official online presence, and there is no public record of its roster.

The task force deserves praise for mustering all the resources it could to warn the public of the looming dangers.

86 Congressional Task Force press release, Sept. 12, 2001, cited in Media Matters Action Network, May 5, 2010.

87 S. J. Resolution 22, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C., Sept. 12, 2001.

88 Author telephone interview with Jim Saxton, July 24, 2009.

89 Ibid.

90 “Biographical Information: Commission Members,” National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, Washington, D.C., accessed June 14, 2011.

91 Author telephone interview with Tom Hawley, Jan. 6, 2010.

92 “Yossef Bodansky, Congressional Staffer — Salary Data.”

93 “The Boards of the Global Panel Foundations,” accessed June 14, 2011.

94 “About Eric,” Eric Cantor website, accessed June 14, 2011.

THE 9/11 REPORT

On July 22, 2004, the 9/11 Commission released its report and charged that Congress had failed to respond to the threat of transnational terror. It made no mention of the task force or its members. On August 3, *The Miami Herald* reported that McCollum, then campaigning for Senate, “generally endorsed” the commission’s findings.⁹⁵ “No, we weren’t acknowledged,” he said. “But the point was to identify the failures ... I thought the report from that perspective was pretty accurate. I suppose I was used to the task force not being recognized.”⁹⁶

Forrest was less forgiving. He stated later that it was “mind-boggling that the 9/11 Commission didn’t talk to me, Saxton, McCollum, or the others.”⁹⁷

Saxton, for his part, continued to raise awareness of terrorism, writing articles for *The Washington Times*⁹⁸ and *The National Interest*.⁹⁹ He also remained chair of the Subcommittee on Terrorism and Unconventional Threats, holding hearings on U.S. strategy in the “Global War on Terror” and other relevant topics. He spent three more years in Congress, then retired in January 2009, the same year as Hunter.

FOR THE RECORD

The legislative record demonstrates that the Republican Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare was undeserving of the *9/11 Report’s* admonishments. Thousands of pages of task force reports and statements incontrovertibly testify to this.

One *9/11 Report* staffer later recalled that

95 *The Miami Herald*, Aug. 3, 2004.

96 Author telephone interview with Bill McCollum, Jan. 16, 2010.

97 Author telephone interview with Vaughn Forrest, Jan. 13, 2010.

98 Jim Saxton, “Confronting Complacency,” *The Washington Times*, July 29, 2005.

99 Jim Saxton, “Reshaping Our Iran Policy,” *The National Interest*, Jan. 3, 2007; idem, “Finally, An Iranian Containment Strategy,” *The National Interest*, Jan. 26, 2007.

“the commission did not bring the same amount of resources, attention, or focus to investigation into the performance of the legislative branch.” In fact, the commission “was divided into nine teams, and Congress was not the focus of any of them. It was a last-minute look.”¹⁰⁰

To be fair, the task force reports were not easy to find. Even the Library of Congress does not have them on file. As one archivist explained, the library would not collect the reports because they were not released by the Government Press Office and were not official publications. Moreover, because of their Republican identification, the archivists may have determined the reports were partisan, and therefore, elected not to collect them.¹⁰¹ The many errors in the task force reports may have been a factor, too.

Until 2007, only a few of its earlier documents could be found online. Then, Peter Leitner and his son Richard, released *Unheeded Warnings: The Lost Reports of the Congressional Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare*. So the reports had not exactly been lost. Leitner requested them in 2006 from Saxton, who gladly complied.

The record clearly shows that the task force cannot be credited with conveying a clear view of the threat during the 1990s. Indeed, the reports were as erroneous as they were prescient. From warning of Libyan-inspired terrorists among Native Americans, to foretelling attacks on a Florida theme park, the task force was often more wrong than right. Yet the group’s members should be credited for their tenacious work to understand al-Qaeda and its affiliates at a time when almost no one else did.

On the tenth anniversary of those devastating attacks, the group deserves praise for mustering all the resources it could to warn the public of the looming dangers. At the very least, its efforts were worthy of mention in the 9/11 Commission’s report.



100 Author telephone interview with anonymous former 9/11 Commission staffer, Jan. 13, 2010.

101 Interview with archivist, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Dec. 16, 2009.

September 11: A Decade Later

Toward a Nonviolent, Pluralistic Middle East

by Amitai Etzioni

The 2001 attacks on the United States have intensified the debate that has existed since the dawn of Islam: How is the West to respond to the followers of Muhammad? Some—most famously Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington—held that the contest is between two rather monolithic civilizations that are bound to clash. In a 2007 award acceptance speech at the American Enterprise Institute, Lewis described a history of clashes between Islam and the West. He stated that at first Muslims sought to spread their nascent faith through conquest throughout the then-Christian world; then the Christians invaded the Muslim world (the Crusaders); then the Muslims pushed back into Europe (the Golden Age of Islam); then the West retaliated by colonizing the Muslim world; and now the Muslims are again rising against Christendom by terrorism and flooding Europe with immigrants.¹ Huntington argued that “Islam’s borders are bloody, and so are its innards. The fundamental problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power.”² By contrast, President George W. Bush stated in the wake of the 9/11 attacks that “Islam is peace”³ while British prime minister Tony Blair argued that the problem was not Islam but “extremists trying to hijack it for political purposes.”⁴

ILLIBERAL BUT MODERATE AND NONVIOLENT

A careful reading of the Qur’an, Hadith (sayings and actions of Muhammad), and other texts and sermons finds that Islam, like other great religions and even major secular belief systems, can be read both as supporting violence and as re-

jecting it. Muslims seeking to justify the use of force quote verses in the Qur’an, such as: “Slay the idolaters wheresoever you find them.”⁵ They can cite the Hadith stating, “I have been commanded to fight against people so long as they do not declare that there is no god but God.”⁶ At the same time, champions of peace can quote the admittedly fewer verses of the Qur’an, such

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1 Bernard Lewis, “Europe and Islam,” The American Enterprise Institute, Washington, D.C., Mar. 7, 2007.

2 Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations: The Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998).

3 “‘Islam Is Peace,’ Says President,” The White House, Washington D.C., Sept. 17, 2001.

4 *The Telegraph* (London), Nov. 2, 2001.

5 Qur. 9:5.

6 Hadith, Sahih Muslim 1.9.30.

as, “There is no compulsion in matters of faith”⁷ and “No human can force a change of heart over which God alone has control.”⁸ For some, jihad is interpreted as a holy war to subdue the non-believers; for others—a spiritual struggle for moral self-improvement.

Hence, to the extent that the West makes the rejection of violence its criteria as to who can be a reliable Muslim partner in building a new Middle East (and more generally a stable world order), it can readily find major Muslim texts in support of such a position. It can find highly influential Muslim authorities who strongly reject terrorism and the use of force more generally but do not and will not support a liberal form of government. These can be considered “illiberal moderates.”

A key figure that fits this description is Iraq’s Ayatollah Ali Sistani, who supports a state whose laws are fully compatible with Islam while calling for an end to sectarian “hatred and violence.”⁹ It could be noted further that he does not believe an Islamic state to be incompatible with elections

and various civil liberties.¹⁰ A similar figure is Sheikh Isa Qassem, an influential cleric among Bahrain’s Shiite opposition, described in a cable released by WikiLeaks as the country’s top religious leader.¹¹ He has called for nonviolence and spoken out against sectarian conflict between Sunnis and Shiites.

He has, however, simultaneously called for Shari’a (Islamic law) rule in Bahrain¹² and endorsed Iran’s supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamene’i.¹³

“Illiberal moderates” strongly reject terrorism and the use of force but do not support a liberal form of government.

Another possible, though problematic example is Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi. Widely regarded as one of the most influential Sunni leaders and the Muslim Brotherhood’s spiritual leader, he increased his popularity through hosting an Al-Jazeera television show viewed by tens of millions of Muslims. His Friday sermon in Cairo’s Tahrir Square on February 18, 2011, a few days after the fall of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak, was attended by hundreds of thousands of ecstatic Egyptians.¹⁴ He is highly illiberal, encouraging strict adherence to the Shari’a, favoring female genital mutilation¹⁵ and the death penalty for homosexuals.¹⁶ At the same time, Qaradawi condemned the 9/11 attacks¹⁷ as well as the March 11, 2004 Madrid and July 7, 2005 London bombings.¹⁸ He was even commended by the French foreign minister, Philippe Douste-Blazy, for helping to secure the release of French journalists in Iraq by vigorously condemning their abduction.¹⁹ Still, he is a highly imperfect example as he endorses terrorism when it comes to Israel and what he terms occupied Muslim territories, including support for attacks against Americans in Iraq.²⁰

Perhaps the most apt example comes from Indonesia where the country’s largest Muslim organization, Nahdlatul Ulama, which claims tens of millions of followers, has denounced terrorism. Paul Wolfowitz described its former leader Abdurrahman Wahid, who also served as Indonesia’s first democratically-elected president,

13 Jacques Neriah, “Could the Kingdom of Bahrain Become an Iranian Pearl Harbor?” The Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, Feb. 20, 2011.

14 “Portrait of Sheikh Dr. Yusuf Abdallah al-Qaradawi, senior Sunni Muslim cleric, affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood,” The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, Ramat Hasharon, Feb. 27, 2011.

15 George Readings, “Female genital mutilation cannot be defended as part of Islam,” *The Guardian* (London), Oct. 15, 2010.

16 “The Qaradawi Fatwas,” *The Middle East Quarterly*, Summer 2004, pp. 78-80.

17 “Aftermath of the 9-11 Terrorist Attack: Voices of Moderate Muslims,” ReligiousTolerance.org, Kingston, Ont., Oct. 12, 2001.

18 *The Guardian*, Sept. 25, 2009.

19 Olivier Guitta, “French foreign Minister officially thanked Sheikh Yusuf Qaradawi!” Counterterrorism Blog, Sept. 26, 2005.

20 “Sheik Yusuf al-Qaradawi: Theologian of Terror,” The Anti-Defamation League, Washington, D.C. Mar. 15, 2011.

7 Qur. 2:256.

8 Qur. 10:99-100.

9 *BBC News*, July 20, 2006.

10 Sharon Otterman, “Iraq: Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani,” Council on Foreign Relations, Washington, D.C., Sept. 1, 2004.

11 *The Telegraph*, July 8, 2008.

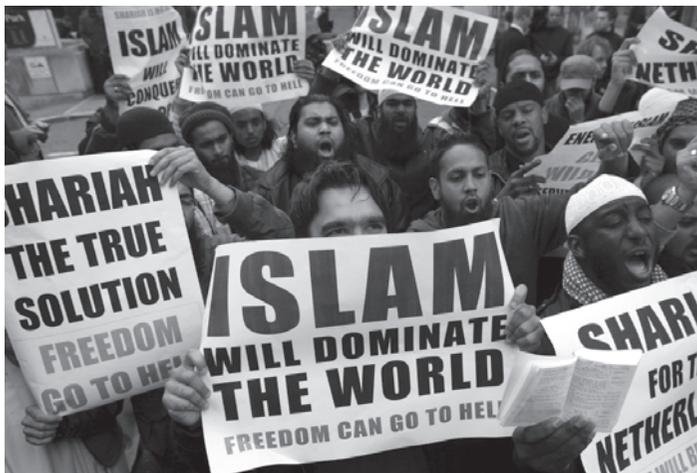
12 Barry Rubin, “Top Bahrain Opposition Cleric: We Want Sharia Law State,” *The Rubin Report*, Mar. 9, 2011.

as the “voice of moderate Islam.”²¹ Another of its former leaders, Hasyim Muzadi, endorsed the country’s pluralism and pledged to take a leading role in combating terrorism in Indonesia.²²

“Illiberal moderate” also pertains to several Islamist groups, associations, and political parties in the region, such as those parts of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan that currently reject violence even as they seek to base governance on Shari‘a, as well as the newly formed Brotherhood-affiliated Freedom and Justice Party in Egypt. It also applies to Egypt’s new party of Sufi Muslims

that opposes secularism but also seeks peaceful coexistence²³ along with the recently legalized Islamist al-Nahda Party in Tunisia, which has renounced violence and waffled on the issue of whether its goal is to impose Shari‘a law.²⁴ In Morocco, both the legal Party of Justice and Development and the illegal Justice and Spirituality Movement, qualify as nonviolent; however, they are also illiberal on several key issues.²⁵

One notes in passing that many of those Muslim public intellectuals and leaders whom Washington does fully embrace because they are liberals actually live in the West and have



While substantial majorities—82-99 percent of Muslims in all countries polled—would like to see constitutional guarantees for freedom of speech, such notions may exist more in the abstract than in the real world. When the Danish newspaper, Jyllands-Posten, published a series of cartoons of Muhammad in September 2005, it ignited a furor throughout the Muslim world, which eventually left dozens dead while cartoonists and their publishers received death threats.

much less of a following in the Middle East than is sometimes implied.

WHAT THE MASSES THINK

What about the masses? Several public opinion polls indicate that in numerous Muslim countries, only minorities hold violent beliefs. A 2006 Gallup poll of Muslims in ten predominantly Muslim countries, representing more than 80 percent of the global Muslim population, found that only 7 percent could be deemed “politically radicalized,” defined as those who both claimed the 9/11 attacks were justified and held unfavorable views of the United States.²⁶ A 2010 Pew

21 *The Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 6, 2010.

22 *The Jakarta Post*, Mar. 15, 2010.

23 *Al-Masry al-Youm* (Cairo), June 14, 2011.

24 Rajaa Basly, “The Future of al-Nahda in Tunisia,” *Arab Reform Bulletin*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C., Apr. 20, 2011.

25 Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, “Islamism, Moroccan-Style: The Ideas of Sheikh Yassine,” *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2003, pp. 43-51.

26 Dalia Mogahed, “Islam and Democracy,” The Gallup Center for Muslim Studies, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 2006. For data that run in a different direction and critiques, see Daniel Pipes, “How Many Islamists?” www.DanielPipes.org, Dec. 28, 2010.

poll in seven largely Muslim countries—including the most populated ones in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa—found that most people did not approve of suicide bombing and other acts of violence against civilian targets. No more than 15 percent of the population in any country viewed these acts as often justified, and only in

Many Muslims favor human rights and democracy abstractly but oppose specific rights when they conflict with Shari'a.

Lebanon and Nigeria did more than a third of those polled view them as at least sometimes justified. Moreover, eight in ten Muslims in Pakistan, more than three-quarters in Turkey, more than two-thirds in Indonesia, and a majority in Jordan held that such violent acts were never justified.²⁷

Also, there has been a steady decline of support for these violent

acts when comparing the 2010 data to that from 2002. Double-digit declines in those agreeing that acts of violence were sometimes or often justified occurred in Jordan, Pakistan, Lebanon, Nigeria, and Indonesia. In addition, majorities in virtually all the countries rated al-Qaeda negatively, including more than nine in ten in Lebanon, and more than seven in ten in Turkey and Egypt. Only in Nigeria did almost half (49 percent) express positive views of al-Qaeda.

Although Saudi Arabia is the most prominent supporter of Wahhabism (an extreme interpretation of Islam) and the homeland of fifteen of the nineteen terrorists who attacked New York and the Pentagon on 9/11, a 2008 study by Terror Free Tomorrow found that less than one in ten Saudis had a favorable opinion of al-Qaeda, and almost nine in ten held that the Saudi military and police should pursue its fighters. Only 13 percent said suicide bombing was sometimes or often justified.²⁸

There are exceptions to these nonviolent majorities. Support for suicide attacks on U.S. forces and its allies in Iraq was higher than that for other violent acts.²⁹ Another exception pertains to groups that target Israel.³⁰ Nonetheless, even in these cases, majorities in most countries were against violence.

While the Pew poll data show clearly that the vast majority of Muslims reject violence, support for democracy and human rights is much more complicated. It often seems that there is a considerable difference between what is favored in the abstract and what concrete measures are supported. This ought to be familiar to Americans though in a rather different context. Most Americans abstractly favor cutting the size of the government but oppose most, if not all, actual cuts in spending. Most are said to be philosophically conservative but operationally liberal. Similarly, many Muslims seem to favor human rights and democracy abstractly but oppose many specific rights especially when they conflict with Shari'a, tradition, and local culture. They also seek increased influence of religion and religious authorities in their public and political lives, a long way from separating religion and state.

Substantial majorities—82-99 percent of Muslims in all countries polled—said that if they were drafting a new constitution for their country, they would guarantee freedom of speech, defined as “allowing all citizens to express their opinions on political, social, and economic issues of the day.”³¹ (Note that religious freedom is not included.) The 2007 Pew poll found that majorities in all Muslim countries held that courts should treat all equally; and majorities in most of the countries held that

27 “Muslim Publics Divided on Hamas and Hezbollah,” Pew Research Center, Global Attitudes Project, Washington, D.C., Dec. 2, 2010.

28 “Saudi Arabians Overwhelmingly Reject Bin Laden, Al Qaeda, Saudi Fighters in Iraq, and Terrorism; Also among Most Pro-American in Muslim World,” Terror Free Tomorrow, Center for Public Opinion, Washington, D.C., 2008, accessed June 22, 2011.

29 “Islamic Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics,” Pew Global Attitudes Survey, Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C., July 4, 2005.

30 “Muslim Publics Divided on Hamas and Hezbollah,” Dec. 2, 2010.

31 Mogahed, “Islam and Democracy.”

people should be free to criticize the government; the media should be free from censorship, and honest multiparty elections should be undertaken in their country.³²

At the same time, more than three-quarters of Egyptians and Pakistanis, a majority of Nigerians and Jordanians, and a sizable minority of Indonesians favored stoning adulterers, the death penalty for those who denounce the Islamic faith, and whipping or cutting off the hands of those who commit theft or robbery—all illiberal punishments based on a fundamentalist interpretation of Shari‘a.³³

These positions were highlighted by the furor that spread throughout the Muslim world when the *fatwa* calling for killing the author of *The Satanic Verses*, Salman Rushdie, was issued in February 1989; when a Danish newspaper published a cartoon of Muhammad in September 2005; and when death threats emerged against Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a former member of the Dutch parliament who renounced her Islamic faith and whose writings are critical of the religion.³⁴ They are further illuminated by the call for the killing of any Muslim who converts to another religion or renounces the faith.

Illiberalism is particularly evident in all matters concerning gender and sexuality. The Gallup poll found that when asked what they least admire about the West, frequent replies by Muslims concerned personal freedoms involving sexuality, promiscuity, and gender mores. A plurality of Muslims in Jordan and Nigeria, and a majority in Egypt (54 percent) and Pakistan (85 percent), said they favored making gender segregation in the workplace the law in their country.³⁵ The 2007 Pew study found that in most of the predominantly Muslim countries in Asia and the Middle East, only minorities said a woman alone should have the right to choose her own

husband. Additionally, substantial majorities in all of those countries said that society should reject homosexuality.

In a 2007 Pew poll, majorities in the five predominantly Muslim Middle Eastern countries surveyed said they preferred democracy to a strong leader (the Palestinian territories were the outlier).³⁶ In the 2010 Pew poll, majorities in six of seven countries polled said that democracy was always preferable to any other kind of government. Pakistan was the outlier, but a plurality (41 percent) agreed with the statement.

At the same time, vast majorities see Islam’s political influence as positive, according to the 2010 Pew data, including more than nine in ten in Indonesia; more than three-quarters in Egypt, Nigeria, and Jordan; more than two-thirds in Pakistan; a majority in Lebanon, and a plurality in Turkey. Less than a third in Lebanon and Turkey, and only 2-14 percent in the five other surveyed countries held a negative view of Islam’s role in politics. In the 2006 Gallup poll, majorities in eight of nine countries in which the question was

Illiberalism among Muslims is particularly evident in all matters concerning gender and sexuality.

asked said that the Shari‘a should be at least a source of legislation in their country, and majorities in four said that it should be the only source (Turkey was the sole outlier). In a 2003 Pew poll, majorities in almost all of the predominantly Muslim countries polled held that religious leaders should play a larger role in politics, including more than nine in ten in Nigeria, and more than seven in ten in Jordan, Bangladesh, and Lebanon. Uzbekistan and Turkey were the outliers, though a sizable minority in both countries (40 percent) favored an even greater role for mullahs.³⁷

The combination of support for both de-

32 “World Publics Welcome Global Trade—But Not Immigration,” Pew Research Center, Global Attitudes Project, Washington, D.C., Oct. 4, 2007.

33 “Muslim Publics Divided on Hamas and Hezbollah,” Dec. 2, 2010.

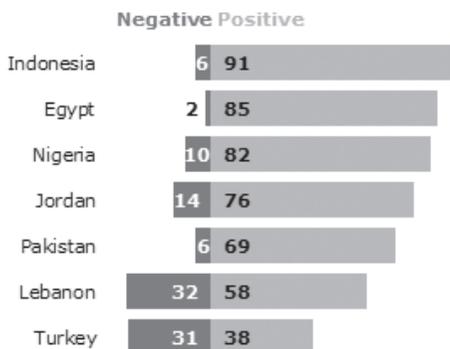
34 See “Ayaan Hirsi Ali: I Will Continue to Ask Uncomfortable Questions,” *Middle East Quarterly*, Fall 2006, pp. 67-70.

35 “Muslim Publics Divided on Hamas and Hezbollah,” Dec. 2, 2010.

36 “World Publics Welcome Global Trade—But Not Immigration,” Oct. 4, 2007.

37 “Views of a Changing World,” Pew Research Center, June 2003.

Islam's Influence in Politics Is...*



Pew Research Center Q52 and Q53

While majorities in six of seven predominantly Muslim countries said that democracy was always preferable to any other kind of government when polled in 2010, vast majorities see Islam's political influence as positive. Most find that Shari'a should be at least a source of legislation in their country.

mocracy and Islam is evident in a March/April 2011 poll of Egyptians. In this poll, 71 percent held that democracy was always preferable to any other kind of government. At the same time, almost nine in ten said they wanted law to be based on Islam with 62 percent saying law should strictly follow the Qur'an.³⁸

In short, whether one focuses on leading Muslim texts, religious authorities, public intellectuals, leaders, or voters, one can find many more reliable partners in peace than partners in building liberal, democratic regimes. Another way to look at the same data is to view the illiberal moderates as the global swing vote. Those who favor liberal democracies are likely to support the United States in the first place. Those who hold violent Islamist beliefs are unlikely to line up with the U.S. agenda. Illiberal moderates are those who

might be the West's allies, however, only as long as they do not have to give up their illiberal beliefs. Hence, Washington would do well to ally itself with all those who refrain from the use of force and let them develop the kind of regimes their people support. Washington could continue to promote greater democracy and liberalism abroad through nonprofit organizations, broadcasts, cultural exchanges, and other persuasive means. However, it should not make acceptance of these principles a condition for diplomatic, economic, political support for either those in power or those challenging the power-holders.

Indeed, the very question of what makes a "good" Muslim is faulty because it leads to the quest for Muslims who are like the citizens of Western nations. The West should first and foremost look for peaceful Muslims, whatever their other persuasions. Pluralism abroad, like at home, means learning to live with people who have

different values, some who harbor strong religious beliefs (like the U.S. Christian Right), some who have political opinions that lean heavily to one extreme of the political spectrum (like the Tea Party and what remains of the radical Left), and so on, as long as they are committed to resolving differences in a nonviolent manner. One can aspire to win them over to what one considers the "good" regime; however, this is a second-stage goal. The Middle East is at best moving to stage one: to limit conflicts to the ballot box and political negotiation and away from massively oppressive and violent confrontations and upheavals.

RESPONDING TO THE REGIONAL UPHEAVALS

The uprisings that roiled the Middle East as of the beginning of 2011 brought new intensity and concern to the question raised by the

38 "Egyptians Embrace Revolt Leaders, Religious Parties, and Military, As Well," Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C., Apr. 25, 2011.

2001 attacks on the United States, a question the West has faced for decades: Should it ally itself only with liberal, democratic, in effect secular groups and regimes? Should it also support illiberal but moderate ones? And what ought to be its position vis-à-vis the remaining Muslim autocracies?

The Libyan Lesson. As the U.S. military joined the fighting in Libya, a number of analysts indicated reluctance to interfere on the basis that officials did not know who the rebels were. In looking for an answer, two rather different criteria were employed and often conflated. One was whether the rebels belonged to the same Libyan groups that sent a disproportionately large number of foreign fighters to battle U.S. forces in Iraq and were members or supporters of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, a militant organization that was suspected of having an “increasingly cooperative relationship” with al-Qaeda. The second was whether these were forces likely to support democracy and human rights in a post-Qaddafi Libya. Leslie Gelb, president emeritus of the Council on Foreign Relations, among others, correctly complained about the lack of clarity regarding how the Obama administration viewed the rebels: “At times, his team seems to equate the rebels with democrats, then retreats to calling them protesters and revolutionaries.”³⁹

The intervention was initially justified as an attempt to stop massive violence, and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton relied on that criterion to justify the ousting of Qaddafi: “When a leader’s only means of staying in power is to use mass violence against his own people, he has lost the legitimacy to rule,” she stated. “The Libyan people deserve a government that is responsive to their aspirations and that protects their universally recognized human rights.”⁴⁰

Before long the goal of saving civilians from Qaddafi’s attacks morphed into an outright demand for regime change. Qaddafi’s calls for a ceasefire and negotiations were rejected, and

Washington increasingly made the demand that he and his family give up their rule as a condition for ending hostilities; military strikes even targeted command-and-control posts in which Qaddafi might have been found, killing his son and three of his grandchildren in one such attack.⁴¹ This is especially pertinent because the quest for regime change may have extended the hostilities and the casualties on both sides. Moreover, given that the differences between the rebels and Qaddafi’s supporters reflect strong and long-standing tribal rivalries, it is rather unlikely that the overthrow of the regime will lead to a peaceful, stable, let alone liberal, democratic government.

It follows that the preferred course of action would have been to end the NATO armed intervention once Qaddafi indicated his willingness to stop military action against the rebels (as long as he lived up to this commitment) and to allow the two sides to work out the course for the future of Libya. The same applies to many other rising groups and standing regimes in the Middle East.

A Nonviolent, Pluralistic Middle East. The lesson of Libya can be generalized to serve as the basis for an approach for transforming the Middle East. For both prudential and normative reasons, the West should not make a commitment to shifting to a liberal, democratic government its litmus test for

deciding to support either autocrats or new, rising political groups. Instead, it should persuade, cajole, and pressure both to refrain from resorting to violence, but otherwise let each nation develop its own form of government. This means that the autocrats will be strongly encouraged (mainly, privately) to negotiate with new claimants rather than gunning them down—and that

The West should not make commitment to a liberal, democratic government its litmus test for support.

39 *The Daily Beast*, Mar. 8, 2011.

40 *USA Today*, Feb. 27, 2011.

41 *The Washington Post*, Apr. 20, 2011.

Washington will work with all new political groups that refrain from violence, such as those that ended the authoritarian governments in Tunisia and Egypt. These may include groups that favor a religious regime, such as moderate parts of the Muslim Brotherhood, or some kind of a moderate monarchy (say in Morocco, Jordan, Oman, Kuwait, or Qatar), or a civilian-military joint rule, as existed in South Korea, Chile, Turkey, and Indonesia before they became more democratic.

A nonviolent pluralism approach does not deny Washington the right to encourage greater liberalism and democracy.

Washington and its allies can surely continue to welcome nations that liberalize their governments, introduce parliamentary democracies, and respect human rights. However, they should neither demand nor expect such a transformation, instead making abstention from violence the first litmus test

as to who can qualify as a partner in the Middle East. That is, Washington would favor what might be called a nonviolent pluralism for the region (and for each country), in which it supports and cooperates with a variety of regimes and new political groups as long as they vie with each other within the rules of nonviolent engagement.

CONSISTENCY

One major merit of the nonviolent pluralism doctrine is that it can be consistently applied to all regimes in the Middle East by providing a clear principle for identifying those groups that meet the elementary condition for partnering with Washington in the changing region. This cannot be said of ad hoc U.S. policy on the matter, which is tailor-made to each case. Throughout the Cold War, Washington positioned itself as the champion of freedom yet supported military dictatorships in South America, Asia, and elsewhere. During the recent uprisings in the Middle East, the U.S. administration fought to oust

Qaddafi, urged Mubarak to step down in Egypt, and cheered the departure of Ben Ali in Tunisia while making few, delayed, and muted pleas for Saleh to step down in Yemen,⁴² waffling on Syria and the Green Movement in Iran, and in effect, supporting the autocrats of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. Even as Bahrain was violently suppressing protests, and just before Riyadh sent its troops to help, Secretary Clinton commended King Hamad for engaging in “meaningful outreach and efforts to try to bring about the change that will be in line with the needs of the people.”⁴³

U.S. leaders tried to explain away these gross inconsistencies. Most notably, Clinton, in a speech asserting Washington’s commitment to “sustained democracies” in the region, argued that diverse approaches were called for given such a “fluid” situation and that “a one-size-fits-all approach doesn’t make sense.”⁴⁴ Moreover, President Barack Obama, in his speech at the National Defense University justifying the Libyan intervention, took pains to emphasize that it was geared only to saving civilians rather than representing a broader doctrine.⁴⁵

These arguments, however, do little to persuade critics abroad and at home, for good reason. Nations provide rationales for their policies, interventions overseas included, because acting legitimately—that is, in line with established values and norms—helps them to advance their goals. True, as Obama stated in his speech on Libya, “I have made it clear that I will never hesitate to use our military swiftly, decisively, and unilaterally when necessary to defend our people, our homeland, our allies, and our core interests”—implicitly disregarding whether or not other people consider the act legitimate. However, Washington—like other

42 See Howard LaFranchi, “Why Obama isn’t pushing for Yemen president to go: Al Qaeda,” *The Christian Science Monitor* (Boston), Mar. 22, 2011.

43 “Secretary Clinton on Libya,” Andrews Air Force Base, U.S. Department of State, Feb. 27, 2011.

44 “Secretary Clinton’s Remarks at the U.S. Islamic World Forum,” Washington, D.C., Apr. 12, 2011.

45 “Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on Libya,” The White House, Mar. 28, 2011.

governments—seeks most times to justify its actions in terms that speak both to the American people and the citizens of others nations. Indeed, in an age of mass communication, higher levels of education, increased attention to public affairs, and growing involvement of the masses in politics, what various people consider normatively appropriate has real consequences.

Legitimacy, in turn, thrives on consistency. Both laws and norms are expected to apply equally to one and all,

without exceptions for one's allies or friends. It is on this test that current policy fails so often, in very visible ways, which evoke the ire of U.S. critics, embarrass its friends, and provide a propaganda windfall to its adversaries. The claim that Washington is hypocritical when it lectures Russia and China about human rights and then provides equipment and training to the police and secret services of Saudi Arabia and Mubarak's Egypt—and previously to the dictators of Argentina, Chile, and Indonesia, among others—is one of the numerous observations that show that inconsistent liberalism is harming the U.S. cause.

Washington can consistently employ military forces to stop genocides but not to change regimes; morally and financially support peaceful uprisings but not groups that use terror to advance their agenda. Consistency does not require relying only on one criterion. As President Obama correctly pointed out, if U.S. vital interests are directly affected—say, a foreign power is blocking the shipment of oil through the Strait of Hormuz—Washington will act based on interest considerations and not necessarily on what other nations consider the right foreign policy. However, at the end of the



As the Arab world continues to be embroiled in conflict, should U.S. policymakers work with “illiberal moderates” like Iraq’s Ayatollah Ali Sistani (left) or Bahrain’s Sheikh Isa Qassem (right)? Both men publicly eschew violence, endorse some democratic institutions, and yet seek a state governed in accordance with Shari’a.

day, under most conditions, a government does best if it can follow clearly-stated principles that are endorsed by others in the international community.

WHY NOT CONSISTENT LIBERALISM?

At this point, one might ask: Why not follow a policy of consistent liberalism, as advocated by numerous human rights nongovernmental organizations and analysts at respected think tanks? One reason is that Washington is much more likely to be on the side of whoever leads the change movements and the future regimes in the region if it does not limit its support only to liberal, democratic groups—which are often the weakest of the new claimants because they tend to fare less well under autocratic regimes than more radical groups—and if it supports all who refrain from the use of force. Another reason is that Islamist groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, have developed a grassroots following through networks of charitable works and social services.

Several observers have referred to the 2011

wave of Middle Eastern uprisings as an “Arab Spring,” a metaphor that should not be taken too seriously; one notes that springs in the Middle East are short and followed by long hot

Obama’s position toward the Arab uprisings has been applied inconsistently, which undermines its legitimacy.

summers and then—the fall. Joe Nocera of *The New York Times* argues that the “Arab Spring” proves that millions of Muslims yearn for “freedom and democracy,”⁴⁶ and Secretary Clinton finds “a time of great movements toward freedom and democracy, at a time when the people across the Middle East and North Africa are re-

jecting the extremist narratives and charting a path of peaceful progress based on universal rights and aspirations.”⁴⁷

Actually, uprisings against a regime are often driven by tribal loyalties, religious or ideological stirrings, or merely by people who seek to throw off the yoke of oppression or to achieve economic betterment. Even when those involved mouth democratic slogans, tearing down a regime cannot be equated with building one, let alone a democratic one. If one stops looking at the shouting masses on television through romantic lenses, one often sees the mobs that greatly worried the Founding Fathers. They can pave the way—but who knows to where?

Indeed, one of the few predictions one can make with a considerable degree of assurance about the developments in the Middle East in the foreseeable future is that there will not be a grand transition from autocracies to shining, liberal democracies or even dimly lit ones. Instead, there are likely to be numerous and different kinds of upheavals and attempts to form new regimes that will fail, leading to still new attempts. Even if relatively democratic or moderate groups take control after a revolution, they may lose out to more

radical ones over time. This is what happened after the French and Russian revolutions.

Also, a nonviolent pluralism approach will prevent Washington from becoming involved in still more wars in the Muslim world, which support for liberal democratic forces would call for, and has a much lower risk of jeopardizing relations with the more benevolent authoritarian regimes and essential allies. The autocrats surely would rather face a U.S. administration that urges them not to turn their guns on the new claimants and holds that peaceful give-and-take is in their mutual interests than face demands that they must transform their regimes or wonder if they will be next on the list of heads of state that Washington argues must leave to make room for change.

Two clarifications are called for at this point. First, it is arguable that all the Middle East’s authoritarian regimes use some level of coercion against their own people, and that amongst those rising against their governments there are often violent elements. However, there is a world of difference between those who arrest a few protesters and even kill a few—and those who bomb cities, kill hundreds if not thousands, or rape and torture to crush an uprising. The harsh realities of social life, even in Western countries, have entailed occasional bursts of violence, for instance the shooting of students at Kent State University by the Ohio National Guard and periodic violent riots in Paris and recently in Greece. But it is best to tolerate violence in only very limited and rare situations.

Second, the nonviolent pluralism approach does not deny Washington the right to raise its moral voice to encourage greater liberalism and democracy in various countries. The U.S. administration can continue to laud democratic ideals in other countries through Voice of America broadcasts and to promote them in student and other cultural exchanges. Nor does it suggest that Washington should refrain from funding a host of organizations that promote these causes, such as Freedom House and the National Endowment for Democracy. However, encouraging peaceful evolution within countries is profoundly different from forced regime change.

One might ask how this approach differs from

46 Joe Nocera, “Four Questions He Leaves Behind,” *The New York Times*, May 3, 2011.

47 *NPR News*, May 3, 2011.

the position Washington took when urging Yemen and Bahrain to “show restraint” and “pursue peaceful and meaningful dialogue with the opposition rather than resorting to the use of force”;⁴⁸ when President Obama said of Syria’s crackdowns, “This outrageous use of violence to quell protests must come to an end now”;⁴⁹ and Secretary Clinton urged the Syrian government to “stop the arbitrary arrest, detention, and torture of prisoners.”⁵⁰ Indeed, Obama articulated this position exceptionally well in his January 2009 inaugural speech that was introduced as his major opening to the Muslim world. He stated, “To those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, know that you are on the wrong side of history, but that we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist.”

However, this position has been applied inconsistently, which undermines its legitimacy as has been evident in the different treatments of Qaddafi’s Libya, on the one hand, of Syria, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia, on the other, and of Egypt, as well as in sporadic demands to usher in liberal democratic regimes by Obama and especially Clinton. Thus, for example, the secretary of state stated in a June 2011 speech to the African Union: “[The Middle Eastern upheavals’] message is clear to us all: The status quo is broken; the old ways of governing are no longer acceptable; it is time for leaders to lead with accountability, treat their people with dignity, respect their rights, and deliver economic opportunity. And if they will not, then it is time for them to go.”⁵¹

CONCLUSION

Aside from various pragmatic reasons to make nonviolence the first litmus test for U.S.

policy toward Middle Eastern regimes, there are several strong normative reasons to favor the same basic position. The right to be free from violence—from being killed, maimed, or tortured—in short, the right of life, has a special standing because all other rights, from free speech to religious freedoms, are conditioned on it, but it, in turn, is not conditioned on these rights being observed. (Dead people lose their other rights while those who live may fight for and see the day their other rights will be realized.) The special normative standing of the right of life is further revealed insofar as the criminal codes of numerous nations place a higher penalty on taking a life than on violating other rights.

For all these reasons, if Washington limits its approval and support to the Middle East’s liberal, democratic groups, it will often be left out in the cold. U.S. interests and those of people of the region are better served if Washington does not merely tolerate a variety of groups and

rulers but also holds that although it hopes in the longer run they all will find their way to a liberal life, for now, moving away from oppression at home, ceasing support for terrorism, halting the building of weapons of mass destruction, and ceasing to threaten other nations and peoples—all matters concerning the use of force—suffices for becoming a reliable ally.

Indeed, Washington may be moving in this direction. On June 30, 2011, Secretary of State Clinton announced that the Obama administration will resume limited contact with the Muslim Brotherhood, allowing U.S. officials to deal directly with members of the Islamist group. The previous policy restricted contact to Brotherhood members in parliament on matters of state business. Now that the group looks to be a major force in the upcoming elections, Clinton told reporters, it is in U.S. interests to engage with the nonviolent organization—while emphasizing “the importance of and support for democratic principles. ... We believe, given the

If Washington limits its approval and support to liberal, democratic groups, it will often be left out in the cold.

48 “Statement from the press secretary on violence in Yemen and Bahrain,” The White House, Mar. 13, 2011.

49 “Statement by the President on Syria,” The White House, Apr. 22, 2011.

50 Reuters, Apr. 20, 2011.

51 “Secretary Clinton Remarks at African Union,” Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, U.S. Department of State, June 13, 2011.

changing political landscape in Egypt, that it is in the interests of the United States to engage with all parties that are peaceful, and committed to nonviolence, that intend to compete for the parliament and the presidency.”⁵²

A critic may argue that rather than engaging radical, Islamist groups, notably the Muslim Brotherhood, the West should endeavor to restrict and, if possible, exclude them from the political arena for the simple reason that their values and goals are mutually exclusive to ours.

These groups seek nothing short of world domination, regardless of whether they are presently using “peaceable” means for tactical reasons.

However, even if it turns out that the Muslim Brotherhood and its like must be spurned, for this author, the basic question remains: Do we assume a priori that all Islamist groups, however moderate, say, in Morocco and Indonesia, are suspect on the face of it, or can we cooperate with some of them? And if the answer is in the affirmative, how should we determine which qualify?

52 Reuters, June 30, 2011.



Who “Likes” Suicide Attacks the Most?

A recent survey, conducted by the Pew Research Center’s Global Attitudes Project, highlights the extent to which extremism is rejected in Muslim nations although there are notable levels of support for radical Islamist groups and suicide terrorism in some countries. Al-Qaeda is rated negatively by majorities in all countries, but more than a quarter express a positive opinion of the terrorist groups in the Palestinian territories. There is no country in which a majority rates the radical Palestinian organization Hamas positively—still, it receives considerable support in Jordan and Egypt. Among the Palestinians themselves, Hamas is less popular than Fatah, its more secular rival.

In recent years, Pew Global Attitudes surveys have documented a decline in support for suicide bombing in a number of countries, and today the percentage of Muslims who say this type of violence is often or sometimes justifiable stands at 10 percent or less in Indonesia, Turkey, and Pakistan. Support for these acts is somewhat more common in Arab nations although there have been steep declines over the last decade in Lebanon and Jordan.

Palestinian Muslims, however, remain an outlier on this question: 68 percent say suicide attacks in defense of Islam can often or sometimes be justified, a level of support essentially unchanged from 2007. And in Egypt, support for suicide bombing is actually on the rise—currently, 28 percent believe it can be justified, up from 8 percent in 2007.

Pew Global Attitudes Project, May 17, 2011

Europe's Underestimated Islamists

by Ian Johnson

In early 1959, a small West German intelligence operation stumbled over a sensational find: U.S. collusion with the Muslim Brotherhood. According to the West German sources—two ex-Wehrmacht soldiers who were in Washington's pay but still felt loyalty to their old German bosses—Washington was supporting one of the Brotherhood's top men, the Geneva-based Said Ramadan, son-in-law of the movement's founder Hassan al-Banna, in the hope of using him in the global battle against communism. The U.S. double-agents wanted to know if the West Germans would also help support Ramadan.

Bonn's response was an unequivocal "no": not because of ethical qualms about doing business with the Brotherhood but because of practical considerations. "Ramadan doesn't possess the slightest influence in the Orient," read an evaluation by the head of the West German intelligence operation, Gerhard von Mende. "A connection with him would only yield negative consequences."¹

Von Mende was neither the first nor the last to have underestimated the Brotherhood or its leaders. In its 83-year history, the movement has time and again been written off as out of date, broken, or otherwise a non-force. Most recently, Western analysts of the Middle East upheavals were quick to portray the Brotherhood as out of touch and, basically, inept. U.S. director of national intelligence James Clapper reduced it to a "largely secular" movement² while anthropologist Scott Atran argued that its "failure to support the initial uprising in Cairo on Jan. 25 [2011] has made it marginal to the spirit of revolt now spreading across the Arab world."³ News pages had similar coverage with the Brotherhood's absence in some Cairo neighborhoods seen as indicative of its declining importance.⁴

Of course, as is now known, the Brotherhood played a leading role in the Egyptian uprising and its wake.⁵ This should have come as no surprise. For all its flaws, mistakes

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1 "Akttennotiz Betr. Besuch von Shamil and Magoma," German Foreign Office Political Archive, Berlin, AA PA ZA 105731, Feb. 3, 1959.

2 *YnetNews* (Tel Aviv), Feb. 11, 2011.

3 Scott Atran, "Egypt's Bumbling Brotherhood," *The New York Times*, Feb. 2, 2011.

4 See, for example, *The New York Times*, Feb. 15, 2011.

5 *Ibid.*, Mar. 24, 2011.

and disastrous decisions, the Brotherhood is one of the most resilient organizations in modern history. Its longevity is due to one of its defining characteristics: an almost intuitive ability to assume new forms while pursuing its ultimate goals and carving out niches of influence. In its eagerness to write off the Brotherhood, the West has shown a distinct lack of attentiveness to the group, leading to decades of blunders.

Said Ramadan, son-in-law of the Muslim Brotherhood's founder, was aided significantly by the CIA.

Nowhere has this phenomenon been more starkly demonstrated than in Europe. For half-a-century—unlike in the Arab world—the Brotherhood has been able to grow without any restrictions, going from a one-man operation centered around Ramadan to being the continent's foremost

Islamist force. How this happened illustrates the Islamist movement's potency and hints at ways it can be dealt with today. A decade after the 9/11 attacks, why is the West still grappling with Islamism, not so much as a force for terrorism—though that risk remains potent—but as an important political force throughout the Middle East and beyond?

PLANTING THE SEEDS

Gamal Abdel Nasser's 1954 ban of the Brotherhood forced the group to reorganize abroad. While many of its senior leaders would spend years in Egyptian jails and its top theoretician, Sayyid Qutb, would be executed, the group was fortunate in having two havens where it was able to regroup. One was Saudi Arabia where it laid down deep roots, eventually melding with indigenous Islamist movements to create a powerful and violent challenge to the ruling royal family.⁶

The other, less well-known haven was Europe. Ramadan had already been to the continent several times and was studying law at Cologne University. When the Egyptian ban came into effect, he was living in Geneva, which he would make his home until his death forty years later.

This was a period before the great influx of migrant workers was to transform Europe. Muslims were few and far between. Germany, for example, had just two mosques, one in Hamburg and the other in Berlin. But this does not mean that Islam was not on the radar of Western policymakers. The process of decolonization was creating dozens of newly independent states, many of them Muslim. Western intelligence agencies were eager to use covert propaganda to influence these countries for broader, strategic purposes, such as the battle against communism.

West Germany was home to several hundred Muslims (estimates vary with the upper limit around 2,000) who had served in the Wehrmacht and the Nazi SS. They had been former Red Army soldiers who had been captured by the Germans and changed sides, either for fear of death in the horrific German prisoner-of-war camps or because of their belief in the Nazis' promise to liberate their Soviet-ruled homelands. After the war, most were repatriated but some managed to stay on, congregating for various reasons in Munich.⁷

Many of these began working for von Mende, who had spent the war years in the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories (usually known as the Ostministerium), coordinating Muslim and other Soviet minorities. After the war, he set up a series of quasi-free intelligence operations that have remained unstudied to date, eventually settling on the name "Research Service East Europe" (Forschungsdienst Osteuropa) that was co-financed at various times by the West German Interior Ministry, Foreign Office, External Intelligence Service, and Domestic Intelligence Service. Von Mende tried to rally the Muslims who stayed behind—many of them his old Ostministerium

6 Stephane Lacroix, *Awakening Islam: Religious Dissent in Contemporary Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011).

7 Alexander Dallin, *German Rule in Russia: A Study in Occupation Politics*, 2nd ed. (London: The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1981, p. 540).

colleagues—in order to achieve West German foreign policy aims, including the long-term recovery of lost German territories east of the Oder-Neisse border. One of his methods for winning over the Muslims was to promise them a mosque in Munich.

Ramadan stepped into this complex situation in 1958. Under von Mende's guidance, the Munich Muslims set up a registered, legal organization to build the mosque,⁸ inviting young Arab students for extended stays in the city. Ramadan was thus invited from Geneva to Munich and within a year kicked out von Mende's Muslims and took over the project, using his position as head of the Munich Mosque Construction Commission⁹ to traverse the Muslim world with his assistant (and later rival), Ghaleb Himmat.

Ramadan was aided significantly by the Central Intelligence Agency, which allegedly paid for his travel and backed his efforts to take over the mosque. Suspicions by the West German and Swiss intelligence services that he was a CIA operative have never been positively proven, but the archives show an early U.S. fascination with the Brotherhood, one that would recur in the subsequent decades.¹⁰

Whatever the reasons behind the U.S. support for Ramadan and the Brotherhood, the latter made good use of their European platform.



In an unassuming office complex in Herndon, Virginia, the Muslim Brotherhood's European leaders set up the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) as a beachhead for spreading Islamist thought in the West. IIIT's headquarters were raided by the FBI in 2002 for connections to terrorists, and the institute was cited in 2010 by the Justice Department as an unindicted coconspirator in the Holy Land Foundation terrorism financing case.

Through dint of hard work and organizational prowess they used the mosque as a springboard to create a European-wide network.¹¹

CONSOLIDATION AND EXPANSION

An initial effort at forming a framework for Islamism in Europe took place in 1973, just a few months before the Munich mosque opened. Held in London's theater district, the Islamic Cultural Centers and Bodies in Europe was designed to establish a network of like-minded groups. Several dozen activists attended, including Ghaleb Himmat, freshly minted as head of the Islamic Community of Southern Germany—the official name of the Munich mosque. Reflecting Saudi Arabia's efforts to dominate organized Islam, the

8 "About the Muslim Brotherhood," *Global Muslim Brotherhood Daily Report*, accessed June 24, 2011.

9 Ian Johnson, "The Muslim Brotherhood in Europe," briefing for the Congressional Human Relations Caucus, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C., Feb. 9, 2006.

10 Ian Johnson, *A Mosque in Munich: Nazis, the CIA, and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in the West* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2010).

11 Lorenzo Vidino, "The Western Brotherhood," *The New Muslim Brotherhood in the West* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).



The palatial setting for the European Institute of Human Science in Ceredigion, Wales, illustrates the vast financial resources available to the European arm of the Muslim Brotherhood. The institute's aim, according to its website, is to "cultivate a truly Islamic atmosphere and an authentic way of life for all brothers and sisters who study there."

Ismail Faruqi, a leading Islamist thinker who had also been in Lugano and who held a teaching post at Temple University in Philadelphia.¹³

Meanwhile, the Islamic Center of Munich continued to grow in importance, and in 1982, changed its name to the Islamic Community of Germany, reflecting its growth across the country. The Islamic Center of Munich was still impor-

tant but now primarily as the headquarters of a national group that oversaw a chain of mosques and cultural centers. The exact number of these, in the early 1980s, cannot be ascertained, but it had branches in all major West German cities.

Reflecting its international importance, the group continued to add members from abroad, turning membership in the mosque into a badge of honor. Khurshid Ahmad, for example, joined. He had been at the 1973 London meeting and was the most important representative in Europe of Jamaat-e-Islami, the South Asian version of the Muslim Brotherhood. Another key person to join was Issam al-Attar, the charismatic head of the Muslim Brotherhood's Syrian branch, who had moved to Belgium in the early 1960s and settled in the West German city of Aachen in 1968.¹⁴

Their joining was emblematic of the interna-

chairman was a Saudi. Himmat was elected to the governing council, along with Khurshid Ahmad, a leading Pakistani activist. The meeting did not immediately succeed in setting up a European network, but it was a first step.¹²

Four years later, the Brotherhood scored a crucial success. A meeting in the Swiss lakeside resort of Lugano, headed by Himmat and Yusuf Nada, another key person in the mosque, with the participation of prominent activists, notably Yusuf al-Qaradawi, now widely described as the Brotherhood's spiritual leader, initiated the arduous process of rebuilding the organization after the years of Nasserite repression. In Europe, protected by laws and institutions, they were free to set up lasting structures, beginning with the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), whose real task was to provide the theoretical underpinnings for the spread of Islamism in the West. In 1978, the group met in Saudi Arabia and decided to relocate IIIT to the United States where it would be headed by

tant but now primarily as the headquarters of a national group that oversaw a chain of mosques and cultural centers. The exact number of these, in the early 1980s, cannot be ascertained, but it had branches in all major West German cities.

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Their joining was emblematic of the interna-

13 Muhammad Shafiq, *Growth of Islamic Thought in North America: Focus on Ismail Raji al-Faruqi* (Brentwood, Mass.: Amana Publications, 1994), p. 27-9.

14 "Protokoll," Amtsgericht München (Munich district court), Dec. 4, 1982, p. 1.

12 *Impact International*, May 25-June 7, 1973, p. 3.

tional Islamist movement's ability to overcome the ethnic divisions that had split Islam. Although men like Himmat, Attar, and Ahmad had their ideological and personal differences, in Europe they had far more in common. From their point of view, they were the vanguard of a new Islamist wave in the West, pioneering minorities in Christian lands. But they had little to do with ordinary Muslims or the mosque they were supposed to be leading; they did not live in Munich, and the mosque was just a vehicle for their struggle. The group's disconnect from West Germany was highlighted by Himmat, who sent in the protocols of the 1982 meeting by registered mail from his villa overlooking Lake Lugano, 250 miles away from Munich.¹⁵

By the 1990s, an alphabet soup of organizations had stretched across Europe. The Islamic Community of Germany—as the organization based at the mother mosque in Munich—was a founding member of the Brussels-based Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe linking Brotherhood groups in more than twenty countries. Attached to it is the Dublin-based European Council on Fatwa and Research that issues religious opinions to European Muslims. A funding arm, the U.K.-registered Europe Trust, channels money from the Persian Gulf to groups sympathetic to the Brotherhood in Europe, primarily to build mosques. And the European Institute of Human Sciences trains imams at three campuses in France and Wales. All these bodies and organizations are linked to the Brotherhood through interlocking directorates and senior advisors, such as Qaradawi. These groups also receive significant funding from foreign donors such as the Maktoum Foundation.¹⁶

This frenzy of institution building highlights an important point about the Brotherhood, namely that it is not a religious society with theological goals. It has had one or two important thinkers, but their main point has been simple: The Qur'an should be interpreted in a relatively literal fashion so as to shape every aspect of temporal society.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Author's interview with Ahmad Rawi, former head of the Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe, Markfield, U.K., July 21, 2004.

Most of its members, especially the key institution builders and functionaries who run it, have no theological training or knowledge. Many held degrees in engineering, medicine, or law, leading to the sometimes mocking term of “engineer Islam.” This personnel mix, however, is ideally suited for institution building. Back in Egypt before it was banned, it imitated 1930s-style fascist parties. The Brotherhood had political parties, newspapers, youth associations, women's groups and a quasi-military wing. In Europe, these diligent functionaries dutifully duplicated much of this structure (minus the military wing). The main difference is that the Brotherhood is operating as a minority religion, so it uses its structures not to Islamize mainstream society—which is an unrealistic task—but to dominate the West's Muslim communities. It aims to shield them from the West's secular and multicultural societies, providing an alternative reality for its members. It also tries to convert other Muslims into “better” Muslims, who follow the Brotherhood's narrow vision of Islam.

This goal is all the more important given the fact that since the abolition of the caliphate (in 1924), the Islamic world has had no overarching religious authority or structure. If a group set up a body and claimed to speak for Muslims, few could challenge it unless a rival group was set up.

The Brotherhood, with its organizational prowess, has been quicker and more efficient than other Muslim groups to assert its preeminence in Europe—from Ramadan's pan-European Muslim conference sponsored by the CIA in the 1960s to the pan-European federation today. It is no coincidence that in both cases—and all in between—outsiders have financed the Brotherhood's activities. That is because at its heart, the Brotherhood outside of Egypt is not a mass organization. It is a group of elite organizers who have set up the structures to define Islam in the West. The Islamic Center of Munich and all successor organizations have never numbered more than a few dozen members. These people did not serve

Europe, once considered outside the Muslim world, has become central to its future.

Munich's Muslim community—indeed, the Turkish Muslims who by the 1970s made up 90 percent of the city's Muslims were explicitly denied membership. Instead, the leadership

Under the Bush and Obama administrations, the CIA has pushed for cooperation with the Muslim Brotherhood.

was obsessed with setting up structures. In the Cold War, these groups were relatively unimportant. If anyone paid attention to them it was with a view to using them to fight communism. But as they developed, something unexpected happened: Europe, once outside the Muslim world, became central to its future, and the Brotherhood,

after years of laborious organizational work, was suddenly poised to lead the charge.

CONDUIT TO TERRORISM

The Brotherhood may be influential in Muslim circles, but is it involved in terrorism? The answer to this is, yes, but this is to some extent a moot point. Since 9/11, terrorism has become a far-too-narrow test for Western evaluation of Islamist groups. If they are violent (usually defined in terms of attacks against Western targets), then they are bad; otherwise, they are good. The Brotherhood has managed to slip through relatively unscathed—yet another indication of the underestimation of its real importance.

To illustrate this point, it may be useful to return to the Munich mosque and two of its brushes with terrorism. Mahmud Abouhalima, the man convicted of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, for example, had been a regular at the mosque¹⁷ and had sought spiritual counseling from Ahmad al-Khalifa, then the mosque's chief imam. Khalifa and the center denied any connection with the plot, saying Abouhalima had simply come for spiritual counseling.

There was also the case of Mamduh Mahmud Salim, widely seen as al-Qaeda's finance chief and bin Laden's personal mentor. He was arrested in 1998 in a small town near Munich while on a business trip to Germany. Before being extradited to the United States, he called up Khalifa and asked for spiritual guidance. (He was later put on trial in New York and sentenced to thirty-two years in prison.) Khalifa confirmed to having met both men but described the contacts as being purely humanitarian work.¹⁸

German intelligence was, nevertheless, alarmed and launched an all-out investigation into Salim's contacts. One, in particular, stood out: Mamun Darkazanli—a Syrian businessman living in Hamburg, who attended a small mosque there called al-Quds. German police bugged Darkazanli's home and observed his contacts at the mosque, including one particular man, Muhammad Atta, but being unsure about the nature of their findings decided to drop the investigation. Two years later, on September 11, 2001, Atta flew the first plane into the World Trade Center, and al-Quds mosque emerged as a place where the hijackers had been radicalized. Darkazanli was never prosecuted, but he was yet another less-than-glorious link between the Islamic Center of Munich and political-religious extremism.¹⁹

Shocked by the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. government swung hard against the Brotherhood. Investigators were especially fascinated by one of Nada's investment vehicles, Banque al-Taqwa. Himmat sat on its board, and seemingly every Islamist in Europe had bought shares in it, making its shareholder list a who's who of the Muslim Brotherhood in Europe. Nada had set up the bank as one of the first financial institutes to operate in conformity with Islamic law. Instead of offering depositors interest, the bank called its customers investors and offered them profits from money it lent out. But he had invested the money amateurishly—Nada himself says he put most of it in Malaysian businesses shortly before the 1997

¹⁷ *Time Magazine*, June 24, 2001.

¹⁸ *Al-Islam* (Munich), June 2001, pp. 16–8.

¹⁹ Ian Johnson and Alfred Kueppers, "Missed Link," *The Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 19, 2001.

Asian financial crisis—and the bank went under. U.S. prosecutors, however, concluded that the bank was a conduit for terrorist money. Washington declared Nada and Himmat terrorist financiers and had the designation endorsed by the United Nations. Both men's bank accounts were frozen.²⁰

The Islamic Community of Germany suddenly faced a financial crisis. The community's chief officer, Himmat, signed the group's checks, but now anything he touched was frozen. There was also a painful interview in the Munich mosque's

publication *al-Islam* in which Khalifa tried to justify why Himmat, who had lived in Lugano for decades, was running the group. After twenty-nine years at the helm, Himmat resigned in early 2002.²¹

But this did nothing to combat terrorism. As the Munich mosque's links to the 9/11 attacks show, the Brotherhood is not so much—at least in terms of Western targets—an active promoter of terrorism. Instead, it creates the milieu from which terrorism arises. Atta did not receive instructions from anyone affiliated with the Munich mosque, but the mosque was part of an Islamist environment with links to Atta. This is why the government's attempts to cripple Nada and Himmat financially were inappropriate. The problem that both men posed was ideological and needed to be countered on this level. Their lack of direct links to terrorism was proven by

20 Matthew A. Levitt, "The Role of Charities and NGOs in the Financing of Terrorist Activities," Subcommittee on International Trade and Finance, U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, Washington, D.C., Aug. 1, 2002.

21 Amtsgericht München, Jan. 13, 2002. Himmat gave the explanation of the frozen accounts in a telephone interview, June 1, 2005.

Photo will not display.

It took German authorities close to ten years to shut down Masjid Taiba, formerly known as al-Quds mosque in Hamburg, Germany. The mosque was a center of radicalization, "graduating," among others, Muhammad Atta who flew the first plane into the World Trade Center on 9/11.

Washington's inability to prosecute them. Eight years after freezing their accounts, Washington had to acquiesce as they were unfrozen.

This parallels a broader and equally uninformed rapprochement between Western governments and the Brotherhood. By the second term of George W. Bush, efforts were already underway to renew Washington's decades-old links to the group. The State Department organized conferences between the European Brotherhood and American Muslims—who are also in groups descended from that organization.²² All of this was backed by CIA analyses, with one arguing that the Brotherhood featured "impressive internal dynamism, organization, and media savvy."²³ Ignoring warnings from Western allies against supporting the Brotherhood in Europe, the CIA pushed for cooperation. This policy has continued under the Obama administration.

22 Tom C. Korologos, U.S. ambassador to Belgium, "Islamist Extremism in Europe," testimony before the Subcommittee on European Affairs, U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Apr. 5, 2006.

23 "Muslim Brotherhood: Pivotal Actor in European Political Islam," Central Intelligence Agency, Langley, Md., May 10, 2006.

CONCLUSION

Why the enduring interest in the Brotherhood? Since its founding in 1928, the movement has managed to voice the aspirations of the Middle East's downtrodden and often confused middle class. Although it has many adherents at the lowest-rungs of society, it is run and organized by educated professionals.

The Muslim Brotherhood has many adherents at the lowest rungs of society, but it is run and organized by educated professionals.

An organization run by such people and appealing to the masses is naturally intriguing to Western policymakers eager to influence this strategic part of the world.

But how the Brotherhood achieves its appeal makes it a dubious partner. Most Muslim societies have lived through more than a century of

oppression by corrupt and brutal elites, and Islamists have invariably presented the establishment of religious rule as the only road to a more just society. In truth, however, the Brotherhood has offered a fundamentally anti-modern, political program and ideology, exalting the small num-

ber of "true" Muslims who adhere to a literalist view of the Qur'an and writing off the rest—including most Muslims—as apostates.

Many Brotherhood spokesmen claim it renounces violence, but its chief theoreticians have not been able to bring themselves to do so. Qaradawi, for one, has regularly railed against "Zionists and Jews"—although some analysts claim this is not so serious and that he is actually a moderate (at least in comparison to al-Qaeda). Yet he has explicitly endorsed suicide bombings against Israeli civilians, including children (because they will grow up to be adults), expressing his desire to die as a martyr "at the hands of a non-Muslim."²⁴

This means that a decade after 9/11, the West is still unsure how to deal with Islamism. Just as in the 1950s, policymakers tended to either lionize Islamists as potential allies in the struggle against communism or write them off as passé; these two extremes have been much in play in the decade attending the attacks. What is missing is a middle way that treats Islamism for what it is: a potent ideology that is likely to be a threat for the foreseeable future.



²⁴ BBC News, July 7, 2004; *Global Muslim Brotherhood Daily Report*, Jan. 31, 2011; see, also, "The Qaradawi Fatwas," *Middle East Quarterly*, Summer 2004, pp. 78-80.

Baby, You Can Drive My Car

Dozens of Saudi women risked arrest by flouting a driving ban. No arrests were reported after women across the country violated religious restrictions on driving, intended to limit their ability to fraternize with men.

Saudi Arabia is the only country in the world that bans women from driving. The prohibition forces families to hire live-in drivers, and those who cannot afford the \$300 to \$400 a month for a driver must rely on male relatives to drive them to work, school, shopping, or the doctor.

A Saudi woman defiantly drove through the nation's capital while others brazenly cruised by police patrols in the first forays of a campaign that hopes to ignite a road rebellion against the male-only driving rules in the ultraconservative kingdom.

It was a rare grassroots challenge to the Western-backed Saudi monarchy as it tries to ride out the Arab world's wave of change, and a lesson in how the uprisings are taking root in different ways. In this case, on Friday, the driver's seat was turned into a powerful platform for women's rights in a country where wives and daughters have almost no political voice.

Associated Press, June 18, 2011

Does Anyone Speak Arabic?

by Franck Salameh

In August 2010, Associated Press staffer Zeina Karam wrote an article, picked up by *The Washington Post* and other news outlets, that tackled a cultural, and arguably political, issue that had been making headlines for quite some time in the Middle East: the question of multilingualism and the decline of the Arabic language in polyglot, multiethnic Middle Eastern societies.¹ Lebanon was Karam's case study: an Eastern Mediterranean nation that had for the past century been the testing grounds for iconoclastic ideas and libertine tendencies muzzled and curbed elsewhere in the Arab world.² However, by inquiring into what is ailing the Arabic language—the nimbus and supreme symbol of “Arabness”—the author aimed straight at the heart of Arab nationalism and the strict, linguistic orthodoxy that it mandated, putting in question its most basic tenet: Who is an Arab?

ARABIC AND ARABISM

For most of the twentieth century, Arabs, Arab nationalists, and their Western devotees tended to substitute Arab for Middle Eastern history, as if the narratives, storylines, and paradigms of other groups mattered little or were the byproduct of alien sources far removed from the authentic, well-ordered, harmonious universe of the “Arab world.”³ As such, they held most Middle Easterners to be Arab even if only remotely associated with the Arabs and even if alien to the experiences, language, or cultural proclivities of Arabs. In the words of Sati al-Husri (1880-1967), a Syr-

ian writer and the spiritual father of linguistic Arab nationalism:

Every person who speaks Arabic is an Arab. Every individual associated with an Arabic-speaker or with an Arabic-speaking people is an Arab. If he does not recognize [his Arabness] ... we must look for the reasons that have made him take this stand ... But under no circumstances should we say: “As long as he does not wish to be an Arab, and as long as he is disdainful of his Arabness, then he is not an Arab.” He is an Arab regardless of

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1 Zeina Karam, “Lebanon Tries to Retain Arabic in Polyglot Culture,” *The Washington Post*, Aug. 16, 2010. For more on Arabic language decline, see Mahmoud al-Batal, “Identity and Language Tension in Lebanon: The Arabic of Local News at LBCI,” in Aleya Rouchdy, ed., *Language Contact and Language Conflict in Arabic: Variations on a Sociolinguistic Theme* (London: Curzon Arabic Linguistics Series, 2002); *Al-Itijah al-Mu'akis*, Al-Jazeera TV (Doha), Aug. 1, 2000, Aug. 28, 2001; Zeina Hashem Beck, “Is the Arabic Language ‘Perfect’ or ‘Backwards’?” *The Daily Star* (Beirut), Jan. 7, 2005; Hashem Saleh, “Tajrubat al-Ittihad al-'Urubby... hal Tanjah 'Arabiyan?’” *Asharq al-Awsat* (London), June 21, 2005.

2 Fouad Ajami, “The Autumn of the Autocrats,” *Foreign Affairs*, May-June, 2005.

3 Elie Kedourie, “Not So Grand Illusions,” *The New York Review of Books*, Nov. 23, 1967.



A rigid and unforgiving understanding of the role of Arabic as a means of developing Arab nationalism appeared frequently in the writings of Baath Party founder Michel Aflaq. He promoted violence against those users of the Arabic language who refused to conform to his prescribed, overarching, Arab identity: "hatred unto death, toward any individuals who embody an idea contrary to Arab nationalism."

his own wishes, whether ignorant, indifferent, recalcitrant, or disloyal; he is an Arab, but an Arab without consciousness or feelings, and perhaps even without conscience.⁴

This ominous admonition to embrace a domineering Arabism is one constructed on an assumed linguistic unity of the Arab peoples; a unity that a priori presumes the Arabic language itself to be a unified, coherent verbal medium, used by all members of Husri's proposed nation. Yet Arabic is not a single, uniform language. It is, on the one hand, a codified, written standard that is never spoken natively and that is accessible only to those who have had rigorous

training in it. On the other hand, Arabic is also a multitude of speech forms, contemptuously referred to as "dialects," differing from each other and from the standard language itself to the same extent that French is different from other Romance languages and from Latin. Still, Husri's dictum, "You're an Arab if I say so!" became an article of faith for Arab nationalists. It also condensed the chilling finality with which its author and his acolytes foisted their blanket Arab label on the mosaic of peoples, ethnicities, and languages that had defined the Middle East for millennia prior to the advent of twentieth-century Arab nationalism.⁵

But if Husri had been intimidating in his advocacy for a forced Arabization, his disciple Michel Aflaq (1910-89), founder of the Baath Party, promoted outright violence and cruelty against those users of the Arabic language who refused to conform to his prescribed, overarching, Arab identity. Arab nationalists must be ruthless with those members of the nation who have gone astray from Arabism, wrote Aflaq,

they must be imbued with a hatred unto death, toward any individuals who embody an idea contrary to Arab nationalism. Arab nationalists must never dismiss opponents of Arabism as mere individuals ... An idea that is opposed to ours does not emerge out of nothing! It is the incarnation of individuals who must be exterminated, so that their idea might in turn be also exterminated. Indeed, the presence in our midst of a living opponent of the Arab national idea vivifies it and stirs the blood within us. And any action we might take [against those who have rejected Arabism] that does not arouse in us living emotions, that does not make us feel the orgasmic shudders of love, that does not spark in us quivers of hate, and that does not send the blood coursing in our veins and make our pulse beat faster is, ultimately, a sterile action.⁶

4 Abu Khaldun Sati Al-Husri, *Abhath Mukhtara fi-l-Qawmiyya al-'Arabiya* (Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wihda al-'Arabiya, 1985), p. 80.

5 Franck Salameh, *Language Memory and Identity in the Middle East: The Case for Lebanon* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2010), pp. 9-10.

6 Michel Aflaq, *Fi Sabil al-Ba'ath* (Beirut: Dar at-Tali'a, 1959), pp. 40-1.

Therein lay the foundational tenets of Arab nationalism and the Arabist narrative of Middle Eastern history as preached by Husri, Aflaq, and their cohorts: hostility, rejection, negation, and brazen calls for the annihilation of the non-Arab “other.” Yet despite the dominance of such disturbing Arabist and Arab nationalist readings, the Middle East in both its modern and ancient incarnations remains a patchwork of varied cultures, ethnicities, and languages that cannot be tailored into a pure and neat Arab essence without distorting and misinforming. Other models of Middle Eastern identities exist, and a spirited Middle Eastern, intellectual tradition that challenges the monistic orthodoxies of Arab nationalism endures and deserves recognition and validation.

THE ARABIC LANGUAGE DEBATE

Take for instance one of the AP article’s interviewees who lamented the waning of the Arabic language in Lebanese society and the rise in the numbers of Francophone and Anglophone Lebanese, suggesting “the absence of a common language between individuals of the same country mean[s] losing [one’s] common identity”—as if places like Switzerland and India, each with respectively four and twenty-three official, national—often mutually incomprehensible—speech forms, were lesser countries or suffered more acute identity crises than ostensibly cohesive, monolingual societies. In fact, the opposite is often true: Monolingualism is no more a precondition or motivation for cultural and ethnic cohesiveness than multilingualism constitutes grounds for national incoherence and loss of a common identity. Irishmen, Scotsmen, Welsh, and Jamaicans are all native English-speakers but not Englishmen. The AP could have acknowledged that glaring reality, which has been a hallmark of the polyglot multiethnic Middle East for millennia. This, of course, is beside the fact that for many Lebanese—albeit mainly Christians—multilingualism and the appeal of Western languages is simply a way of heeding history and adhering to the country’s hybrid

ethnic and linguistic heritage.

Cultural anthropologist Selim Abou argued that notwithstanding Lebanon’s millenarian history and the various and often contradictory interpretations of that history, the country’s endogenous and congenital multilingualism—and by extension that of the entire Levantine littoral—remains indisputable. He wrote:

From the very early dawn of history up to the conquests of Alexander the Great, and from the times of Alexander until the dawning of the first Arab Empire, and finally, from the coming of the Arabs up until modern times, the territory we now call Lebanon—and this is based on the current state of archaeological and historical discoveries—has always practiced some form of bilingualism and polyglossia; one of the finest incarnations of intercultural dialogue and coexistence.⁷

So much, then, for linguistic chauvinism and language protectionism. The Arabic language will survive the onslaught of multilingualism but only if its users will it to survive by speaking it rather than by hallowing it and by refraining from creating conservation societies that build hedges around it to shield it from desuetude. Even avid practitioners of multilingualism in Lebanon, who were never necessarily talented or devoted Arabophones, have traditionally been supportive of the idea of preserving Arabic in the roster of Lebanese languages—albeit not guarding and fixing it by way of mumification, cultural dirigisme, or rigid linguistic planning. Though opposed in principle to Arab nationalism’s calls for the insulation of linguistically libertine Lebanon “in the solitude of a troubled and spiteful nationalism ... [and] linguistic totalitarianism,” Lebanese thinker Michel Chiha (1891-1954) still maintained that:

Modern Standard Arabic is codified and written but never spoken natively.

⁷ Selim Abou, *Le bilinguisme Arabe-Français au Liban* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962), pp. 157-8.

Languages or dialects often perfunctorily labeled Arabic might not be Arabic at all.

Arabic is a wonderful language ... the language of millions of men. We wouldn't be who we are today if we, the Lebanese of the twentieth century, were to forgo the prospect of becoming [Arabic's] most accomplished masters to the same extent that we

had been its masters some one hundred years ago ... But how can one not heed the reality that a country such as ours would be literally decapitated if prevented from being bilingual (or even trilingual if possible)? ... [We must] retain this lesson if we are intent on pro-

tecting ourselves from self-inflicted deafness, which would in turn lead us into mutism.⁸

Another fallacy reiterated in the AP article was the claim that "Arabic is believed to be spoken as a first language by more than 280 million people."⁹ Even if relying solely on the field of Arabic linguistics—which seldom bothers with the trivialities of precise cognomens denoting varieties of language, preferring instead the overarching and reductive *lahja* (dialect/accents) and *fusha* (Modern Standard Arabic, MSA) dichotomy to, say, the French classifications of *langue*, *langage*, *parler*, *dialecte*, *langue vernaculaire*, *créole*, *argot*, *patois*, etc.—Zeina Karam's arithmetic still remains in the sphere of folklore and fairy tale, not concrete, objective fact. Indeed, no serious linguist can claim the existence of a real community of "280 million people" who speak Arabic at any level of native proficiency, let alone a community that can speak Arabic "as a first language."

Harvard linguist Wheeler Thackston—and before him Taha Hussein, Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyed, Abdelaziz Fehmi Pasha, and many others—have shown that the Middle East's demotic languages are not Arabic at all, and consequently, that one can hardly speak of 280

million native Arabophones—or even of a paltry one million such Arabic speakers—without oversimplifying and perverting an infinitely complex linguistic situation. The languages or dialects often perfunctorily labeled Arabic might indeed not be Arabic at all.

This is hardly a modern aberration devised by modern reformists fancying dissociation from the exclusivity of modern Arabism and its monolithic paradigm. Even Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), the fourteenth-century Muslim jurist and polymath and arguably the father of modern sociology, wrote in his famous 1377 *Prolegomena* that only the language of Quraish—the Prophet Muhammad's tribe—should be deemed true Arabic; that native Arabs learn this speech form naturally and spontaneously; and that this language became corrupt and ceased being Arabic when it came into contact with non-Arabs and assimilated their linguistic habits. Therefore, he argued,

the language of Quraish is the soundest and purest Arabic precisely due to its remoteness from the lands of non-Arabs—Persians, Byzantines, and Abyssinians ... whose languages are used as examples by Arab philologists to demonstrate the dialects' distance from, and perversion of, Arabic.¹⁰

Thackston has identified five dialectal clusters that he classified as follows: "(1) Greater Syria, including Lebanon and Palestine; (2) Mesopotamia, including the Euphrates region of Syria, Iraq, and the Persian Gulf; (3) the Arabian Peninsula, including most of what is Saudi Arabia and much of Jordan; (4) the Nile Valley, including Egypt and the Sudan; and (5) North Africa and [parts of] the ... regions of sub-Saharan Africa."¹¹ He acknowledged that although these five major dialectal regions were speckled with linguistic varieties and differences in accent and sub-dialects, "there is almost complete mutual comprehension [within each of them]—

8 Michel Chiha, *Visage et Présence du Liban* (Beirut: Editions du Trident, 1984), p. 49-52, 164.

9 Karam, "Lebanon Tries to Retain Arabic."

10 Ibn Khaldun, *al-Muqaddimah* (Beirut: Dar al-Qalam, 1977), p. 461.

11 Wheeler M. Thackston, Jr., *The Vernacular Arabic of the Lebanon* (Cambridge, Mass.: Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University, 2003), p. vii.

that is, a Jerusalemite, a Beirut, and an Aleppo may not speak in exactly the same manner, but each understands practically everything the others say.” However, he wrote,

When one crosses one or more major boundaries, as is the case with a Baghdadi and a Damascene for instance, one begins to encounter difficulty in comprehension; and the farther one goes, the less one understands until mutual comprehension disappears entirely. To take an extreme example, a Moroccan and an Iraqi can no more understand each other’s dialects than can a Portuguese and Rumanian.¹²

In 1929, Tawfiq Awan had already begun making similar arguments, maintaining that the demotics of the Middle East—albeit arguably related to Arabic—were languages in their own right, not mere dialects of Arabic:

Egypt has an Egyptian language; Lebanon has a Lebanese language; the Hijaz has a Hijazi language; and so forth—and all of these languages are by no means Arabic languages. Each of our countries has a language, which is its own possession: So why do we not write [our language] as we converse in it? For, the language in which the people speak is the language in which they also write.¹³

12 Ibid.

13 Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs: The Search for Egyptian Nationalism, 1900-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 220.



For some Arabs, like these Beirutis enjoying a night out on the town, multilingualism and the appeal of Western languages is a natural corollary to their country’s hybrid ethnic and linguistic heritage. The territory now known as Lebanon has historically practiced some form of polyglossia and was once a shining representative of intercultural coexistence in the Middle East.

Even Taha Hussein (1889-1973), the doyen of modern Arabic *belles lettres*, had come to this very same conclusion by 1938. In his *The Future of Culture in Egypt*,¹⁴ he made a sharp distinction between what he viewed to be Arabic *tout court*—that is, the classical and modern standard form of the language—and the sundry, spoken vernaculars in use in his contemporary native Egypt and elsewhere in the Near East. For Egyptians, Arabic is virtually a foreign language, wrote Hussein:

Nobody speaks it at home, [in] school, [on] the streets, or in clubs; it is not even used in [the] Al-Azhar [Islamic University] itself. People everywhere speak a language that is definitely not Arabic, despite the partial resemblance to it.¹⁵

14 Taha Hussein, *The Future of Culture in Egypt* (Washington, D.C.: American Council of Learned Societies, 1954).

15 Ibid., pp. 86-7.

To this, Thackston has recently added that when Arabs speak of a bona fide Arabic language, they always mean

Classical [or Modern Standard] Arabic: the language used for all written and official communication; a language that was codified, standardized, and normalized well over a thousand years ago and that has almost a millennium and a half of uninterrupted literary legacy behind it. There is only one problem with [this] Arabic: No one speaks it. What Arabs speak is called *Arabi Darij* (“vernacular Arabic”), *lughā ammiyye* (“the vulgar language”), or *lahje* (“dialect”); only what they write do they refer to as “true [Arabic] language.”¹⁶

Middle Easterners are steering clear of Arabic in alarming numbers but not due to Western influence.

And so, even if Modern Standard Arabic were taken to be the Arabic that the AP was speaking of, it is still patently false to say, as does Karam, that MSA is anybody’s “first,” native “spoken language”—let alone the “spoken . . . first language [of] more than

280 million people.” Even Edward Said, a notoriously supple and sympathetic critic when it comes to things Arab, deemed Arabic, that is MSA, the “equivalent of Latin, a dead and forbidding language” that, to his knowledge, nobody spoke besides “a Palestinian political scientist and politician whom [Said’s] children used to describe as ‘the man who spoke like a book.’”¹⁷

FOREIGN IMPOSITION OR SELF AFFLICTION?

Playing into the hands of keepers of the Arab nationalist canon—as well as Arabists and lobbyists working on behalf of the Arabic language today—the AP article adopted the

cliché that the decline of Arabic—like the failure of Arab nationalism—was the outcome of Western linguistic intrusions and the insidious, colonialist impulses of globalization. “Many Lebanese pride themselves on being fluent in French—a legacy of French colonial rule,” Karam wrote, rendering a mere quarter-century of French mandatory presence in Lebanon (1920–46) into a period of classical-style “French colonial rule” that had allegedly destroyed the foundations of the Arabic language in the country and turned the Lebanese subalterns into imitative Francophones denuded of their putative Arab personality.¹⁸

Alas, this fashionable fad fails to take into account that French colonialism in its Lebanese context differed markedly from France’s colonial experience elsewhere. For one, the founding fathers of modern Lebanon lobbied vigorously for turning their post-Ottoman mountain *Sanjak* into a French protectorate after World War I.¹⁹ And with regard to the Lebanese allegedly privileging the French language, that too, according to Selim Abou, seems to have hardly been a colonialist throwback and an outcome of early twentieth-century French imperialism. In his 1962 *Le binlinguisme Arabe-Français au Liban*, Abou wrote that the French language (or early Latin variants of what later became French) entered Mount-Lebanon and the Eastern Mediterranean littoral at the time of the first Crusades (ca. 1099).²⁰ Centuries later, the establishment of the Maronite College in Rome (1584) and the liberal (pro-Christian) policies of then Mount-Lebanon’s Druze ruler, Fakhreddine II (1572–1635), allowed the Maronites to further strengthen their religious and their religion’s ancillary cultural and linguistic ties to Rome, Europe, and especially France—then, still the “elder daughter” of the Catholic Church. This unleashed a wave of missionary work to Lebanon—and wherever Eastern Christianity dared flaunt its specificity—and eventually led to the found-

18 Karam, “Lebanon Tries to Retain Arabic.”

19 See, for instance, Meir Zamir, *The Formation of Modern Lebanon* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988).

20 Abou, *Le binlinguisme Arabe-Français au Liban*, pp. 177–9.

16 Thackston, *The Vernacular Arabic of the Lebanon*, p. vii.
17 Edward Said, “Living in Arabic,” *al-Ahram Weekly* (Cairo), Feb. 12 – 18, 2004.

ing of schools tending to the educational needs of the Christian—namely Maronite—communities of the region. Although foundational courses in Arabic and Syriac were generally taught at those missionary schools, European languages including French, Italian, and German were also part of the regular curriculum. French, therefore, can be argued to have had an older pedigree in Lebanon than suggested by Karam. And contrary to the classical norms in the expansion and transmission of imperial languages—the spread of Arabic included—which often entailed conquests, massacres, and cultural suppression campaigns, the French language can be said to have been adopted willingly by the Lebanese through “seduction” not “subjection.”²¹

It is true that many Lebanese, and Middle Easterners more generally, are today steering clear of Arabic in alarming numbers, but contrary to AP’s claim, this routing of Arabic is not mainly due to Western influence and cultural encroachments—though the West could share some of the blame; rather, it can be attributed, even if only partially, to MSA’s retrogression, difficulty, and most importantly perhaps, to the fact that this form of Arabic is largely a learned, cultic, ceremonial, and literary language, which is never acquired natively, never spoken natively, and which seems locked in an uphill struggle for relevance against sundry spontaneous, dynamic, natively-spoken, vernacular languages. Taha Hussein ascribed the decay and abnegation of the Arabic language primarily to its “inability of expressing the depths of one’s feelings in this new age.” He wrote in 1956 that MSA is

difficult and grim, and the pupil who goes to school in order to study Arabic acquires only revulsion for his teacher and for the language, and employs his time in pursuit of any other occupations that would divert and soothe his thoughts away from this arduous effort ... Pupils hate nothing more than they hate studying Arabic.²²

21 Ibid., pp. 191-5.

22 Taha Hussein, “Yasiru an-Nahw wa-l-Kitaba,” *al-Adab* (Beirut), 1956, no. 11, pp. 2, 3, 6.

Yet, irreverent as they had been in shunning Arabic linguistic autocracy and fostering a lively debate on MSA and multilingualism, Lebanon and Egypt and their Arabic travails are hardly uncommon in today’s Middle East. From Israel to Qatar and from Abu Dhabi to Kuwait, modern Middle Eastern nations that make use of some form of Arabic have had to come face to face with the challenges hurled at their hermetic MSA and are impelled to respond to the onslaught of impending polyglotism and linguistic humanism borne by the lures of globalization.

In a recent article published in Israel’s liberal daily *Ha’aretz*, acclaimed Druze poet and academic Salman Masalha called on Israel’s Education Ministry to do away with the country’s public school system’s Arabic curricula and demanded its replacement with Hebrew and English course modules. Arabophone Israelis taught Arabic at school, like Arabophones throughout the Middle East, were actually taught a foreign tongue misleadingly termed Arabic, wrote Masalha:

The mother tongue [that people] speak at home is totally different from the ... Arabic [they learn] at school; [a situation] that perpetuates linguistic superficiality [and] leads to intellectual superficiality ... It’s not by chance that not one Arab university is [ranked] among the world’s best 500 universities. This finding has nothing to do with Zionism.²³

Masalha’s is not a lone voice. The abstruseness of Arabic and the stunted achievements of those monolingual Arabophones constrained to acquire modern knowledge by way of Modern Standard Arabic have been indicted in the United Nations’ Arab Human Development reports—a

A Druze poet and academic called on Israel to do away with the public school system’s Arabic curricula.

23 Salman Masalha, “Arabs, Speak Hebrew!” *Ha’aretz* (Tel Aviv), Sept. 27, 2010.

series of reports written by Arabs and for the benefit of Arabs—since the year 2002. To wit, the 2003 report noted that the Arabic language is struggling to meet the challenges of modern times

[and] is facing [a] severe ... and real crisis in theorization, grammar, vocabulary, usage, documentation, creativity, and criticism ... The most apparent aspect of this crisis is the growing neglect of the functional aspects of [Arabic] language use. Arabic language skills in everyday life have deteriorated, and Arabic ... has in effect ceased to be a spoken language. It is only the language of reading and writing; the formal language of intellectuals and academics, often used to display knowledge in lectures ... [It] is not the language of cordial, spontaneous expression, emotions, daily encounters, and ordinary communication. It is not a vehicle for discovering one's inner self or outer surroundings.²⁴

And so, concluded the report, the only Arabophone countries that were able to circumvent this crisis of knowledge were those like Lebanon and Egypt, which had actively promoted a polyglot tradition, deliberately protected

the teaching of foreign languages, and instated math and science curricula in languages other than Arabic.

Translation is another crucial means of transmitting and acquiring knowledge claimed the U.N. report, and given that “English represents around 85 percent of the total world knowledge balance,”

one might guess that “knowledge-hungry countries,” the Arab states included, would take heed of the sway of English, or at the very least, would seek out the English language as a major source

of translation. Yet, from all source-languages combined, the Arab world's 330 million people translated a meager 330 books per year; that is, “one fifth of the number [of books] translated in Greece [home to 12 million Greeks].” Indeed, from the times of the Caliph al-Ma'mun (ca. 800 CE) to the beginnings of the twenty-first century, the “Arab world” had translated a paltry 10,000 books: the equivalent of what Spain translates in a single year.²⁵

But clearer heads are prevailing in Arab countries today. Indeed, some Arabs are taking ownership of their linguistic dilemmas; feckless Arab nationalist vainglory is giving way to practical responsible pursuits, and the benefits of valorizing local speech forms and integrating foreign languages into national, intellectual, and pedagogic debates are being contemplated. Arabs “are learning less Islam and more English in the tiny desert sheikhdom of Qatar” read a 2003 *Washington Post* article, and this overhaul of Qatar's educational system, with its integration of English as a language of instruction—“a total earthquake” as one observer termed it—was being billed as the Persian Gulf's gateway toward greater participation in an ever more competitive global marketplace. But many Qataris and Persian Gulf Arabs hint to more pressing and more substantive impulses behind curricular bilingualism: “necessity-driven” catalysts aimed at replacing linguistic and religious jingoism with equality, tolerance, and coexistence; changing mentalities as well as switching languages and textbooks.²⁶

This revolution is no less subversive in nearby Abu Dhabi where in 2009 the Ministry of Education launched a series of pedagogical reform programs aimed at integrating bilingual education into the national curriculum. Today, “some 38,000 students in 171 schools in Abu Dhabi [are] taught ... simultaneously in Arabic and English.”²⁷

And so, rather than rushing to prop up and protect the fossilized remains of MSA, the de-

The Arabs' failure to modernize may be a corollary of their language's inability to conform to the exigencies of modern life.

24 *Arab Human Development Report 2003* (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2003), p. 54.

25 *Ibid.*, pp. 66-7.

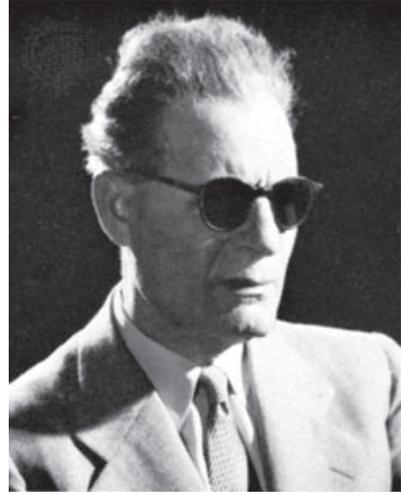
26 *The Washington Post*, Feb. 2, 2003.

27 *The National* (Abu Dhabi), Sept. 15, 2010.

bate that should be engaged in today's Middle East needs to focus more candidly on the utility, functionality, and practicality of a hallowed and ponderous language such as MSA in an age of nimble, clipped, and profane speech forms. The point of reflection should not be whether to protect MSA but whether the language inherited from the Jahiliya Bedouins—to paraphrase Egypt's Salama Musa (1887-1958)—is still an adequate tool of communication in the age of information highways and space shuttles.²⁸ Obviously, this is a debate that requires a healthy dose of courage, honesty, moderation, and pragmatism, away from the usual religious emotions and cultural chauvinism that have always stunted and muzzled such discussions.

LINGUISTIC SCHIZOPHRENIA AND DECEIT

Sherif Shubashy's book *Down with Sibawayh If Arabic Is to Live on!*²⁹ seems to have brought these qualities into the debate. An eighth-century Persian grammarian and father of Arabic philology, Sibawayh is at the root of the modern Arabs' failures according to Shubashy. *Down with Sibawayh*, which provoked a whirlwind of controversy in Egypt and other Arab countries following its release in 2004, sought to shake the traditional Arabic linguistic establishment and the Arabic language itself out of their millenarian slumbers and proposed to unshackle MSA from stiff and superannuated norms that had, over the centuries, transformed it into a shrunken and fossilized mummy: a ceremonial, religious, and literary language that was never used as a speech form, and whose hallowed status "has rendered it a heavy chain curbing the Arabs' intellect, blocking their creative energies



Taha Hussein, considered the "dean of modern Arabic literature," recognized the futility of thinking of classical Arabic as one unified and unifying language. "Nobody speaks it at home," he wrote, "[in] school, [on] the streets, or in clubs ... People everywhere speak a language that is definitely not Arabic, despite the partial resemblance to it."

... and relegating them to cultural bondage."³⁰

In a metaphor reminiscent of Musa's description of the Arabic language, Shubashy compared MSA users to "ambling cameleers from the past, contesting highways with racecar drivers hurtling towards modernity and progress."³¹ In his view, the Arabs' failure to modernize was a corollary of their very language's inability (or unwillingness) to regenerate and innovate and conform to the exigencies of modern life.³² But perhaps the most devastating blow that Shubashy dealt the Arabic language was his description of the *lahja* and *fusha* (or dialect vs. MSA) dichotomy as "linguistic schizophrenia."³³

28 Salama Musa, *Maa Hiya an-Nahda, wa Mukhtarar Ukhra* (Algiers: Mofam, 1990), p. 233.

29 Sherif al-Shubashy, *Li-Tahya al-Lugha al-'Arabiya, Yasqut Sibawayh* (Cairo: Al-Hay' a al-Misriya li'l-Kitab, 2004); Cherif Choubachy, *Le Sabre et la Virgule: La Langue du Coran est-elle à l'origine du mal arabe?* (Paris: L'Archipel, 2007).

30 Choubachy, *Le Sabre et la Virgule*, pp. 10, 16-8.

31 Shubashy, *Li-Tahya al-Lugha al-'Arabiya*, p. 18.

32 Choubachy, *Le Sabre et la Virgule*, pp. 17-8; Shubashy, *Li-Tahya al-Lugha al-'Arabiya*, p. 14.

33 Shubashy, *Li-Tahya al-Lugha al-'Arabiya*, pp. 125-42.

Standard Arabic is a symbiotic bedmate of Islam and the tool of its cultural and literary tradition.

For although Arabs spoke their individual countries' specific, vernacular languages while at home, at work, on the streets, or in the marketplace, the educated among them were con-

strained to don a radically different linguistic personality and make use of an utterly different speech form when reading books and newspapers, watching television, listening to the radio, or drafting formal, official reports.³⁴

That speech form, which was never spontaneously spoken, Shubashy insisted, was Modern Standard Arabic: a language which, not unlike Latin in relation to Europe's Romance languages, was distinct from the native, spoken vernaculars of the Middle East and was used exclusively by those who had adequate formal schooling in it. He even went so far as to note that "upward of 50 percent of so-called Arabophones can't even be considered Arabs if only MSA is taken for the legitimate Arabic language, the sole true criterion of Arabness."³⁵ Conversely, it was a grave error to presume the vernacular speech forms of the Middle East to be Arabic, even if most Middle Easterners and foreigners were conditioned, and often intimidated, into viewing them as such. The so-called dialects of Arabic were not Arabic at all, he wrote, despite the fact that

like many other Arabs, I have bathed in this linguistic schizophrenia since my very early childhood. I have for very long thought that the difference between MSA and the dialects was infinitely minimal; and that whoever knew one language—especially MSA—would intuitively know, or at the very least, understand the other. However, my own experience, and especially the evidence of foreigners studying MSA, convinced me of the deep chasm that separated

MSA from dialects. Foreigners who are versed in MSA, having spent many years studying that language, are taken aback when I speak to them in the Egyptian dialect; they don't understand a single word I say in that language.³⁶

This "pathology" noted Shubashy, went almost unnoticed in past centuries when illiteracy was the norm, and literacy was still the preserve of small, restricted guilds—mainly the ulema and religious grammarians devoted to the study of Arabic and Islam, who considered their own linguistic schizophrenia a model of piety and a sacred privilege to be vaunted, not concealed. Today, however, with the spread of literacy in the Arab world, and with the numbers of users of MSA swelling and hovering in the vicinity of 50 percent, linguistic schizophrenia is becoming more widespread and acute, crippling the Arab mind and stunting its capacities. Why was it that Spaniards, Frenchmen, Americans, and many more of the world's transparent and linguistically nimble societies, needed to use only a single, native language for both their acquisition of knowledge and grocery shopping whereas Arabs were prevented from reading and writing in the same language that they use for their daily mundane needs?³⁷

As a consequence of the firestorm unleashed by his book, Shubashy, an Egyptian journalist and news anchor and, at one time, the Paris bureau-chief of the Egyptian *al-Ahram* news group, was forced to resign his post as Egypt's deputy minister of culture in 2006. The book caused so much controversy to a point that the author and his work were subjected to a grueling cross-examination in the Egyptian parliament where, reportedly, scuffles erupted between supporters and opponents of Shubashy's thesis. In the end, the book was denounced as an affront to Arabs and was ultimately banned. Shubashy himself was accused of defaming the Arabic language in rhetoric mimicking a "colonialist discourse."³⁸

34 Ibid., p. 125.

35 Choubachy, *Le Sabre et la Virgule*, p. 119.

36 Shubashy, *Li-Tahya al-Lugha al-'Arabiya*, pp. 125-6.

37 Ibid., pp. 126-8, 130; Choubachy, *Le Sabre et la Virgule*, p. 121.

A deputy in the Egyptian parliament—representing Alexandria, Shubashy’s native city—accused the author of “employing the discourse and argumentation of a colonialist occupier, seeking to replace the Arab identity with [the occupier’s] own identity and culture.”³⁹ Ahmad Fuad Pasha, advisor to the president of Cairo University, argued that the book “was added proof that, indeed, the Zionist-imperialist conspiracy is a glaring reality,”⁴⁰ aimed at dismantling Arab unity. Muhammad Ahmad Achour wrote in Egypt’s *Islamic Standard* that

Shubashy has taken his turn aiming another arrow at the heart of the Arabic language. Yet, the powers that seek to destroy our language have in fact another goal in mind: The ultimate aim of their conspiracy is none other than the Holy Qur’an itself, and to cause Muslims to eventually lose their identity and become submerged into the ocean of globalization.⁴¹

Even former Egyptian president Husni Mubarak felt compelled to take a potshot at Shubashy in a speech delivered on *Laylat al-Qadr*, November 9, 2004, the anniversary of the night that Sunni Muslims believe the Prophet Muhammad received his first Qur’anic revelation. Mubarak warned,

I must caution the Islamic religious scholars against the calls that some are sounding for the modernization of the Islamic religion, so as to ostensibly make it evolve, under the pretext of attuning it to the dominant world order of “modernization” and “reform.” This trend has led recently to certain initiatives calling for the modification of Arabic vocabulary and grammar; the modification of God’s chosen language no less; the holy language in which he revealed his message to the Prophet.⁴²

38 See, for example, Muhammad al-Qasem, “Li-Tahya al-Lugha al-‘Arabiya ... wa Yasqut Sibawayh... Limatha?” *Islam Online*, July 10, 2004.

39 Choubachy, *Le Sabre et la Virgule*, p. 181.

40 Ibid., p. 190.

41 Ibid., pp. 189-90.

42 Ibid., p. 190.

THE LATIN PRECEDENT

However understandable, this onslaught was largely unnecessary. For all his audacity, spirit, and probity, not to mention his provocative dissection of the linguistic and cultural conundrum bedeviling the Arabs, Shubashy failed to follow his argument to its natural conclusion, and his proposed solutions illustrated the hang-ups and inhibitions that had shackled and dissuaded previous generations of reformers.

Like Taha Hussein, Salama Moussa, and Tawfiq Awan, among others, Shubashy seemed at times to be advocating the valorization and adoption of dialectal speech forms—and the discarding of MSA. But then, no sooner had he made a strong case for dialects than he promptly backed down, as if sensing a sword of Damocles hanging over his head, and renounced what he would now deem a heresy and an affront to Arab history and Muslim tradition—in a sense, resubmitting to the orthodoxies of Arab nationalists and Islamists that he had initially seemed keen on deposing.

His initial virulent critiques of the Arabic language’s religious and nationalist canon notwithstanding, his best solution ended up recommending discarding dialects to the benefit of “reawakening” and “rejuvenating” the old language. There were fundamental differences between Latin and MSA, Shubashy argued:

Arabic is the language of the Qur’an and the receptacle of the aggregate of the Arabs’ scientific, literary, and artistic patrimony, past and present. No wise man would agree to relinquish that patrimony under any circumstances.⁴³

43 Shubashy, *Li-Tahya al-Lugha al-‘Arabiya*, pp. 133-4.

Big language unification movements have been met with failure, wars, genocides, and mass population movements.

In fact, contrary to Shubashy's assertions, this was a dilemma that Europe's erstwhile users (and votaries) of Latin had to confront between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries. For, just as MSA is deemed a symbiotic bedmate of Islam and the tool of its cultural and literary tradition, so was Latin the language of the church, the courts of Europe, and Western literary, scientific, and cultural traditions. Leaving Latin was not by any means less painful and alienating for Christian Europeans than the

Successful language unification movements normalize speech forms already spoken natively.

abandonment of MSA might turn out to be for Muslims and Arabs. Yet a number of audacious fifteenth-century European iconoclasts, undaunted by the linguistic, literary, and theological gravitas of Latin orthodoxy, did resolve to elevate their heretofore

lowly, vernacular languages to the level of legitimate and recognized national idioms.

One of the militant pro-French lobbies at the forefront of the calls for discarding Latin to the benefit of an emerging French language was a group of dialectal poets called La Brigade—originally troubadours who would soon adopt the sobriquet La Pléiade. The basic document elaborating their role as a literary and linguistic avant-garde was a manifesto titled *Déffence et illustration de la langue Françoise*, believed to have been penned in 1549 by Joachim Du Bellay (1522-60). The *Déffence* was essentially a denunciation of Latin orthodoxy and advocacy on behalf of the French vernacular. Like Dante's own fourteenth-century defense and promotion of his Tuscan dialect in *De vulgari eloquentia*—which became the blueprint of an emerging Italian language and a forerunner of Dante's Italian *La Divina Commedia*—Du Bellay's French *Déffence* extolled the virtues of vernacular French languages and urged sixteenth-century poets, writers, and administrators to make use of their native vernacular—as opposed to official Latin—in their creative, literary, and official functions, just as they had

been doing in their daily lives.

Latin, nevertheless, persisted and endured, especially as the language of theology and philosophy, in spite of the valiant intellectuals who fought on behalf of their spoken idioms. Even during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, students at the Sorbonne who were caught speaking French on university grounds—or in the surrounding Latin Quarter—were castigated and risked expulsion from the university. Indeed, the Sorbonne's famed Latin Quarter is believed to have earned its sobriquet precisely because it remained a sanctuary for the language long after the waning of Latin—and an ivory tower of sorts—where only Latin was tolerated as a spoken language. Even René Descartes (1596-1659), the father of Cartesian logic and French rationalism was driven to apologize for having dared use vernacular French—as opposed to his times' hallowed and learned Latin—when writing his famous treatise, *Discours de la Méthode*, close to a century after Du Bellay's *Déffence*.

Descartes' contemporaries, especially language purists in many official and intellectual circles (very much akin to those indicting Shubashy and his cohorts today), censured Descartes, arguing French to be too divisive and too vulgar to be worthy of scientific, philosophic, literary, and theological writing. Yet, an undaunted Descartes wrote in his introduction:

If I choose to write in French, which is the language of my country, rather than in Latin, which is the language of my teachers, it is because I hope that those who rely purely on their natural and sheer sense of reason will be the better judges of my opinions than those who still swear by ancient books. And those who meld reason with learning, the only ones I incline to have as judges of my own work, will not, I should hope, be partial to Latin to the point of refusing to hear my arguments out simply because I happen to express them in the vulgar [French] language.⁴⁴

44 René Descartes, *Discours de la méthode* (Paris: Edition G.F., 1966), p. 95.

Yet, the psychological and emotive dominance of Latin (and the pro-Latin lobby) of seventeenth-century Europe remained a powerful deterrent against change. So much so that Descartes' written work would continue vacillating between Latin and French. Still, he remained a dauntless pioneer in that he had dared put into writing the first seminal, philosophical treatise of his time (and arguably the most influential scientific essay of all times) in a lowly popular *lahja* (to use an Arabic modifier.) He did so not because he was loath to the prestige and philosophical language of his times but because the French vernacular was simply his natural language, the one with which he, his readers, and his illiterate countrymen felt most comfortable and intimate. It was the French *lahja* and its lexical ambiguities and grammatical peculiarities that best transmitted the realities and the challenges of Descartes' surroundings and worldviews. To write in the vernacular French—as opposed to the traditional Latin—was to function in a language that reflected Descartes' own, and his countrymen's, cultural universe, intellectual references, popular domains, and historical accretions.

CONCLUSION

This then, the recognition and normalization of dialects, could have been a fitting conclusion and a worthy solution to the dilemma that Shubashy set out to resolve. Unfortunately, he chose to pledge fealty to MSA and classical Arabic—ultimately calling for their normalization and simplification rather than their outright replacement.⁴⁵ In that sense, Shubashy showed himself to be in tune with the orthodoxies preached by Husri who, as early as 1955, had already been calling for the creation of a “middle Arabic language” and a crossbreed fusing MSA and vernacular speech forms—as a way of bridging the Arabs' linguistic incoherence and bringing unity to their fledgling nationhood:

MSA is the preserve of a small, select number of educated people, few of whom bother using it as a speech form. Conversely, what we refer to as “dialectal Arabic” is in truth a bevy of languages differing markedly from one country to the other, with vast differences often within the same country, if not within the same city and neighborhood ... Needless to say, this pathology contradicts the exigencies of a sound, wholesome national life! [And given] that true nations deserving of the appellation require a single common and unifying national language ... [the best solution I can foresee to our national linguistic quandary] would be to inoculate the dialectal languages with elements of MSA ... so as to forge a new “middle MSA” and diffuse it to the totality of Arabs ... This is our best hope, and for the time being, the best palliative until such a day when more lasting and comprehensive advances can be made towards instating the final, perfected, integral MSA.⁴⁶

There are few Arabs doing critical work on Standard Arabic who do not end up being cowed into silence.

This is at best a disappointing and desultory solution, not only due to its chimerical ambitions but also because, rather than simplifying an already cluttered and complicated linguistic situation, it suggested the engineering of an additional language for the “Arab nation” to adopt as a provisional national idiom. To expand on Shubashy's initial diagnosis, this is tantamount to remedying schizophrenia by inducing a multi-personality disorder—as if Arabs were in want of yet another artificial language to complement their already aphasiac MSA.

Granted, national unification movements and the interference in, or creation of, a national language are part of the process of nation building and often do bear fruit. However, success in the building of a national language is largely

45 Shubashy, *Li-Tahya al-Lughha al-'Arabiya*, pp. 142, 184-5.

46 For the full text of Husri's address, see Anis Freyha, *al-Lahajat wa Uslubu Dirasatiha* (Beirut: Dar al-Jil, 1989), pp. 5-8.

dependent upon the size of the community and the proposed physical space of the nation in question.⁴⁷ In other words, size does matter. Small language unification movements—as in the cases of, say, Norway, Israel, and France—can and often do succeed. But big language unifica-

It is society and communities of users that decide the fate of languages.

tion movements on the other hand—as in the cases of pan-Turkism, pan-Slavism, pan-Germanism, and yes, pan-Arabism—have thus far been met with not only failure but also devastating wars, genocides, and mass population move-

ments. Moreover, traditionally, the small language unification movements that did succeed in producing national languages benefitted from overwhelming, popular support among members of the proposed nation. More importantly, they sought to normalize not prestige, hermetic, (written) literary languages, but rather lower, degraded speech forms that were often already spoken natively by the national community in question (e.g., Creole in Haiti, Old Norse in Norway, and modern, as opposed to biblical Hebrew in Israel).⁴⁸

Shubashy's call of "down with Sibawayh!" meant purely and simply "down with the classical language" and its MSA progeny. Overthrow-

ing Sibawayh meant also deposing the greatest Arabic grammarian, the one credited with the codification, standardization, normalization, and spread of the classical Arabic language—and later its MSA descendent. Yet, calling for the dethroning of one who was arguably the founding father of modern Arabic grammar, and in the same breath demanding the preservation, inoculation, and invigoration of his creation, is contradictory and confusing. It is like "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results," to use Albert Einstein's famous definition of insanity. Or could it be that perhaps an initially bold Shubashy was rendered timid by a ruthless and intimidating MSA establishment? After all, there are few Arabs doing dispassionate, critical work on MSA today, who do not ultimately end up being cowed into silence, or worse yet, slandered, discredited, and accused of Zionist perfidy and "Arabophobia." Salama Musa,⁴⁹ Taha Hussein,⁵⁰ and Adonis⁵¹ are the most obvious and recent examples of such character assassinations.

Ultimately, however, it is society and communities of users—not advocacy groups, linguistic guilds, and preservation societies—that decide the fate of languages. As far as the status and fate of the Arabic language are concerned, the jury still seems to be out.



47 Ronald Waurdhaugh, *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), pp. 353-74.

48 John Myhill, *Language, Religion, and National Identity in Europe and the Middle East* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2006), pp. 9-12.

49 Ibrahim A. Ibrahim, "Salama Musa: An Essay on Cultural Alienation," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Oct. 1979.

50 "Taha Hussein (1889-1973)," Egypt State Information Service, Cairo, accessed June 10, 2011.

51 See Adonis, *al-Kitab, al-Khitab, al-Hijab* (Lebanon: Dar al-Adab, 2009), pp. 9, 14, 16-9.

Israel's Tenured Extremists

by Steven Plaut

Israel is under assault from within and not just from the usual suspects. Its legitimacy and, in many cases, its very existence are being attacked by a domestic academic fifth column. Hundreds of professors and lecturers, employed by Israel's state-financed universities, are building careers as full-time activists working against the very country in which they live. And the problem is growing. Fortunately, the Israeli public has become aware of the problem and is increasingly demanding that something be done about it. A not inconsiderable part of the credit for this belongs to the *Middle East Quarterly*, probably the first serious journal to discuss the problem a decade ago, sparking a debate that continues to challenge the Israeli academy's offensive against the Jewish state.

"SOCRATES" BLOWS THE WHISTLE

In fall 2001, the *Middle East Quarterly* ran a major exposé of anti-Israel academics based inside Israeli universities. Titled "Israel's Academic Extremists,"¹ it shattered the conspiracy of silence that had long been observed in the Israeli media and on Israeli campuses about scholars working against their own country and in support of its enemies. And it opened a floodgate.

The article was attributed to "Solomon Socrates," described as "the pen name for a watchdog team of researchers keeping an eye on Israel's universities." The very fact that the authors felt they needed the cloak of anonymity to protect themselves from retaliation from their colleagues within higher education may have been the most dramatic illustration of the sorry state of academic freedom and pluralism in Israel's universities.

Noting that hiring and promotion procedures at Israeli universities were commonly politicized, with leftist faculty who had poor academic publi-

cation records getting hired and promoted as acts of political solidarity, the article offered thumbnail characterizations of about two dozen Israeli academic extremists. Today that list seems tame and thin, at least when compared with the dimensions of the problem as it is now understood. A few of the names were of obscure academicians of little interest, evidently spotlighted as a result of some outlandish statements and positions. Two of those named, Benny Morris and Ilan Gurtzev, would no longer make the list and are generally considered today to be important defenders of Zionism and critics of "post-Zionist" historical revisionism of which they were once key articulators. Morris appears to have jettisoned most of his earlier Israel-bashing and New History revisionism regarding the period of Israel's war of independence, though not everyone is persuaded the rehabilitation is sincere.² As a result he has become the favorite whipping boy for much of the anti-Zionist Left, incensed that he no longer spends his days denouncing Israel as the ulti-

1 Solomon Socrates, "Israel's Academic Extremists," *Middle East Quarterly*, Fall 2001, pp. 5-14.

2 See, for example, Efraim Karsh, "Benny Morris and the Reign of Error, Revisited," *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2005, pp. 31-42; idem, "Israel's Human Chameleon Strikes Again," *The American Thinker*, July 10, 2011.

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mate evil in the world. In February 2010, Morris was even denied the right to speak at a Cambridge University student event on the grounds that he was too pro-Israel and thus supposedly anti-Arab.³ In June 2011, he was accosted by anti-Israel activists while on his way to lecture at the London School of Economics.⁴ Gur-Ze'ev, meanwhile, has been speaking out forcefully against the anti-Semitism and totalitarian inclinations of the radical Left, to the chagrin of those who oppose him.⁵

Many of the leaders of the “Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions” movement against Israel are Israeli academics.

From Socrates' 2001 list, Baruch Kimmerling, Dan Bar-On, and Israel Shahak are no longer alive while Ilan Pappé and Gabriel Piterberg have emigrated and built careers elsewhere as full-time Israel bashers. The remaining names have, however, been joined by scores, perhaps hundreds, of home-grown academic

bashers of Israel over the past decade.

THE INTERNAL WAR AGAINST ISRAEL

Most of Israel's anti-Israel academics hold tenured faculty positions at the country's tax-funded public universities. They include people who justify and celebrate Arab terrorism and who help initiate campaigns of boycott and economic divestment directed against their own country in time of war. Today, many of the leaders of the so-called boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel are Israeli academics. The phenomenon is near pandemic at the four main Israeli liberal arts universities: Tel Aviv University (TAU), the Hebrew University, the University of Haifa, and Ben-Gurion University. At

the two scientific-engineering institutions, the Technion and the Weizmann Institute, there are small numbers of faculty involved in such political activity but they are a minor presence, and this is also true of the religious university, Bar-Ilan. Israeli colleges are less generously funded by the government than universities and so are more dependent on competing for student tuition. This may explain why extremist faculty are more unusual there than in universities, though Sapir College in the Negev may be an exception.

On the eve of the 2003 Iraq war, dozens of Israeli academics warned the world that Israel was planning massive war crimes and genocidal massacres against the Palestinians the moment the first coalition troops were to land in Iraq.⁶ When the actual fighting took place and no such crimes were perpetrated by Israel, not a single signer of the petition issued an apology for the smears against the Jewish state.

In other petitions, Israeli academics routinely denounce Israel for carrying out war crimes and human rights violations. In some, they call for suppressing Israeli sovereignty by imposing certain political solutions on the country that are opposed by the vast majority of Israelis.⁷ Hundreds of Israeli university professors have been involved in organizing mutiny and insurrection among Israeli soldiers, and some have been arrested for violently attacking police and soldiers or for similar forms of law-breaking. For example, Tel Aviv University's Anat Matar,⁸ the Hebrew University's Amiel Vardi, math lecturer Kobi Snitz⁹ (who has taught at several institutions), and others have been arrested for law-breaking and for participating in violent, illegal demonstrations. At least one faculty member at Ben-Gurion University has openly called for murder of those who reject his far-leftist opinions.¹⁰

6 Avraham Oz, "Urgent warning: The Israeli government may be contemplating crimes against humanity," LabourNet.UK, Sept. 24, 2002.

7 "Anti-Israel Petitions Signed by Israeli Academics," IsraCampus (Haifa), accessed May 27, 2011.

8 *Israel Academia Monitor* (Even Yehuda), Sept. 9, 2005.

9 "PSP Supports Kobi Snitz, an Israeli Activist Beginning Short Prison Term for Anti-Occupation Activity," International Campaign of Solidarity with the Palestinian Prisoners, Sept. 21, 2009.

3 *The Jerusalem Post*, Feb. 7, 2010.

4 *Makor Rishon* (Tel Aviv), June 24, 2011.

5 Ilan Gur-Ze'ev, *The Possibility/Impossibility of a New Critical Language in Education* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2010).

The Israeli university authorities wink at such behavior¹¹ and sometimes even collaborate with¹² and promote it.

Scores of Israeli academics openly advocate the so-called Palestinian right of return,¹³ which would effectively end Israel's existence, while others openly call for Israel to be annihilated altogether. Other Israeli academics signed the so-called Olga document demanding that Israel grant the Palestinians an unrestricted "right of return."¹⁴ Such people often claim to favor a "one-state solution,"¹⁵ in which Israel's existence as a sovereign nation would end, to be enfolded within a larger state with an Arab and Muslim government and majority. A few Israeli academics even campaign on behalf of and promote Holocaust deniers. Articles by Ben-Gurion University's Neve Gordon have been published on the web site of Holocaust denier Ernst Zundel¹⁶ and in Iran's state newspaper.¹⁷ Neve has also endorsed Norman Finkelstein,¹⁸ often regarded as a Holocaust denier or at least a Holocaust trivializer while other Israeli academics have praised Holocaust revisionist David Irving.¹⁹

During the Cast Lead military operation against Hamas in Gaza (winter 2008-09), the visibility of this group grew. While polls showed near-unanimous support for the operations among Israeli Jews,²⁰ a high proportion of Israeli academics opposed the operation.²¹

10 *YNet News* (Tel Aviv), June 6, 2011.

11 Lee Kaplan, "Rivka Carmi, President of Ben Gurion University, hails anti-Israel activity on her campus," *IsraCampus*, accessed May 27, 2011.

12 "President of Ben-Gurion University Collaborating with Communist Ideologue Jacob Katriel," *The Jewish Press Blog*, Sept. 29, 2007.

13 "Jewish Supporters of Refugee Rights Including the Palestinian Right of Return," The Middle East Crisis Committee, Woodbridge, Conn., Nov. 8, 2003.

14 "Anti-Israel Petitions Signed by Israeli Academics," *IsraCampus*, July 12, 2004.

15 See, for example, "Join the One-State Initiative," Palestine Justice Network, Apr. 23, 2011.

16 See, for example, "Where Truth Is Destiny," Zundel'site, Oct. 27, 2000.

17 *The Tehran Times*, Apr. 6, 2009.

18 Neve Gordon, "Cloud after Auschwitz," *The Nation*, Nov. 13, 2000.

19 "Shraga Elam and David Irving," Paul Bogdanor website, Mar. 13, 2003.

20 *The Jerusalem Post*, Dec. 31, 2008.

PUBLIC LECTURE
RENOWNED ISRAELI HISTORIAN
PROFESSOR ILAN PAPPÉ
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Although no longer teaching in Israel, Ilan Pappé, formerly of the University of Haifa, perhaps best exemplifies the internal academic onslaught against the Jewish state. Pappé continues to make a career out of maligning Israel as an "ethnic cleanser" despite all evidence to the contrary.

The Hebrew University professor of linguistic education, Nurit Elhanan-Peled, has devoted much of her career to promoting the political agenda of the very same Palestinian terrorists who murdered her own daughter in a suicide bombing of a civilian Israeli bus.²² Many anti-Israel academics cheered on Hamas as it launched rockets at the civilians in Israel's south.²³ Others publicly endorsed Hezbollah's "legitimate resistance" when northern Israel was showered by Katyusha rock-

21 Seth J. Frantzman, "The Israeli Academy and the Gaza War," *IsraCampus*, Mar. 2009.

22 Gary Katz, "The Case of Nurit Peled-Elhanan," *IsraCampus*, Jan. 6, 2008.

23 Shlomo Sharan, "Our Inner Scourge: The Catastrophe of Israel Academics," The Ariel Center for Policy Research (ACPR, Shaarei Tikva), Sept. 2007; see, also, Arnon Soffer, "Bemalkodet Ha-Radicalizm Ha-Akademi," University of Haifa, 2007.

ets during the summer war of 2006.²⁴ Some are currently among the leaders of marches that call upon the world to prevent Jews from living in neighborhoods of East Jerusalem, where, they believe, Jews just do not belong.

THE DERSHOWITZ COUNTERATTACK

Probably the most dramatic exhibition of the problem came at the national assembly of the governors of Tel Aviv University in the spring of 2010. The keynote speaker invited to the affair was Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz. While left of center, Dershowitz is passionately pro-Israel and, at the same time, vehemently opposed to infringements upon academic freedom.

Harvard's Alan Dershowitz gave a speech denouncing the homegrown, anti-Israel cadre of university lecturers.

Upon receiving an honorary doctoral degree at Tel Aviv University, Dershowitz gave a dramatic speech denouncing the homegrown, anti-Israel cadre of lecturers dominating Israeli universities.²⁵ He defended the rights of these academics to exercise freedom of speech—or, in his words, the “right to be wrong.”

But he also defended the rights of others to denounce and criticize them.

In no time, Dershowitz confronted the all-too-common refrain sounded by these scholars that they are only engaging in legitimate criticism of Israel. To the contrary, Dershowitz contended, these people were actually often engaged in delegitimizing Israel itself, calling for world boycotts against the Jewish state, and at times calling for its annihilation. They go so far, he stated, as to organize boycott campaigns by recruiting and leading teams of anti-Israel radicals.

Dershowitz then named several Tel Aviv University faculty, including some who were in Boston that same week attempting to organize a boycott against the Technion, Israel's main engineering university,²⁶ for supposedly being a cog in the Israeli “war machine.”

Without naming names, Dershowitz heaped scorn on TAU professor Shlomo Sand for his recent book, *The Invention of the Jewish People*,²⁷ which claims that there is actually no such thing as a Jewish people. Dershowitz went on to denounce those who insist that freedom of speech belongs only to people who agree with them and assailed those at Israeli universities who harass students who dare to disagree with forced-fed ideology, comparing this behavior to teachers who sexually harass students. He insisted that students, too, are entitled to academic freedom, which includes the right to disagree with their professors.

While such a peroration would ignite controversy anywhere, it was downright incendiary at Tel Aviv University, arguably home to the greatest concentration of tenured leftists teaching in Israel.²⁸ While the audience repeatedly interrupted him with loud applause, faculty members reportedly squirmed in their seats.²⁹

It did not take long for these academics to open fire in retaliation; within days, a group of TAU professors denounced Dershowitz and challenged his right to criticize them. Signatures for a petition were collected and published on a left-wing website. The petition essentially denied Dershowitz's right to freedom of speech, despite the pretence of some signatories to the contrary, by deriding his charges against specific academics as “bordering on incitement that can pose a clear and present danger to these members of staff.”³⁰

24 Ran HaCohen, “A Case for Hizbullah?” Antiwar.com, Palo Alto, Calif., Aug. 13, 2003.

25 “Full Text of Alan Dershowitz's Tel Aviv Speech,” *Ha'aretz* (Tel Aviv), May, 12, 2010.

26 Ibid.

27 New York and London: Verso, 2010.

28 Sharan, “Our Inner Scourge: The Catastrophe of Israel Academics.”

29 For a webcast of the lecture, see “Opening Night, May 7,” Tel Aviv University, May 7, 2010.

30 “Mikhtav Havrei Segel Beuniversitat Tel Aviv Beinyan Neum Habela shel Alan D Dershowitz,” *Kibbush Magazine*, May 11, 2010.

A quick look at the names on the petition illustrates the nature of the problem. Among the signatories claiming that Dershowitz's words criticizing the anti-Israel camp reminded them of "the dark regimes" in human history were:

Chaim Gans of TAU law school, who organized a petition demanding that Col. Pnina Baruch-Sharvit, head of the Israel Defense Forces international law division, be prevented from teaching a course in the school after her retirement from military service because her department (allegedly) legitimized strikes in which civilians were hurt or killed during Operation Cast Lead.³¹

Gadi Algazi, a historian at TAU who, among other activities, led a march of Israeli Arabs supporting Hezbollah terror.³²

Uri Hadar, a psychology professor, who recently organized a conference at TAU to support Hamas and Hezbollah.³³

Daniel Bar-Tal, an educational psychologist, who produces anti-Jewish propaganda for the U.N. and believes Zionism is an obstacle to peace.³⁴

ATTACK AGAINST FREEDOM OF SPEECH

As starkly demonstrated by the anti-Dershowitz petition, Israel's tenured radicals are not only vehemently anti-Israel but also staunchly anti-democratic. For them, academic freedom and freedom of speech means absolute protection of the right to "criticize" Israel but not to defend it.

McCarthyism has become the favorite rhe-

torical bludgeon wielded by Israeli academics to deny their critics the freedom of speech. This McCarthyism, they charge, endangers freedom of speech and democracy. So tenured academics should have the sacrosanct right to denounce and demonize all of Israel and also to smear non-leftist Israelis, including private citizens such as army officers, in the most lurid and vulgar ways. But those who respond by criticizing these critics are endangering democracy. In particular, the radical academics have denounced the watchdog web sites that monitor and cite what they say, as well as the Zionist student organization Im Tirtzu (If you will it) and members of the Israeli Knesset (parliament) who have criticized

the behavior of the radicals. In the strange world of Israeli academic radicals, the worst offense against academic freedom is the verbatim citing of what they actually say or write.

Some professors, most notoriously David Newman, dean of social sciences and humanities at Ben-Gurion University,³⁵ and Daniel Bar-Tal of the School of Education at Tel Aviv University,³⁶ have published calls for the suppression and silencing of critics. The president of TAU censored Mark Tanenbaum, a governor of the university's board, when the latter proposed an investigation into professors who use the school's name and funds when participating in forums of a political nature³⁷—behavior, incidentally, that is barred by the university's own bylaws. The Israeli media have also reported a growing number of demands from academics that the freedom of expression of their critics—and for that matter, of scholars deviating from politi-

**University of Haifa
faculty organized
a petition to
demand that army
officers be barred
from speaking
in schools.**

31 *Ha'aretz*, May 21, 2011.

32 *Ynet News*, Mar. 31, 2010.

33 Ben-Dror Yemini, "Incitement at Tel Aviv University or 'Voices from Gaza'?" *Ma'ariv* (Tel Aviv), Apr. 15, 2010.

34 Alon Ben Shaul, "It's the Zionists, Stupid," *IsraCampus*, accessed May 27, 2011.

35 See, for example, David Newman, "Bashing the Academic Left," *The Jerusalem Post*, Apr. 14, 2011; "Ben-Gurion University—David Newman," *IsraCampus*, Apr. 24, 2009.

36 Gerald Steinberg, "Right of Reply: Israel's Academic Left on the Attack," *The Jerusalem Post*, May 17, 2010.

37 *The Jerusalem Post*, May 12, 2010.

cally correct dogmas—be suppressed.³⁸

Thus, for example, when Yeruham Leavitt was teaching a class in medical ethics at Ben-Gurion University, he questioned the assertion that children raised by homosexual couples experience no adverse effects.

For this he was not only fired for “unacceptable thinking,” but the president of Ben-Gurion University, Rivka Carmi, went out of her way to defend the firing.³⁹ On the other hand, when a professor of sociology at the Hebrew University, Eyal Ben-Ari, was accused by several

female students of having raped and sexually molested them, the university at first circled the wagons around him and only years later suspended him for two years without pay.⁴⁰

Tel Aviv University faculty members have participated in protests demanding that the campus Center for Iranian Studies be shut down because they feared its work could assist the United States and Israel in confronting Tehran.⁴¹ The radicals also opposed allowing an Israeli ex-general to speak there.⁴² In 2008, the student union at Tel Aviv University wanted to hold an exhibit protesting human rights abuses in China, but university officials ordered it shut down lest it offend Chinese diplomats.⁴³ Meanwhile, TAU has repeatedly hosted events organized by the Israeli Communist Party, held in campus facilities.

Academics from all across the country are now calling for a boycott of Ariel University Center in Samaria because it is located across the “Green Line.”⁴⁴ There have been no petitions though

to eliminate politicized programs of ideological indoctrination run by the radical Left inside many university departments. There have been petitions by left-wing faculty members to eliminate university programs for Israeli army officers, intelligence service officers, and police, as well as petitions to bar army officers from holding academic positions.⁴⁵ Similarly, a group of University of Haifa faculty from its school of education organized a petition to demand that army officers be barred from speaking in schools.

All too often, university administrations have colluded with this mindset. When Neve Gordon of Ben-Gurion University filed a harassment “strategic lawsuit against public participation” (SLAPP) against this author for criticizing his public, political activities and writings, Gordon was backed by the highest officials at the university. These evidently see nothing amiss with such attempts at suppressing freedom of speech for other academics who happen to dislike Gordon’s extremist opinions.⁴⁶

HIRING FOR UNIFORMITY IN THOUGHT

The Israeli campus has become thoroughly politicized with faculty hiring and promotion decisions subordinated to political bias. As noted in the 2001 *MEQ* article, scholars with mediocre academic records are often hired and promoted as acts of solidarity with the Left. There have also been allegations of malicious blocking and sabotaging of the academic careers of those with political views on the Right. Israeli academics recruited through this politicized process have misused their podiums to impose courses consisting of anti-Israel libel and venom on students.⁴⁷

38 See Benjamin Pogrund, “The Guardians of Israeli Academia,” *Ha’aretz*, Oct. 23, 2009; Nitzza Berkovitch, “McCarthyism in Tel Aviv,” *YNet News*, Aug. 17, 2010.

39 *YNet News*, July 4, 2010.

40 *Ha’aretz*, Aug. 1, Aug. 5, 2008, Feb. 24, 2011.

41 *Israel Academia Monitor*, Apr. 23, 2006.

42 *YNet News*, Nov. 6, 2006; *Israel Academia Monitor*, Apr. 23, 2006.

43 *Epoch Times* (New York), Mar. 8, 2008.

44 *The Jerusalem Post*, Sept. 1, 2011.

45 Seth Frantzman, “Ivory Towers of Critique: The Philosophy and Political Science Departments at Tel Aviv University,” *IsraCampus*, Oct. 15, 2009.

46 Rivka Carmi, “Universities Are in the Footnotes,” *The Jerusalem Post*, May 28, 2011; *Ha’aretz*, Sept. 15, 2010. A SLAPP is a lawsuit that is intended to censor, intimidate, and silence critics by forcing them to bear costs involved in a legal defense.

47 Jacob Benschimon, “In-Classroom Indoctrination at the University of Michigan,” *FrontPage Magazine*, Apr. 29, 2008; *Israel Academia Monitor*, accessed June 7, 2011.

The manner in which this ideological hegemony is maintained over campuses is well known within the Israeli academic institutions even if the corruption has rarely been aired publicly. Consider a typical hiring or promotion procedure for an academic whose publication record consists mainly, or exclusively, of propaganda articles that bash Israel. Evaluation procedures are typically corrupted and politicized: An evaluation committee for the candidate is appointed, consisting entirely of like-minded faculty members who then typically request assessments from eight to ten “referees” from Israel and around the world. But all, or nearly all, of the referee letter-writers will themselves have identical anti-Israel sympathies and can generally be counted upon to write glowing

letters of support out of a sense of political solidarity. Ben-Gurion University seems to be the most accomplished institution in such practices.

Faculty chat lists in which Israeli professors post comments, especially in the social sciences, are invariably dominated by the self-defined “progressives.” The author was personally summoned by a rector of the University of Haifa, Yossi Ben Artzi, and threatened with disciplinary actions for using sarcasm in response to “bash-Israel” postings placed on the local professors’ chat list. The “Israel Social Science” chat list is routinely censored to limit postings critical of the Left while ideological postings by anti-Israel faculty members suffer from no such handicap and dominate the list.⁴⁸ For example, an ideological article by the left-leaning Hebrew University professor Yitzhak Galnoor attacking the exercise of



Not all Israeli students accept the anti-Zionist narratives of their professors. Here members of the student organization Im Tirztu rally in support of the Jewish state. The group is under assault by academics for the crime of cataloguing information about academic political bias, gleaned from course descriptions and syllabi.

academic freedom by critics of leftists in Israeli universities⁴⁹ was posted on the list while list manager David Levi-Faur refused to permit any response to it to appear.

Would-be non-leftist faculty can clearly see the political writing on the wall. They must choose either to toe the political line out of career self-interest or to muzzle themselves and maintain a low profile, at least until they reach senior academic ranks and often after that as well.⁵⁰ Thus political uniformity and the campus hegemony are perpetuated.

ABUSES IN THE CLASSROOM

Israeli administrators have long turned a blind eye to anti-Israel courses which are often manda-

48 Steven Plaut, “The Leftwing McCarthyism of Prof. Itzhak Galnoor,” *IsraCampus*, Oct. 13, 2009. Examples of post-Zionist domination of the chat list: “Chaim Gans: Professorim Negeed Chofesh Ha-Bitot,” Aug. 2, 2010; “Dubi Kanengisser: Post-Tzionut ba-Akademia Ha-Yisraelit,” Aug. 17, 2010.

49 Itzhak Galnoor, “Academic Freedom under Political Duress: Israel,” *Social Research*, Summer 2009, pp. 541-60.

50 Carmi, “Universities Are in the Footnotes”; *Ha’aretz*, Sept. 15, 2010.

tory for students.⁵¹ They have ignored growing reports that students are being harassed and penalized by faculty members when they dare to disagree with faculty political opining and indoctrination.⁵² When the Im Tirtzu movement issued reports documenting classroom intimidation and indoctrination of students,⁵³ the group was denounced by scores of faculty members and by the rectors at Ben-Gurion University, University of Haifa, and Tel Aviv University as McCarthyists and fascists.⁵⁴

Administrators have also refused to speak out against anti-Israel rallies, misrepresented as academic conferences, which take place almost

weekly on Israeli campuses. When Islamist cleric Sheikh Ra'ed Salah spoke at the University of Haifa in June 2009, the university heads ordered that Jewish students be physically barred from entering the auditorium in which he spoke.⁵⁵ The cleric then called upon Arab students attending the lecture to become

“martyrs.” The following year the University of Haifa barred the sheikh from speaking, but Tel Aviv University responded by hosting him.⁵⁶

Meanwhile the level of in-classroom anti-Israel indoctrination conducted in Israeli universities has been steadily growing. Crusading against Israel has become the chief scholarly credential of a growing number of tenured Israeli academics.⁵⁷ Rigid, anti-Israel uniformity and monolithic

far-left consensus are to be found in many academic departments in Israeli universities, especially in the humanities, the softer social sciences, law, and education. There are some departments in which no Zionist or non-leftist is, in effect, permitted to teach.

In many university departments in Israel, academic pluralism means that anti-Israel opinion is preached and taught by a diverse set of faculty members—leftist Jews, Arabs, men, and women, all holding the same opinions—but not pluralism of ideas and ideological outlooks. All Israeli universities strive to expand the presence of Arab and female faculty members in the name of diversity, using affirmative action preferences. Yet none of them see anything wrong with the existence of entire departments in which there is not a single religiously observant faculty member or someone with writings from the Right side of the political spectrum.⁵⁸

The anti-Israel political activities of faculty often border on open support for treason. Dozens of tenured extremists⁵⁹ were active in celebrating Tali Fahima, an Israeli woman arrested for collaborating with terrorists and helping to plan terror attacks.⁶⁰ Many openly identified with convicted nuclear spy and traitor Mordechai Vanunu,⁶¹ or with the former Arab Knesset member Azmi Bishara, wanted for espionage and now in hiding outside Israel.⁶²

In a few cases, Israeli faculty members who have defamed army officers and other public figures as war criminals have caused their targets to cancel study and travel plans outside Israel for fear of being prosecuted on the weight of these smears.⁶³ Some of the most openly anti-Semitic propaganda on the planet, including much produced by neo-Nazis as well as open calls for the annihilation of Israel, is currently being dis-

The most dramatic change on campuses has been the emergence of a patriotic, Zionist student movement.

51 Benshimon, “In-Classroom Indoctrination at the University of Michigan”; *Israel Academia Monitor*, accessed June 7, 2011.

52 *Ha'aretz*, Nov. 9, 2009.

53 Dan Illouz, “True Academic Freedom in Israel,” *Arutz Sheva* (Beit El and Petah Tikva), July 23, 2010.

54 *Ha'aretz*, Aug. 19, 2010. For negative responses, see *The New Centrist*, Feb. 7, 2010; “Israel’s Drift toward Fascism—More on Im Tirtzu,” Jews for Justice for Palestinians (London), Sept. 21, 2010; “When Zionism Is Portrayed at Fascism,” Dan Illouz website, Apr. 6, 2010.

55 *Canada Free Press*, June 19, 2009.

56 *YNet News*, June 24, 2009; *ibid.*, May 24, 2011.

57 Benshimon, “In-Classroom Indoctrination at the University of Michigan.”

58 *Ha'aretz*, Aug. 19, 2010.

59 Free Tali Fahima petition, Oct. 4, 2004.

60 *YNet News*, June 8, 2010.

61 Mordechai Vanunu petition, accessed June 8, 2011.

62 “Neither Dictates nor War,” petition supporting Bishara signed by Israeli academics with the list of signers; *Arab News* (Jeddah), May 3, 2007.

63 *The Guardian* (London), Oct. 27, 2009; *Arutz Sheva*, June 27, 2011; *YNet News*, Sept. 11, 2005, Feb. 27, 2006.

seminated via the ALEF List, an anti-Israel chat list operating under the auspices of the University of Haifa. Many of the worst anti-Semitic pronouncements disseminated by that list are posted on the “ALEF Watch” web site, run by IsraCampus.⁶⁴ These include endorsements of terrorism, calls for Israel to be exterminated, and Holocaust denial.

This anti-Israel bias and the accompanying suppression of dissident, pro-Israel opinion has been the focus of several recent studies receiving wide attention in the media. These include a survey of syllabi in political science courses, collected by the Im Tirtzu student organization,⁶⁵ and a similar report on sociology departments prepared by the Institute for Zionist Strategies.⁶⁶ Both studies claim to detect extreme bias and one-sided indoctrination in departmental courses, including mandatory courses.

CHANGE IN THE AIR?

The biggest change that has occurred since the 2001 Socrates article is that the Israeli public now is aware of tenured extremism. Public figures, members of the parliament, journalists, students, alumni, donors, and other academics are speaking up courageously, criticizing anti-Israel academics, and challenging the hegemony of the far Left over Israel’s four main liberal arts universities. There have been proposals in Israel’s parliament to require disclosure of sources of funding for radical, anti-Israel nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).⁶⁷ Israeli radical academics are active in all such groups. There have also been proposals for a law that would deny citizenship to those refusing to declare loyalty to Israel or who engage in extremist, anti-Israel activities.⁶⁸ A number of Knesset members and other political

leaders in Israel have repeatedly spoken out against the political activities of radical academics, including in NGOs, among them Danny Danon, Gideon Sa’ar (the Israeli minister of education), Alex Miller, and Michael Ben-Ari.⁶⁹ Sa’ar held special Knesset committee hearings on the seditious activities of faculty and political biases in Israeli universities.⁷⁰

The Knesset has considered bills directed against Israeli academics who issue calls for anti-Israel boycotts⁷¹ and probing human rights NGOs involved in anti-Israel propaganda activities.⁷² Other public figures, such as the mayor of the town of Omer in which many faculty members of Ben-Gurion University reside, have called for sanctions against universities that refuse to act against tenured radicals.⁷³

One sign of how far things have been transformed is the widespread willingness today to criticize Israel’s tenured foes by name in all of the Israeli mainstream media, with the daily *Ma’ariv* the most aggressive. The most consistent and effective critics of the anti-Israel radicals have been Ben-Dror Yemini⁷⁴ and Kalman Liebskind,⁷⁵ both at *Ma’ariv*. Watchdog web sites have arisen that monitor and document the anti-Israel activities of Israeli faculty members. The main such group is IsraCampus, operating as a sort of Israeli cousin to the Middle East Forum’s Campus Watch. Other groups and websites also follow the anti-Israel political activities of academics, including NGO

The Israeli public is losing patience with anti-Israel academics and demanding accountability from the universities.

64 ALEF Watch, IsraCampus, accessed June 8, 2011.

65 *Ha’aretz*, Aug. 17, 2010.

66 “Post-Zionism in the Academy,” Institute for Zionist Strategies, Jerusalem, accessed June 1, 2011.

67 Alana Goodman, “Is Israel’s Controversial NGO Law Simply a Foreign Agent Registration Act?” *Commentary*, Jan. 6, 2011.

68 Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Oct. 12, 2010; *YNet News*, Feb. 14, 2011.

69 *YNet News*, Jan. 5, 2011.

70 *Ibid.*, Nov. 2, 2010.

71 *The Guardian*, Jan. 5, 2011; Joseph Dana, “Will It Soon Be Illegal for Israelis to Support BDS?” +972 website, Feb. 15, 2011.

72 Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Jan. 12, 2011.

73 NRG website (*Ma’ariv*), June 2, 2011.

74 Ben-Dror Yemini, “Academic Brainwashing,” *Ma’ariv*, IsraCampus trans., Aug. 20, 2010.

75 *Arutz Sheva*, Jan. 11, 2011.

Monitor, headed by Gerald M. Steinberg of Bar-Ilan University.

But perhaps the most dramatic change on Israeli campuses has been the emergence over the past few years of a patriotic, Zionist student movement. Until three or four years ago, it was unusual to see Israeli university students take to the barricades except over the price of tuition or cafeteria food. The Arab student unions would regularly hold small anti-Israel protests and political activities, but Jewish students were rarely involved in campus political expression. Thanks to the Im Tirtzu movement, all that has changed. Largely the initiative of two eloquent and prolific Hebrew University students, Ronen Shoval and Erez Tadmor, Im Tirtzu is the dominant student ideological movement today on most Israeli campuses.⁷⁶

The term Im Tirtzu, means, "If you will it," and it is part of a longer mantra originally coined by Theodor Herzl as part of his proposal for creation of a Jewish state. The Im Tirtzu student movement has emerged as the most effective and vocal force drawing public attention to the abuses stemming from campus politicization.⁷⁷ Im Tirtzu leaders have testified in the Knesset and write frequently in the media; the movement regularly organizes counter-protests with Israeli flags and patriotic slogans in response to every anti-Israel demonstration organized by Arab and Jewish leftist students. Its members wear T-shirts to class with images of Herzl and Jabotinsky. It has called for pressure on Israeli universities, especially Ben-Gurion University,⁷⁸ to force campus officials to act against classroom politicization, and it has threatened to file Supreme Court petitions to achieve this.

Left-wing academics increasingly complain about Im Tirtzu students cataloguing information about political bias, gleaned from course descriptions and syllabi. The group's leaders have highlighted the fact that students from the center and right of the Israeli spectrum experience harassment from left-wing faculty.⁷⁹ In one infa-

mous incident, a student at Ben-Gurion University, Rachel Avraham, was threatened with penalties and a lowered grade by the anti-Zionist geography professor Oren Yiftachel if she refused to toe his ideological line.⁸⁰ Other harassment of student Zionists is even worse. In another incident, leftist students at Ben-Gurion University were photographed giving Heil Hitler Nazi salutes to pro-Zionist students at a campus rally following the Turkish flotilla raid⁸¹ while Hebrew University students used the Nazi salute during student council electioneering.⁸²

The Israeli public is losing patience with radical anti-Israel academics and demanding accountability from the universities regarding the use and misuse of taxpayer funds. Indeed, the awakening of public awareness in Israel (and outside it) over the past decade has been breathtaking. Internet web searches about the subject yield thousands of articles on numerous websites, both inside and outside of Israel, leading many leftist professors increasingly to complain about being "spied upon."⁸³ Other radicals may be exercising greater caution and circumspection as a result. While difficult to prove numerically, far-leftist academics now seem increasingly to perceive and complain about a drop in the willingness on the part of their fellow travelers in the anti-Israel camp to go public these days with anti-Israel statements and actions, to engage in open incitement against Israel, or to sign their names to openly anti-Israel and anti-Semitic petitions.

Still, the battle rages on. Depoliticizing the Israeli campus is yet a far-off dream. But as anger grows against Israel's tenured extremists, change is in the air.



76 Ibid., June 17, 2009.

77 *The Jerusalem Post*, Aug. 18, 2010.

78 *Ha'aretz*, Aug. 18, 2010.

79 Martin Sherman, "Channel 10 'Hamakor' on Im Tirtzu's efforts in combating post/anti-Zionist perspectives in Israeli academe," *Israel Academia Monitor*, Feb. 9, 2011.

80 Illouz, "True Academic Freedom in Israel"; Rachel Avraham, "Studying under Dr. Oren Yiftachel," *Israel Academia Monitor*, accessed June 8, 2011.

81 Haim Misgav, "Freedom to Give Nazi Salute," *YNet News*, Aug. 19, 2010.

82 *Arutz Sheva*, June 9, 2009.

83 Lincoln Z. Shlensky, "Neve Gordon: Assault on Academic Freedom," *Jewish Peace News*, Sept. 1, 2010; Neve Gordon, "Struggling over the Right to Struggle—An Assault on Israeli Academic Freedom and Liberal Values," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Aug. 26, 2010, and *Occupation Magazine*, Aug. 30, 2010.

The Muhammad al-Dura Hoax and Other Myths Revived

by Nidra Poller

On September 30, 2000, a day after Yasser Arafat launched his war of terror, euphemized as the al-Aqsa *intifada*, state-owned France 2 Television broadcast a news report, filmed by a Palestinian cameraman, of the fatal shooting of a 12-year-old Palestinian identified as Muhammad al-Dura. The dramatic voice-over commentary by the station's long-time Jerusalem correspondent, Charles Enderlin, described how the boy and his father Jamal were pinned down by Israeli gunfire at Netzarim Junction in the Gaza Strip. The father pleaded frantically with the soldiers to stop shooting, to no avail. "A last burst of gunfire," intoned Enderlin, "the boy is dead, his father critically wounded."

The bloodless images of Jamal and Muhammad al-Dura were instantly seared into the public mind. Distributed free of charge to international media, repeated endlessly like a raucous war cry, the Dura video provoked anti-Jewish violence in Israel and, on a scale not seen since the Holocaust, throughout Europe.¹ The recently-created al-Jazeera television—founded in 1996—was significantly boosted by exploiting the Dura death scene.

Recognized almost immediately as a staged scene by astute observers, denounced by others as an unfounded accusation against Israeli soldiers, the Dura video has been analyzed, investigated, dissected, exposed, taken to court, attacked, defended, exploited, and debated for almost ten years.² As it turned out, the Palestinian cameraman Talal Abu Rahma, who has won countless prizes for the video, captured less than one minute of the dramatic scene that lasted, according to his sworn testimony, for forty-five minutes. Forty-five minutes of uninterrupted gunfire "from the Israeli position" left the man and boy miraculously intact as far as one can gather from looking at the video. Contrary to what the world has been led to believe, there is no raw footage of the scene. And, contrary to what might be expected, this and other equally embarrassing revelations have left the Dura myth, to all intents and purposes, intact.

REINVENTING A LIE

In his latest attempt to silence critics of the controversial broadcast, Enderlin recently pub-

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1 "The Muhammad Al-Dura Blood Libel: A Case Analysis," interview with Richard Landes, Institute for Global Jewish Affairs, Jerusalem, Nov. 2, 2008.

2 See Philippe Karsenty, "We Need to Expose the Muhammad al-Dura Hoax," *Middle East Quarterly*, Fall 2008, pp. 57-65.

lished a book-length defense of the original allegations, *Un Enfant est mort* (A Child is Dead), followed by the dateline *Netzarim, 30 septembre 2000*.³ Systematically presented in France as an internationally acclaimed expert on the Arab-Israeli conflict, the France 2 correspondent is virtually unknown in the rest of the world, except perhaps for his role as producer of the “Death of Muhammad al-Dura.”

Enderlin likes to scold critics of the broadcast by saying they have never set foot in Gaza and know nothing about war reporting. In spring

The Dura video displays no signs of violence, bodily harm, or untimely death.

2011, riled by complaints in “communitarian” (i.e., Jewish) media about the failure of national media and, more particularly, the state-owned France 2 TV channel, to cover the blood-curdling slaughter of five members of the Fogel family in the Itamar

settlement on March 12, 2011, the professional journalist treated critics to a lecture on his blog on how a newscast is composed. “I wish I could report all important events,” he wrote, “the horrible Itamar crime, the tragic death of Palestinian adolescents killed last year by an Israeli strike on Gaza (... for which Benjamin Netanyahu apologized), rockets that fall regularly in the south of Israel.” A news director, explained Enderlin with a touch of exasperation, must allocate limited air time to a flow of incoming news. Priorities are set according to “well-established criteria.” With thousands dead from earthquake and tsunami in Japan, “the world’s third largest economy,” there was no room to cover “what happened in Itamar.” The next day, he added, a short item was squeezed in on the consequences of the murder (i.e., anticipated settler violence). Until the culprits were arrested, opined the seasoned journalist, the attack could not be qualified as a terrorist assault.⁴

No such doubts about the identity of the culprits had tempered Enderlin’s enthusiasm for the Dura video, aired within a few hours after its filming. No “well-established criteria” had weakened the conviction of his dramatic voice-over commentary: The boy was killed and the father wounded by gunfire from the Israeli position. Today, readily admitting that the Dura scene was exploited by, among others, the killers who beheaded Daniel Pearl,⁵ the France 2 correspondent asserts his right to unrestricted liberty: “If a journalist were expected to anticipate the subsequent use of his report by extremists, it would amount to unacceptable self-censorship.”⁶ Does the Dura broadcast respect any well-established journalistic criteria? Reliable sources, corroboration, fact-checking, general credibility, coherence? Does the video actually correspond to the incident as it was reported? Was the original report modified by subsequent input? Does the journalist honestly address questions raised by serious investigators about the veracity of the report? The answer is no, no, and again, no.

Though fed into the news stream, the Dura report was not produced as news. What was it, then? Sloppy journalism? Crafty Palestinian propaganda? Perhaps a new form of street theater: a staged killing to represent the very real “murder” of Palestinian children, year in year out, at the hands of merciless Israeli soldiers? Or, more gently, a staged representation of the real killing of Palestinian children caught in the crossfire of an endless conflict? These and similar hypotheses fly in the face of the testimony of the sole eyewitnesses—Talal Abu Rahma and Jamal al-Dura—and the France 2 correspondent who brought the incident to the world’s attention.

Careful study of the literature shows that no credible defense of the Dura scene as a legitimate news item has ever been formulated. Arguing the case that they brought before the French courts as plaintiffs against media watchdog Philippe Karsenty and other defendants, Enderlin and the France 2 hierarchy were unable to furnish any

3 Charles Enderlin, *Un enfant est mort/ Netzarim, 30 September 2000* (Paris: Don Quichotte Editions, 2010).

4 Victor Perez, “Charles Enderlin nous prend pour des simplets,” Victor Perez Blogspot, Mar. 25, 2011.

5 Joel J. Sprayregen, “The New York Times and the al-Dura Hoax,” *The American Thinker*, July 17, 2008.

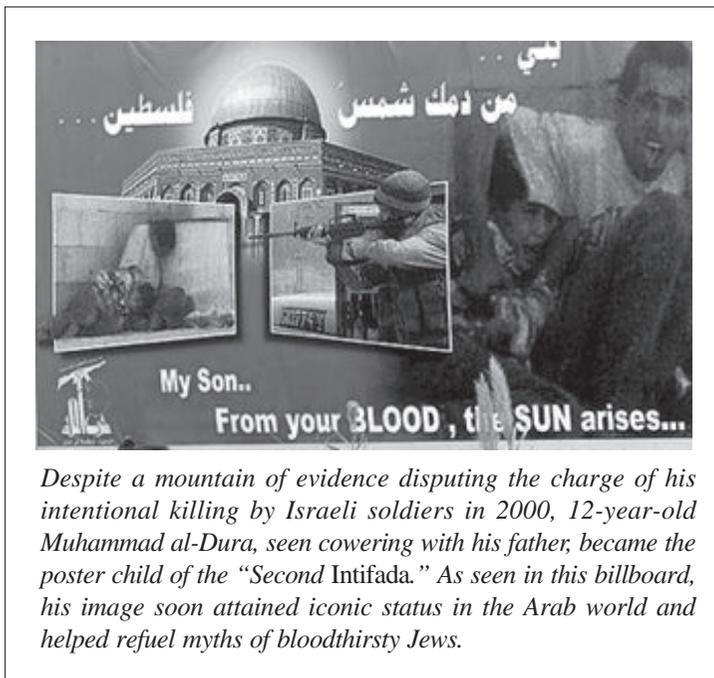
6 Enderlin, *Un enfant est mort*, p. 99.

new material evidence to prove the video's authenticity.⁷ Likewise, in his recently published *Un Enfant est mort*, the author rehashes the original narrative, twisting and tweaking here and there to cover with new inventions some of the glaring anomalies exposed by his detractors.

Here is an example of the method and its madness: What became of the spent shells left at the feet of the victims, which would furnish irrefutable proof of the source of the alleged forty-five minutes of uninterrupted gunfire? The France 2 cameraman Abu Rahma, who has repeated in countless interviews the enveloping narrative that gave substance to his brief non-graphic video, was no match for Esther Schapira of the German broadcast network ARD, who caught him in a convoluted explanation of the disappearance of the spent shells.⁸ First, he told her that the Palestinian general Osama al-Ali had the bullets, to which she argued that she had footage of the general denying that he had the bullet casings. Abu Rahma stumbled, then admitted that France 2 had them, breaking into an irrepressible smile of pure deception.

Now Enderlin sets the record straight: "If Esther Schapira had bothered to ask, she would have learned that the Palestinian general Osama al-Ali went to the site early in the morning after the death of Muhammad al-Dura to examine the barrel and, so doing, he put the stone back on top of it, as it was in the France 2 video. He also gathered all the spent shells and asked our cameraman not to tell anyone."⁹

Is this the work of a responsible French-Is-



Despite a mountain of evidence disputing the charge of his intentional killing by Israeli soldiers in 2000, 12-year-old Muhammad al-Dura, seen cowering with his father, became the poster child of the "Second Intifada." As seen in this billboard, his image soon attained iconic status in the Arab world and helped refuel myths of bloodthirsty Jews.

raeli journalist and his loyal Palestinian cameraman? Is no one shocked or embarrassed by this confession? Did the dozens of French journalists who signed a petition in defense of Enderlin, victim, in their eyes, of conspiracy theory whackos backed by a communitarian lobby, read this passage? Did the journalists who served Enderlin a microphone on a silver platter in so-called interviews to promote this book ever read that passage? Or would they argue: "In case you don't know it, journalists have a right to protect their sources." Their colleague, Enderlin, demeans every individual, newspaper, magazine, or online media that has dared to cast doubt on the authenticity of the Dura incident.¹⁰

BLOOD LIBELS AND GENOCIDAL INTENTS

Muhammad al-Dura, alleged victim of merciless Israeli soldiers, was reportedly twelve years

7 Karsenty, "We Need to Expose the Muhammad al-Dura Hoax."

8 Esther Schapira, dir., *Drei Kugeln und ein totes Kind*, Mar. 18, 2002, ARD Network (Germany).

9 Enderlin, *Un enfant est mort*, p. 52.

10 Ibid., pp. 112, 117, 125, 135, 153.

old; more of a youth than a child. What is the connection between the world-shaking news of his death and the eerie journalistic silence that veiled the murder of a 3-month-old Jewish infant, Hadas Fogel, on Sabbath eve? The baby's throat was slit so far she was nearly decapitated. Two of her brothers were slaughtered like animals in their beds. Their mother and father, who tried to protect the children, were stabbed to death. The bloodied, stabbed, slashed corpses lay in pools of blood.¹¹ The Dura video, by contrast, displays no signs of violence, bodily harm, or untimely death. The sensation of violence is induced by the voice-over commentary, by the grimaces and gestures of the alleged victims, and guttural cries from unseen observers within range of the microphone attached to Abu Rahma's camera.

One might ask with feigned innocence why the picture of a man and boy bearing absolutely no signs of physical assault would stir the collective soul of humanity to its utmost depths while the vicious bloody slaughter of three young children and their parents—coupled with the heart-breaking portraits of family members when they

were still alive and full of light—seems to provoke an embarrassed shrug.

Stripped of its context and significance, the slaughter of the Fogel family was apparently handled by newsrooms as a onetime crime whereas the Dura incident, enhanced by a crudely fabricated

narrative that escaped critical examination, was raised to the highest media power. Is there a connection between the unfounded certainty about the identity of Dura's killers and the artificial doubts about the murderers of the Fogel family? Yes, if there is a connection between blood libel and genocide.

The twenty-first-century blood libel branding Israelis as child-killers, like the earlier version that accuses Jews of killing non-Jewish children

for ritual purposes, is intractable to factual evidence. Deconstruction of the Dura myth encounters a cascade of problems: Only a tiny minority of the general public has the slightest knowledge of the case. That tiny minority of informed, convinced, discerning observers can at best enlarge its circle by small increments, leaving essentially the whole world still believing that a Palestinian child was deliberately shot by Israeli soldiers. Those who are convinced by the mass of concrete evidence to the contrary, rarely figure among the population that will commit genocidal acts based on or reinforced by the blood libel.

Though scriptural and historic Islamic anti-Jewish bigotry would suffice without the Dura incitement to fill certain hearts with murderous rage, the Dura blood libel, indelibly engraved in the public mind, interferes with the perception of a rising genocidal wave. Blood libel incites and excuses genocidal attacks on Jews whether they are the slaughter of the Fogels, *shahid* operations (misnamed "suicide bombings"), rocket attacks from Gaza, or the promise to wipe Israel off the face of the earth. One way of disguising genocidal attacks is to treat them like common crimes. Was the Fogel massacre soft-pedaled because of an overabundant news flow or was it kept out of view precisely because it reveals genocidal intentions?

A similar mechanism operated in France to cover the true nature of two atrocious murders of Jews. The Sébastien Selam murder¹² was literally attributed to one third jealousy, one third insanity, and one third anti-Semitism. The twenty-seven defendants in the kidnapping, torture, and murder of Ilan Halimi¹³ were tried behind closed doors in the court of first resort and again in appeals court. Attempts to expose the true nature of these killings have been decried as Jewish hypersensitivity, tribalism, self-interested exploitation of suffering, manipulation of the judicial system by pressure groups, and shameful resort to primitive vengeance.¹⁴

This twenty-first-century blood libel branding Israelis as child-killers is intractable to factual evidence.

11 *The Guardian* (London), Mar. 14, 2011.

12 *The Jerusalem Post*, Jan. 21, 2010.

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

14 *New English Review* (Nashville, Tenn.), July 13, 2009; *Le Monde* (Paris), July 21, 2009.

These and other acts of gratuitous, unmitigated cruelty were committed in a context of explicit genocidal intentions that are willfully ignored or denied. By contrast, the alleged killing of Muhammad al-Dura is readily accepted though framed by a ludicrous narrative. Cameraman Abu Rahma and the surviving victim, Jamal al-Dura, insist that Israeli soldiers deliberately shot at the defenseless civilians for forty-five minutes until they had critically injured the man and killed the boy. Insisting adamantly that the gunfire came solely from the Israeli position, they claim the soldiers could clearly see the target. One can imagine that television viewers believed they were watching the scene from the same vantage point as the soldiers, who saw it in a close-up, as it appears in the video, looking more like a poster than a news clip.

Soldiers do not need forty-five minutes to hit a sitting target at close range. Obviously embarrassed by this detail, commentators seeking to show that critics of the Dura story are wrong-headed often replace the forty-five minutes of uninterrupted gunfire with a more credible crossfire. Blithely contradicting the two eyewitnesses, they create a more palatable version of the incident for Western consumption while tacitly admitting that the Dura report is for some reason excluded from factual analysis.¹⁵

Whether one prefers forty-five minutes of relentless gunfire aimed at the man and boy, or forty-five seconds of crossfire, Jamal al-Dura's wounds combined with his grief at losing his son are given as evidence of the veracity of his testimony. The wounded man wrapped in bloodied bandages was filmed on his hospital bed the day after the incident. He has dramatically described the wounds, bullet by bullet. His scars were displayed on several occasions, most recently in a film made by Abu Rahma for screening at a semi-private press conference organized by then-news director of France 2, Arlette Chabot, in 2004 when two mainstream journalists, Denis Jeambar and

Daniel Leconte, came close to exposing the Dura broadcast as a staged scene.¹⁶ Those wounds are now at the center of a libel suit brought by Dura against journalist Clément Weil-Raynal and the Israeli surgeon he interviewed, Yehuda David, as well as Serge Benatar, editorial director of the *Actualité Juive* weekly, who published the interview.¹⁷

David has testified under oath that the scars exhibited by Jamal al-Dura were not inflicted by gunfire in September 2000; they were inflicted by knives and an ax wielded by fellow Palestinians who attacked Jamal in 1992.

David did reparative surgery, successfully restoring the patient's use of his right hand. On April 29, 2011, Weil-Raynal and David were found guilty of public defamation of Dura.¹⁸ The text of the decision is incoherent, illogical, and peppered with contradictions. The defendants have appealed.

In the meantime, Metula News Agency—one of the major sources of investigation and analysis of, in their words, the “Netzarim Controversy”—reexamined a passage in the video.¹⁹ As he describes how a bullet pierced his right hand, Jamal waves a report from the Jordanian hospital where he was treated several days after the alleged shooting. A zoom on the document shows that Jamal was treated for a gunshot wound to the left hand. In fact, a close look at the Dura “death scene” reveals that Jamal's right hand was deformed in the first image, shows no signs of additional damage at the end of the brief video,

Staged scenes and Israeli atrocity hoaxes have been eagerly consumed by the Western media.

15 Larry Derfner, “Rattling the Cage: Al-Dura and the Conspiracy Freaks,” May, 28, 2008; Gideon Levy, “Mohammed al-Dura Lives on,” *Ha'aretz* (Tel Aviv), Oct. 7, 2007.

16 Andrea Levin, “*The New York Times* Buries al Dura Story,” CAMERA, Feb. 7, 2005; Charles Enderlin v. Philippe Karsenty, Court of Appeals, Paris, May 28, 2008; *Le Figaro* (Paris), Jan. 25, 2005; RCJ FM radio (Paris), Feb. 1, 2005.

17 Debriefing.org, May 9, 2011; Véronique Chemla, May 31, 2011.

18 Debriefing.org, May 9, 2011; Véronique Chemla, May 31, 2011.

19 Metula (Israel) News Agency, Mar. 23, 2011.

and looks exactly the same today as it did before it was allegedly pierced by an Israeli bullet.

Charles Enderlin asks, rhetorically, how Palestinians could be so clever as to stage the Dura scene in the middle of a fierce gun battle. But raw footage shot at Netzarim Junction shows that “fierce gun battles” were also staged that day. While men and youths attacked the Israeli outpost with rocks, firebombs, and burning tires, fake battle scenes were filmed in another part of the junction, out of range of the Israel Defence Forces outpost.²⁰

Many staged scenes and Israeli atrocity hoaxes have been launched and eagerly consumed by the Western media in the past decade. Abu Rahma and Enderlin relayed the Gaza blackout hoax in 2008. The term “fauxtography” was coined for the method used in the 2006 Lebanon war. The Dura scene is particularly resistant to demystification. The emotional investment elicited by the incident extends far beyond the core population of anti-Zionist anti-Semites. This is due, some would argue, to the dramatic construction that draws the viewer into identification with the father, said to be desperately trying to protect

his son. Then, in a brief lapse of time, less than one minute, the helpless father is said to be critically wounded, and his child is dead. Viewers feel that they should have jumped in and saved the child.

The vast majority of articles devoted to the Dura affair begin, notably, with a visual memory of the scene (e.g. “the boy

dies in his father’s arms”) induced by testimony from the two eyewitnesses but contradicted by the concrete reality of the video.

A recent incident in the Libyan capital of Tripoli shows how journalists can, if they so desire,

exercise healthy skepticism when invited to cover staged scenes. Reporters were shown damage allegedly wreaked by a coalition strike on the home of a prosperous, well-dressed gentleman. Furniture and personal belongings were topsy-turvy, but there was no sign of an explosion, breakage, or soot. The alleged victim argued that his home was not a military target: “The children were doing their homework.” A reporter, displaying missile fragments in the garden, points out the absence of signs of an explosion on the site. The crater, which was apparently dug for the occasion, does not correspond to the munitions displayed as evidence. Other television reports on mass funerals or wounded civilians taken to hospital were accompanied by levelheaded warnings: “None of this can be verified. We have no way of checking this information. The wounded were perhaps used by Qaddafi’s forces as human shields; they may be soldiers disguised as civilians.”

All of that lucidity should also be retroactively transposed to Israel’s 2009 Cast Lead operation in Gaza. The same manipulations were practiced by Hamas without evoking the appropriate skepticism. (Richard Goldstone has just admitted that his report was based on faulty information, to which Jeffrey Goldberg commented: “Well, I’m glad he’s cleared that up. Unfortunately, it is somewhat difficult to retract a blood libel, once it has been broadcast across the world.”)²¹ Obviously, and regrettably, staged news, parroted agency dispatches, falsified documentaries, and sloppy journalism are common fare. When, however, Western media serve as facilitators for hostile forces engaged in geopolitical operations aimed at radically transforming the international balance of power, they cannot be shrugged off as the petty misdemeanors of mass communications. Israelis in particular and Jews in general are the target of the Dura blood libel, but it does not stop there. Other “lethal narratives” are funneled into the news stream with exquisite ease.

The restructuring of the Middle East is prettied up by the Western media to make one believe it harbors no danger.

20 Richard Landes, dir., *Pallywood* (documentary), accessed May 31, 2011.

21 Jeffrey Goldberg, “Judge Richard Goldstone: Never Mind,” *The Atlantic*, Apr. 2, 2011.

MYTHS AND DOUBLE STANDARDS

Viewers have been presented, since December 2010, with what the world media has termed the “Arab Spring.” Though the footage in this case is not staged, it is subject to highly selective editing and transformed by way of narrative into a spontaneous uprising of freedom-loving democrats throwing off tyrannical rulers in certain Arab-Muslim countries. Western governments are expected to align themselves with the popular uprising at the speed of television coverage: Anchormen and women, who identify with the crowd in this or that liberation square, set the pace, and Western leaders appear to follow suit. European heads of state scramble to outrun President Obama with imperious demands for immediate compliance. The targeted autocrat is told to abdicate. His misdeeds are splashed across the screen; his foreign investments are frozen; his crony capitalism is denounced; his wife is vilified; and his opponents are portrayed as Internet savvy, cosmopolitan, secular, charming, young professionals who would fit in with one’s dinner party guests tomorrow evening.

This young Facebook-Twitter image is pasted over the somewhat grimy reality actually captured by television cameras. Soothing words flow from the mouths of journalists determined to deny the reality of Star of David graffiti, women in *hijab* (Islamic head covering), men with Islamic beards, shouts of *Allahu Akbar* (Allah is great), row upon row of prostrate men praying in the “secular revolution” square, man-in-the-square interviewees promising to destroy Israel, Muslim Brotherhood figures waiting in the wings, confusion, connivance, danger, violence, and sexual assault.

Spring blossomed with the “Jasmine Revolution” in Tunisia. In the space of three days, commentary went from, “What Islamists? There are none!” to “The dictator ben Ali had excluded many groups, including the Islamists, from the political arena” to “Of course, the Islamists, like other parties, will assume their rightful place in the democratic process.” Step by step, country by country, in what was supposed to be an entirely positive, virtually unstoppable momentum,



Selective editing has helped transform the narrative of the 2011 Arab uprisings into an exercise in self-determination by long-suffering masses. Most newscasts, however, refrain from showing photos like this, a picture of Egypt’s Mubarak with a Jewish star of David across his forehead, thus concealing anti-Semitic currents in the “Arab street.”

the conflicts become more violent, culminating at this writing in the Libyan adventure—armed intervention by a hastily concocted, essentially untenable coalition that includes, or included, the Arab League. Western journalists and reporters, like gawkers at a country fair, run from one show to the next, rarely looking back to report on retrograde forces gobbling up freedom-lovers or newly-liberated nations spilling out refugees. Over 20,000 have landed in Lampedusa since January 2011,²² and thousands more are on the way. Jews are harassed in Tunisia; Copts are persecuted in Egypt; Shari‘a is poised to replace the arbitrary rule of the dictator with an implacable tyranny.

²² *The Irish Times* (Dublin), Apr. 4, 2011.

The question is not, “How could we have known it would turn sour?” Nor can one conclude that, come what may, democracies should always act to defend a popular uprising even at the risk of paving the way for a new autocracy. The question is rather: What will become of democratic countries if they abdicate their international relations and defense to a consortium of the United Nations and international opinion?

Israel is not the victim of a double standard; it is the target of no standard at all.

The power balance in the Middle East is undergoing a radical transformation that touches Western vital interests, not the least of which is the security of Israel. Old-fashioned national sovereignty is nearly as unpopular as the Oriental

potentates pushed out of their palaces and into a black hole. Democratically-elected leaders committed to defending the welfare and security of their citizens are now expected to prove their integrity precisely by ignoring that responsibility. A crowd with slogans and banners is instantly awarded the title of “humanity,” and everything done to satisfy their demands is “humanitarian.” Of course, the citizens of democracies should be inclined to welcome liberation movements against tyrannical rulers, but it is absurd to actively support movements that may well shift the international balance of power toward greater tyranny.

CONCLUSION

And what does all this have to do with the Dura hoax? The answer is: far too much for comfort. As suggested above, the staged Dura death scene was conceived by forces hostile to Israel and Jews and made credible by the Western media that relayed it. Though the video and its narrative are crude, the prestige of Enderlin and the French television network have protected it from the profound reexamination that could eventually remove its sting. Similarly, the restructuring of the Middle East, which could ultimately de-

liver free individuals, groups, and nations into the hands of our enemies, is prettied up by the Western media that, hand in hand with official discourse, makes one believe this change harbors no danger. Citizens of the free democracies are enticed into trusting the United Nations, which has in fact lost its integrity, instead of counting on their democratically-elected governments and national sovereignty.

Finally, who is that international community with its international opinion enthroned like blood-thirsty spectators of gladiatorial combats, empowered to give the thumbs up or thumbs down? Is it not the dumbstruck viewer convinced that this Palestinian child, a “target of gunfire from the Israeli position,” could escape death if only he would come to the child’s rescue?

In a parallel inversion, jihad conquest justifies itself as a defense against aggression by infidels who refuse to accept the dominion of Allah and comply with Shari’a law. The Palestinian child is not a real victim of real bullets; he is the symbol of that “aggressive” refusal to submit to Islam. The murderous rage unleashed against Jews in response to that symbolic aggression reveals its genocidal intent. The fury is now aimed at Christians in Muslim lands, at Americans and Europeans on their own soil. Panic strikes the embattled citizens of our lands—not at the thought of this merciless jihad, but panic at any attempt to discern it, describe it, defend against it.

Israel is not the victim of a double standard; it is the target of no standard at all. The reasons for this are profound and cannot be limited to anti-Semitism. The fear and trembling provoked by the crudely fabricated Dura scene is the misdirected terror instilled by genocidal forces bearing down on citizens of free democracies. These citizens are the helpless child cringing in fear. No matter how honestly that force designates itself, how clearly it shows its face, how vast the territory it covers, how frankly it expresses its intentions, the frightened child seeks comfort in accusing himself of his imminent destruction.



Sudan's Ticking Time Bombs

by Damla Aras

The referendum held on January 9, 2011, was a milestone for Sudan. With an overwhelming majority of 98.3 percent, southerners decided to secede from the north and to create Africa's youngest state—the Republic of South Sudan. While this momentous development was expected to end Khartoum's decades-long struggle with the southern Sudanese rebels, it has set off a number of ticking time bombs and exacerbated existing conflicts. On top of Sudan's financial problems and the wider impact of the Arab upheavals, President Omar Bashir's government is now facing a number of pressing issues in the post-referendum era. With the rise of new disputes and the escalation of protracted conflicts, is Bashir's Sudan on the verge of further instability?

DARFUR: AN INCENDIARY BOMB

The most contentious and pressing problem confronting Khartoum is undoubtedly finding a solution to the Darfur conflict. The success of the southern Sudanese struggle for independence has had an impact on the Darfur movements, which quickly intensified their ties with the nascent southern Sudanese state. Historically, the Darfur movements have been influenced by and have had good relations with the anti-Khartoum southern Sudanese rebel movement, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). For instance, at the inception of Darfur's

Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), John Garang—then-leader of SPLM—offered it logistical support, including weapons. Indeed, the SLA manifesto of 2003 was an echo of Garang's own vision of a "New Sudan."¹ Similarly, Suliman Arcua Minawi (known as Minni Minawi), the only Darfurian rebel movement leader to have signed a peace accord with the Sudanese government in 2006, moved to Juba, the South Sudan capital when he decided to end his partnership with Khartoum in December 2010. Indeed, Darfurian movements had been using South Sudan as safe haven for quite some time until the local authorities asked them to leave in late 2010 under pressure from Khartoum.² By way of coercing the south to stop its support for the Darfur rebels, since December 2010 the northern Sudanese forces reverted to air strikes against both the movements' main routes to the south and their

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1 Julie Flint, "Darfur's Armed Movements," in Alex de Waal, ed., *War in Darfur and the Search for Peace* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 148, 160.

2 Agence France-Presse, Nov. 13, 2010; Bloomberg News, Jan. 5, 2011.

Sudan's January referendum inspired the Darfur rebels to unite their military forces against Khartoum.

likely safe havens there.³

Thus the referendum added fuel to the fire and inspired the Darfur rebels to unite their military forces against Khartoum. For the first time, major rebel movements such as SLA/MM (the Sudan Liberation Army's branch under Minni Minawi's control), SLA/AW (the faction under the leadership of Abdul Wahid al-Nur), JEM (Justice and Equality Movement), and LJM (the Liberation and Justice Movement) formed coalitions and have been fighting against the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) since early 2011.

In addition to some external factors, notably pressure from the international community, the January referendum also played a role in pushing the rebel movements to form political pacts. Previous attempts at pacts had failed due to power struggles between the groups. But in early 2011, several formerly adversarial organizations united and declared their support for a northern democratic state. In March, the JEM and LJM, which had agreed to participate in ongoing peace talks in Doha, signed an agreement to coordinate their positions in future negotiations.⁴ Khalil Ibrahim's JEM and Minawi's SLA/MM faction signed an agreement to unite their political resistance to the government, demanding a modern, secular, democratic state, which would resolve both the Darfur issue and Sudan's problems in general. JEM also confirmed their contact with Abdul Wahid, in a demonstration of the groups' determination to bring all Darfur movements together.⁵ By the same token, Abdul Wahid's SLA/AW faction, worried about losing its grassroots support given Abdul Wahid's long exile in France, announced its readiness to unite with the other armed movements in Darfur and, equally important, emphasized its willingness to reunite with Minni Minawi. Indeed, in mid-May Abdul Wahid and Minni Minawi announced their alliance and vowed to strive together to

establish a democratic regime in Sudan.⁶ In the same month, a breakaway faction of the LJM and SLA/MM signed a coordination agreement to

unify their armed resistance,⁷ and a number of SLA splinter groups such as SLA/Juba Unity and SLA/Mother reunited with SLA/AW.⁸ A final significant development was the integration of an Arab group, the Revolutionary Democratic Forces Front (RDFF) with SLA/AW in May.⁹ All these developments indicate that the Darfur movements are not only reorganizing among themselves, they are also integrating other anti-government factions, including Arabs, against Khartoum.

In order to weaken the Darfur armed groups, the northern Sudanese government made two major decisions. The first was the "New Darfur Strategy," approved by the government in July 2010, which sought to end the Darfur conflict through a skillful use of sticks and carrots: heavy strikes against rebel forces accompanied by economic incentives for the civilian population. To this end, Khartoum has announced a large number of investments and initiatives in the region, some of which have been actualized while others remained dormant.¹⁰

The second and most recent government initiative was the creation of two new states—Central and Eastern Darfur—in addition to the three existing ones in the north, south and west. According to the 2006 Darfur peace agreement, the government will hold a referendum on the permanent status of Darfur, in which Darfurians will be given two choices: 1) retention of the status quo, in which the three existing states will continue to be directly responsible to the central government; 2) creation of a Darfur region composed of the three states under the Darfur Re-

3 Agence France-Presse, Mar. 23, 2011.

4 Radio Dabanga (Darfur), Mar. 22, 23, 2011.

5 Ibid., Mar. 24, 2011.

6 *Sudan Tribune* (Paris), May 16, 2011.

7 SudanJem.com (Sudan Justice and Equality Movement), Mar. 28, 2011.

8 *Sudan Tribune*, May 10, 2011.

9 *Terrorism Monitor* (Jamestown Foundation, Washington, D.C.), June 2, 2011.

10 *Sudan Tribune*, July 31, 2010.

gional Authority which will be responsible to the government.

The government is in favor of the first option as it consolidates its control over the states¹¹ and, further, facilitates creation of two more states. Khartoum argues that increasing the number of states will give local leaders the ability to develop closer relations with their constituents, and the internecine disputes will be more effectively resolved. According to the government, peace can only be achieved from the grassroots up. Hence President Bashir held meetings with Darfur leaders in an attempt to reach a common understanding on this matter,¹² and the National Council of Ministers endorsed the creation of East and Central Darfur in early May.¹³

However, these moves failed to impress the rebels. Darfur armed movements demanded that Darfur become one region, which could give them an advantage over the central government as they expect to be supported by the majority of Darfurians. That is to say, they could exert more pressure on the government and potentially succeed in future elections.¹⁴ Against this backdrop, Minawi's SLA/MM accused Khartoum of using divide and rule tactics. At the same time, the JEM charged the government with seeking to divide Darfurians along tribal lines and favoring certain tribes over others, so that the government could share power with the tribes it favors



While rebel factions jockey for power, and President Bashir's northern Sudan government seeks to undermine resistance, conditions in Sudan's internal displaced persons camps worsen. The Zam Zam camp in Darfur is one of the world's largest refugee camps, home to more than 200,000 residents.

in the new two states (in Central Darfur, the Fur tribe, and in East Darfur, Arab tribes such as the Reizegat).¹⁵ They believe the government is seeking ways to weaken the rebel groups and prevent Darfur from following in the footsteps of South Sudan.¹⁶ After all, the region had been an independent sultanate of the Fur tribe until 1916.¹⁷ SLA leader Abdul Wahid makes clear that he does not want secession for Darfur, but he adds that he cannot prevent others considering the possibility under the current circumstances.¹⁸

While the armed groups and the government have been strategically, militarily, and politically positioning themselves, the local population has been the ultimate victim of the ongoing and violent clashes. The hotspots include Jabal

11 Ibid., May 5, 2011.

12 *Sudan Vision Daily* (Khartoum), Mar. 24, 2011.

13 Agence France-Presse, May 5, 2011.

14 Reuters, Apr. 24, 2011.

15 *Sudan Tribune*, May 5, 2011.

16 *Sudan Vision Daily*, Mar. 24, 2011; *The Independent* (London), Mar. 18, 2011.

17 Edward Thomas, *The Kafia Kingi Enclave* (London: Rift Valley Institute, 2010), p. 28.

18 *Terrorism Monitor*, June 2, 2011.

The crisis over Abyei is part of a bigger dispute over the oil-producing state of south Kordofan.

Marra, Shangil Tobaya, and Dar al-Salam in north Darfur, Kor Abeche in south Darfur, and Jebel Marra in the center of the province. Govern-

ment air strikes throughout February 2011 resulted in the deaths of many civilians and the destruction of residential areas in Kabkabiya, Wadi Murra, and Sortony in north Darfur.¹⁹ In May, the intensified SAF airstrikes hit villages in Kutum, Kabkabiya, El Fasher in north Darfur and Shaeria, Nyala in south Darfur in a bid to eradicate rebel movements.²⁰ Yet despite its absolute air superiority, the Sudan Armed Forces have thus far only been partially successful in taking full control of rebel strongholds, and the real victims of the airstrikes have been civilians.

Consequently, camps for internally displaced people, such as the Zam Zam camp in north Darfur, were overloaded with civilians fleeing from air strikes and armed clashes on the ground. According to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, nearly 66,000 civilians have been internally displaced since January 2011 as they fled their homes to camps in north and south Darfur.²¹ Yet even this desperate move brought little relief to the hapless refugees as the government, viewing the camps as safe havens for the rebels, cracked down on the camps, both militarily and economically by imposing an economic blockade on the supply of basic commodities and fuel (notably in the Zam Zam camp in early April 2011).²²

PRIMED TO EXPLODE

In addition to Darfur, the referendum results have rekindled other problems between Juba and Khartoum for which the Bashir government will feel increasing heat in the coming months.

Among these issues is the status of the Abyei

area in south Kordofan, which is particularly important for the governments of both northern and South Sudan because of its rich

oil reserves and fertile lands and has become a focal point for violent conflict. According to the 2005 comprehensive peace agreement, the referendum on the future of South Sudan was to be followed by a referendum on Abyei's status to decide whether it should become part of South Sudan or remain in the south Kordofan region of northern Sudan.²³ However, thus far the referendum has not taken place as the issue of eligibility to vote on Abyei's future has not been resolved. Ethnically, Abyei is populated by the Christian Dinka Ngok, who consider themselves part of South Sudan and are supported by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement. According to the peace agreement, only the Dinka were supposed to vote. However, with a view to diluting the region's heavily African identity by injecting an Arab population, Khartoum settled thousands of nomadic Arab Muslims, the Misseriya, who travel to Abyei regularly during the dry season to graze their cattle. Given Bashir's declaration in late March 2011 that the referendum would only be held with Misseriya participation,²⁴ it is clear that the north will continue to fight for the territory from which it derives substantial oil revenues.

Consequently, the South Sudan government has accused the north of arming the Misseriya and using its paramilitary Popular Defense Forces for raids in Abyei villages. According to U.N. reports, attacks against the Dinka led 20,000-25,000 people to flee to the south. U.N. civilian protection officials assert that by March 16, 2011, clashes between rival communities had claimed more than one hundred lives in Abyei.²⁵ While the Sudan People's Liberation Movement held Khartoum responsible for the tensions, the northern government argued that the clashes are due

19 *Sudan Tribune*, Mar. 9, 2011.

20 Agence France-Presse, May 18, 2011.

21 *U.N. Integrated Regional Information Networks via COMTEX*, Mar. 16, 2011.

22 Radio Dabanga, Apr. 5, 2011.

23 *Sudan Tribune*, Apr. 1, 2011.

24 *Ibid.*, Mar. 31, 2011.

25 *Ibid.*, Apr. 4, 2011; Associated Press, Mar. 23, 2011; U.N. News Center, New York, Mar. 16, 2011.

South Sudan is in danger of again being dragged into a civil war if the opposing groups receive external support.

to the south's internal problems. The Misseriya, on the other hand, argued that the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) deployed forces disguised as police in Abyei and that these forces attacked them and blocked their migration route.²⁶ Indeed, the combatant indicators evinced a further increase in the spiral of violence in the territory as recent satellite imagery showed a military buildup in the area. The Harvard Humanitarian Initiative warned that Khartoum was deploying extra security forces in Abyei.²⁷ By the same token, the commander of the United Nations Mission in Sudan, Maj. Gen. Moses Obi, announced that both the north and south had deployed forces with heavy weapons to the region.²⁸ Juba and Khartoum agreed to resolve the issue before the south's official independence in July, and Misseriya and Dinka Ngok tribes signed the Kadugli agreement in mid-January to stop the fighting.²⁹ Yet, these initiatives were not fruitful. Consequently, May 2011 witnessed clashes in Abyei resulting in the deaths of fourteen people followed by SPLM's ambush of a convoy of northern troops and U.N. peacekeepers in which twenty-two SAF soldiers died and which led to the occupation of the area by heavily armed northern troops.³⁰ According to U.N. officials, nearly 100,000 people, most of them Dinka Ngoks, had to flee from their homes as a result.³¹

The Abyei crisis is only a part of a bigger dispute between the south and the north over the oil-producing state of south Kordofan. Similar to the developments in Abyei, the tension in the region was building. Several incidents created further strains, such as SPLM's allegations against Bashir's National Congress Party of fraud in the southern Kordofan gubernatorial

elections and Khartoum's June 1, 2011 ultimatum to SPLA forces to leave the region and the Blue Nile. Consequently, the increase in violence in and around the state capital Kadugli³² forced an estimated 40,000 people to flee.³³

The turmoil in south Kordofan poses a new security threat in Sudan as it may expand the battleground from the Darfur conflict, owing to the activities of certain rebel groups in both regions. JEM, whose agenda has always been nationwide and who has close relations with SPLM, has increased activity in the region. Further, JEM is said to be recruiting Arab Misseriya youth unhappy with the government.³⁴ In the past, the group played an active role in several attacks, such as in Hamrat al-Sheikh in north Kordofan in July 2006, in Wad Banda in west Kordofan in August 2007, against Chinese oil operations in south Kordofan (October and December 2007), and most recently, against an airport used by Chinese oil companies in Heglieg in June 2011.³⁵ Consequently, JEM's agenda seems to be the integration of anti-government forces in Darfur and south Kordofan—regardless of their ethnic background—and fighting against Khartoum nationwide.

Despite the gloomy picture and Bashir's threats not to recognize the south's independence if it persists in claiming rights over Abyei,³⁶ the separation of South Sudan took place on July 9, 2011. From the northern perspective, the south's independence will have a constructive impact on Bashir's government in the international arena because of his positive approach to the referendum and his acceptance of the results. From the southern perspective,

26 *Sudan Tribune*, Feb. 28, 2011.

27 Agence France-Presse, Mar. 23, 2011.

28 Reuters, Mar. 30, 2011.

29 *Sudan Tribune*, Jan. 29, 2011.

30 Agence France-Presse, May 3, 2011; Reuters, May 30, 2011.

31 Agence France-Presse, June 12, 2011.

32 *Ibid.*, June 5, 2011.

33 *Ibid.*, June 12, 2011.

34 *Small Arms Survey* (Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva), June 4, 2011.

35 Jerome Tubiana, "Renouncing the Rebels: Local and Regional Dimensions of Chad-Sudan Rapprochement," Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mar. 2011, p. 61; *Sudan Tribune*, June 14, 2011.

36 BBC, Apr. 28, 2011.

Border disputes are likely to contribute to armed clashes in the near future unless solutions are rapidly implemented.

the south will not risk its independence at this stage by engaging in all-out war with the north.³⁷ Nevertheless, the level of violence between southern and northern forces as well as their proxies is highly likely to escalate in the contentious areas of southern Kordofan and Darfur in the coming days.

WAR BY PROXY AND BORDER WARS

In an attempt to gain leverage, the leaders of both South and northern Sudan hurled accusations at each other of using proxies to further destabilize their respective governments. Khartoum has continuously warned Juba not to support the Darfur movements, which in turn means escalation of violence in the region and further instability for northern Sudan in general.

On the other hand, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement claims to have evidence that Khartoum supplied southern rebels with weapons, so as to enable them to remove the new southern government from power before the official declaration of independence.³⁸ Since the January referendum, several SPLM defectors, such as Gen. George Athor, Col. Matthew Puol Jang, and most recently Gen. Peter Gadet have been fighting against the Sudan People's Liberation Army.³⁹ Given the region's poor infrastructure, the heavily armed population, fast spawning SPLA defectors, and the weak government, South Sudan is in danger of being dragged into a civil war especially if the opposing groups receive external support.

Another outstanding issue brought to the fore by the southern secession is that of border demarcation between the north and the south.

According to the 2005 peace agreement, a precise demarcation of this border in line with the January 1, 1956 frontier of Sudan's independence day should be agreed upon between the

parties. However, the Technical Border Committee established to resolve the issue could not solve all of the border problems between the two parties. Unsatisfied with the current arrangement, the southerners argue that the River Kiir/Bahr al-Arab should constitute the border between the two countries, requiring the north to make territorial concessions. The south has also argued that the mineral-rich Kafia Kingi area, in the horn of southern Darfur, historically belonged to South Sudan. The other contentious border disputes between the northerners and the southerners are between the Sudanese states of the Upper Nile and the White Nile and between the Upper Nile and south Kordofan. These issues are likely to contribute to further armed clashes in the near future unless a flexible solution, such as the recognition of soft borders between the two states, is rapidly implemented.

CONCLUSION

The January 2011 referendum has rekindled old conflicts and created new bones of contention. Khartoum will have to deal with the rebel movements in both Darfur and south Kordofan, which are both likely to continue supporting each other against their mutual adversary. Khartoum will also have to establish a working relationship with the independent government of South Sudan despite the existence of several unresolved issues. Any retaliatory measures by the northern government are liable to produce further instability, not only for its adversaries but also for northern Sudan. More than ever before, the Sudanese government is confronted with a string of ticking time bombs, ready to explode at the first available opportunity.

37 Reuters, May 26, 2011.

38 Radio Miraya (U.N. Mission in Sudan and Swiss NGO Fondation Hirondelle, Juba and Khartoum), Mar. 23, 2011.

39 Xinhua News Agency (Beijing), Mar. 31, 2011; Agence France-Presse, May 21, 2011.



Azzam's Genocidal Threat

by David Barnett and Efraim Karsh

Of the countless threats of violence made by Arab and Palestinian leaders in the run up to and in the wake of the November 29, 1947 partition resolution, none has resonated more widely than the warning by Abdul Rahman Azzam, the Arab League's first secretary-general, that the establishment of a Jewish state would lead to "a war of extermination and momentous massacre which will be spoken of like the Mongolian massacre and the Crusades."

This threat is generally believed to have been made during a briefing to the Egyptian press on May 15, 1948, shortly after the pan-Arab invasion of the newly-proclaimed state of Israel. Some scholars trace it to a May 16 *New York Times* report, citing the Egyptian daily *al-Ahram*.¹ Yet this *New York Times* edition contains no such item whereas the original *al-Ahram* report has yet to surface. Others cite a BBC broadcast as their source,² yet a comprehensive examination, completed by Efraim Karsh, of the corporation's archives in Reading, England, has found no evidence of this broadcast. Others, like the renowned American journalist, I. F. Stone, who covered the saga of Israel's birth as it unfolded, simply noted the threat without proper attribution.³

Indeed, failure to trace the original document⁴ has given rise to doubts as to whether Azzam actually made this threat. Criticizing Karsh for noting the threat in *Palestine Betrayed*,⁵ Israeli academic Benny Morris wrote:

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1 See, for example, Rony E. Gabbay, *A Political Study of the Arab-Jewish Conflict: The Arab Refugee Problem (A Case Study)* (Geneva: Librairie E. Droz, 1959), p. 88; Joan Peters, *From Time Immemorial: The Origins of the Arab-Jewish Conflict over Palestine* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), p. 444, n. 14.

2 See, for example, John Roy Carlson, *Cairo to Damascus* (New York: Knopf, 1951), p. 266; Mizra Khan, "The Arab Refugees—A Study in Frustration," in Walter Z. Laqueur, ed., *The Middle East in Transition: Studies in Contemporary History* (New York: Praeger, 1958), p. 237; Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, *O Jerusalem!* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), pp. 408, 588; Esther Rosalind Cohen, *Human Rights in the Israeli-Occupied Territories, 1967-1982* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 1985), p. 60, n. 72; Mitchell Bard, *Myths and Facts: A Guide to the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Chevy Chase: American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, 2006), p. 121.

3 Isidor Feinstein Stone, *This Is Israel* (New York: Boni and Gaer, 1948), p. 21.

4 Alexander H. Joffe and Asaf Romirowsky, "A Tale of Two Galloways: Notes on the Early History of UNRWA and Zionist Historiography," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Sept. 2010, p. 671.

5 New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010.



Akhbar al-Yom, October 11, 1947.

But was “extermination” their war aim, as Karsh would have it? There is no knowing. Indeed, the Arab leaders going to war in 1948 were very sparing in publicly describing their goals and “exterminating” the Jews never figured in their public bombast. I myself in the past have used the one divergent quote, by Arab League Secretary-General Abdul Rahman Azzam from May 15, 1948, in which he allegedly spoke of a “war of extermination” and a “momentous massacre” à la the Mongols. But in my recent history of the war, *1948* (Yale University Press, 2008), I refrained from reusing it after discovering that its pedigree is dubious.⁶

Yet, the original document does in fact exist. It has eluded scholars for so long because they have been looking in the wrong place.

In his account of Israel’s birth, Stone alluded to the possibility that the threat was made

on the eve of the U.N. vote on partition, with the aim of averting this momentous decision, rather than before the pan-Arab invasion of Israel six months later.⁷ Following this lead, David Barnett found a Jewish Agency memorandum, submitted on February 2, 1948, to the U.N. Palestine Commission, tasked with the implementation of the partition resolution, and yet again to the U.N. secretary-general on March 29, 1948.

Describing the panoply of Arab threats of war and actual acts of violence aimed at aborting the partition resolution, the memorandum read:

(6) ... The “practical and effective means” contrived and advocated by the Arab States were never envisaged as being limited by the provisions of the Charter; indeed, the Secretary-General of the Arab League was thinking in terms which are quite remote from the lofty sentiments of San Francisco. “This

6 Benny Morris, “Revisionism on the West Bank,” *The National Interest*, July-Aug. 2010, pp. 76-7.

7 Stone, *This Is Israel*, p. 21.

war,” he said, “will be a war of extermination and a momentous massacre which will be spoken of like the Mongol massacres and the Crusades.”⁸

The Jewish Agency memorandum cites an October 11, 1947 article in the Egyptian newspaper *Akhbar al-Yom* as the quote’s source. An examination of the original article (see box right) readily confirms the quote’s authenticity, laying to rest one of the longest running historiographical debates attending the 1948 war.

WAR OF EXTERMINATION

An October 11, 1947 report on the pan-Arab summit in the Lebanese town of Aley⁹ by *Akhbar al-Yom*’s editor, Mustafa Amin, contained an interview he held with Arab League secretary-general Azzam. Titled, “A War of Extermination,” the interview read as follows (translated by Efraim Karsh; all ellipses are in the original text):

Abdul Rahman Azzam Pasha spoke to me about the horrific war that was in the offing ... saying:

“I personally wish that the Jews do not drive us to this war, as this will be a war of extermination and momentous massacre which will be spoken of like the Tartar massacre¹⁰ or the Crusader wars. I believe



Interview with Abdul Rahman Azzam, the Arab League’s first secretary-general.

that the number of volunteers from outside Palestine will be larger than Palestine’s Arab population, for I know that volunteers will be arriving to us from [as far as] India, Afghanistan, and China to win the honor of martyrdom for the sake of Palestine ... You might be surprised to learn that hundreds of Englishmen expressed their wish to volunteer in the Arab armies to fight the Jews.

“This war will be distinguished by three serious matters. First—faith: as each fighter deems his death on behalf of Palestine as the shortest road to paradise; second, [the war] will be an opportunity for vast plunder. Third, it will be impossible to contain the zealous volunteers arriving from all corners

8 “Acts of Aggression Provoked, Committed, and Prepared by Arab States in Concert with the Palestine Arab Higher Committee against the Jewish Population of Palestine in an Attempt to Alter by Force the Settlement Envisaged by the General Assembly’s Resolution on the Future Government of Palestine,” memorandum submitted by the Jewish Agency for Palestine to the United Nations Palestine Commission, Feb. 2, 1948; Moshe Shertok, “Letter from the Jewish Agency for Palestine Dated 29 March 1948, Addressed to the Secretary-General Transmitting a Memorandum on Acts of Arab Aggression,” UNSC, S/710, Apr. 5, 1948.

9 For the Aley summit, see Karsh, *Palestine Betrayed*, pp. 87-9.

10 Tatar is used loosely in Arabic to mean Mongol, a reference to the thirteenth-century invasions.—Eds.

of the world to avenge the martyrdom of the Palestine Arabs, and viewing the war as dignifying every Arab and every Muslim throughout the world ...

“The Arab is superior to the Jew in that he accepts defeat with a smile: Should the Jews defeat us in the first battle, we will defeat them in the second or the third battle ... or the final one ... whereas one defeat will shatter the Jew’s morale! Most desert Arabians take pleasure in fighting. I recall being tasked with mediating a truce in a desert war (in which I participated) that lasted for nine months ... While en route to sign the truce, I was approached by some of my comrades in arms who told me: ‘Shame on you! You are a man of the people so how could you wish to end the war ... How can we live without war? This is because war gives the Bedouin a sense of happiness, bliss, and security that peace does not provide! ...

“I warned the Jewish leaders I met in London to desist from their policy,¹¹ telling them that the Arab was the mightiest of soldiers and the day he draws his weapon, he will not lay it down until firing the last bullet in the battle, and we will fire the last shot ...”

He [Azzam] ended his conversation with me by saying: “I foresee the consequences of this bloody war. I see before me its horrible battles. I can picture its dead, injured, and victims ... But my conscience is clear ... For we are not attacking but defending ourselves, and we are not aggressors but defenders against an aggression! ...”



11 Azzam met with Eliahu Epstein, head of the Jewish Agency’s Washington office, on June 18, 1947, and with David Horowitz and Aubrey (Abba) Eban, the Jewish Agency’s liaison officers to the U.N. Special Committee on Palestine, on Sept. 15, 1947. In both meetings, he sought to dissuade his interlocutors from pursuing their quest for statehood by using the Crusaders metaphor. See Karsh, *Palestine Betrayed*, pp. 92-5.—Eds.

Israel Poised to Become “Energy Giant”

OTTAWA—The London-based World Energy Council says Israel’s Shfela Basin, a half-hour drive south of Jerusalem, holds 250 billion barrels of recoverable shale oil, possibly making the energy-vulnerable country “the world’s newest energy giant.” With reserves of 260 billion barrels, Saudi Arabia would remain the world’s No. 1 oil country—though not, perhaps, for long. Howard Jonas, CEO of U.S.-based IDT Corp., the company that owns the Shfela Basin concession, says there is much more oil under Israel than under Saudi Arabia: Perhaps, he says, twice as much.

Even with a mere 250 billion barrels, the Shfela Basin (or 238 square kilometres of it) would make Israel the third-largest holder of shale reserves in the world—right behind the U.S. with 1.5 trillion barrels and China with 355 billion barrels. Assuming for the moment that Mr. Jonas is correct in his calculations, the U.S. and Israel would together hold shale reserves in excess of two trillion barrels: Enough oil to fuel these two countries (at combined consumption of eight billion barrels a year) for more than 200 years.

It will take years—probably decades—for Israel to reach maximum production from its vast reserves of shale oil. But odds are that the Shfela Basin will change the global balance of power long before then. Indeed, it will effectively change the balance of power the day it exports its first barrel of oil. This shouldn’t take long. With such investors as Lord Rothschild (the banker and philanthropist), Rupert Murdoch (the media magnate), and Dick Cheney (the politician), Israel should be pumping oil within three or four years. Also on board is Shell Oil’s top scientist, Harold Vinegar, who says the Shfela oil is not only abundant but premium quality as well: “The equivalent of Saudi extra-light.”

Globe and Mail (Canada), June 28, 2011

“New Age” Islam

by Stephen Schwartz

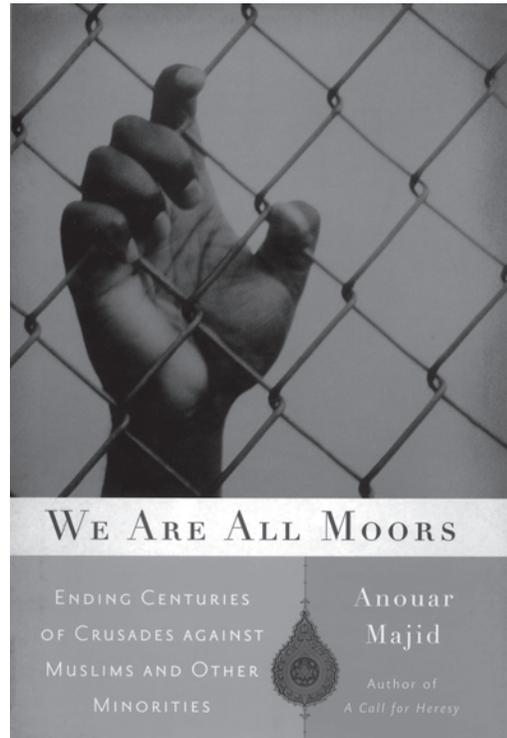
Sufis in Western Society: Global Networking and Locality. Edited by Ron Geaves, Markus Dressler, and Gritt Klinkhammer. London and New York: Routledge Sufi Series, 2009. 224 pp. \$150.

We Are All Moors: Ending Centuries of Crusades against Muslims and Other Minorities. By Anouar Majid. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009. 240 pp. \$24.95.

These volumes epitomize two related, similar, but finally marginal trends that have penetrated the West in recent decades, and which were inflated in the aftermath of the Islamist atrocities of 2001 and other developments: New Age Sufism and “literary” meditations on the clash of civilizations.

In the instance of New Age Sufism, faddish imitations of esoteric Islamic traditions are adopted by Western spiritual seekers. The second trend involves “high concept” meanderings in revisionist Islamic, European, and American history. Both represent attempts to respond to the Islamist challenge without recourse to politics or the military. With the broadening and frequent weakening of Western analysis about Islam, both styles of discourse are increasingly offered to the global reading audience.

The editors—Geaves, a comparative religion professor at Liverpool Hope University, U.K., Dressler of religious and Islamic studies at Hofstra University, and Klinkhammer, a religion professor at Bremen University, Germany—have assembled a volume striking in its attempt to accommodate academic standards of analysis to



Western popular mysticism. *Sufis in Western Society* emerged from a 2003 panel held by the American Academy of Religions. Its title is misleading in that the collection deals minimally with indigenous Sufism in Eastern European Muslim polities such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, or Albania, and the vigorous Sufi presence in such major diaspora communities as that of Germans of Turkish and Kurdish origin (with one exception, discussing Bosnian Muslims in Sweden). Rather, it treats with high seriousness and full credibility the attraction of certain Westerners to religious posturing in Sufi costume.

Most of the Geaves-Dressler-Klinkhammer tome describes prominent new age Sufis, some of

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whom become Muslims but recruit disciples who do not; some who adopt extravagant Islamistic positions while projecting themselves as masters of Sufi wisdom; and some who disseminate self-improvement advice with little or no Islamic ornamentation. The volume gives notable attention to such dubious figures as Feisal Abdul Rauf, best-known for his association with the scheme for the “Ground Zero” mosque in New York, and Nuh Keller, the American fundamentalist Muslim convert who published *The Reliance of the Traveller*,¹ a classic, though backwards-looking volume of Islamic law.

The chapter “Home, Nation, and Global Islam: Sufi-oriented activities and community building among Bosnian Muslims in Southern Sweden,” by Catharina Raudvere, a professor of religions at Copenhagen University, and Ashk Gashi (Ašk Gaši in original text), a Bosnian emigrant to Sweden, includes errors but presents a useful profile of a Muslim community in which Sufi influence has diffused into a general Islamic identity.

Perhaps the most immediately relevant chapter is “Globalizing the Soundworld” by Michael Frishkopf, a professor of music at the University of Alberta, Edmonton. Frishkopf recounts how, as a proselyte to Islam, he attempted to organize a presentation on his campus by a noted Egyptian Sufi performer of religious songs, Sheikh Mohamed el-Helbawy, with the participation of the University of Alberta Muslim Student Association (MSA). The MSA, a pillar of the Wahhabi lobby, rejected this initiative by declaring that the Egyptian figure represented “innovations in religion, and other matters that are highly doubtful and debatable.” This ominous but typical episode presents, in microcosm, the ideological orientation and activities of MSA branches throughout North American academic life.

“Global Sufism,” a chapter by Marcia Hermansen of Loyola University, includes a brief but similar description of the inability of Barelvi Muslims, a traditional yet moderate

trend in South Asian Sunnism, to establish an organization in the United States. She states that “its failure may have occurred as a result of factors specific to the Muslim subculture in the United States, for example, the fact that most community organizations were already controlled by anti-Sufi Islamists.”

Majid’s *We Are All Moors* is an overly ambitious, rambling, error-strewn, and otherwise contrived book, attempting a meditation on the clash of civilizations. In reality, of course, almost none of us are Moors. Use of the terms “Moor” and “Moorish” to refer to the Muslims who invaded the Iberian Peninsula in the eighth century C.E. was always inaccurate and has been abandoned by Spanish cultural historians, of whose work Majid shows little knowledge. “Moor” might denote a Mauretanian or other black African Muslim, but the conquerors who established al-Andalus were Arabs and Berbers, not Mauretanians.

Majid, a Moroccan-American English professor at Maine’s University of New England, has constructed a general history of the past half-millennium, in which the expulsion of Muslims from Spain is treated as a kind of historical original sin that may be expanded to explain anti-Jewish prejudice, the Atlantic slave trade, social distinctions among Israeli Jews, and just about everything else that can be connected artificially with Western “hegemony.” The effect is to condemn all such interactions as expressions of a “Crusader” mentality which, Majid argues, must be thoroughly repudiated for the sake of the world’s salvation.

The effort is tedious, and its undeniable political correctness, while doubtless laudable in principle to many of the author’s peers, does not rescue the work from the pseudo-intellectual quagmire into which he has plunged. Such a product, as a cry of complaint and nothing more, offers no fresh insights or information, and will be of no use to scholars of Islam or Muslim relations with non-Muslim communities. Indeed, it violates the fundamental rule of such inquiries: Make distinctions; do not confuse them.

1 Evanston: Sunna Books, 1993; revised ed., Beltsville, Md.: Amana Publications, 1997.



Brief Reviews

Beware of Small States: Lebanon, Battleground of the Middle East. By David Hirst. New York: Nation Books, 2010. 428 pp. \$29.95 (\$19.99, paper).

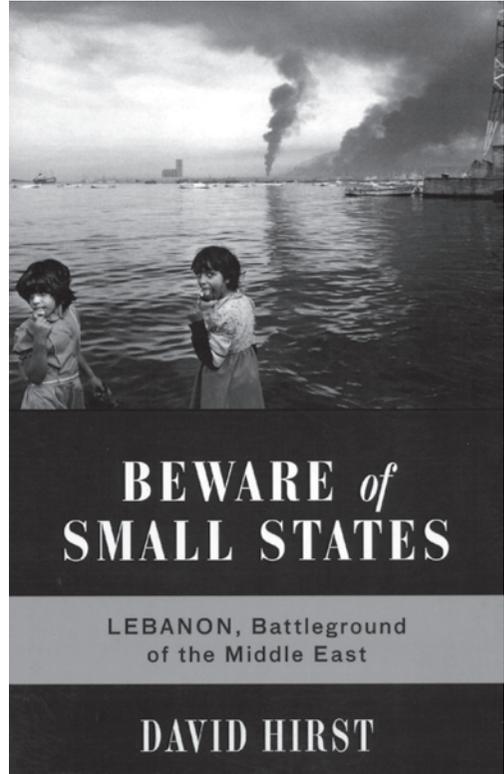
Embracing Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin’s dictum that small states are the victims of greater states, yet a source of danger to them, Hirst, a former Middle Eastern correspondent for the *Guardian*, situates Lebanon in this history at the center of Middle East politics, having undergone successive colonialist, nationalist, and Islamist phases.

Sadly, Hirst’s book reflects the author’s unreserved bias against Israel and what he terms the pro-Zionist, Christian Lebanese. *Beware of Small States* is as much about delegitimizing Israel as it is about delineating the historical course that led to the emergence of Hezbollah as the paradigmatic non-state actor of the Middle East.

Thus, when describing the aftermath of World War I, Hirst writes that “not only was there no Jewish state, there were not even the basic prerequisites of one,” both ignoring historical fact and constructing a lethal fantasy of early Zionists as committed to supplanting the indigenous people and creating an aggressive, expansionist state predisposed to violence.

Similarly, it was “Zionist interventionists” who supported the creation of a Christian Lebanon not so much in the interest of peaceful coexistence with Israel but with the objective of deepening the divisions in the Arab world. Pro-Zionist Christians (in contrast to the Arabist Maronites) support the Jewish state as a means of reinforcing their minority status in the region. The idea of cultural, historical, or political diversity in the Middle East never seems to cross Hirst’s mind, whose condescension towards Maronites who dared to digress from a monolithic, anti-Zionist, Arabic discourse is palpable.

Not once does the author investigate the psychological or sociopolitical conditions of the Lebanese from a Christian perspective. All the



many declarations of throwing the Maronites into the sea, driving them into exile, detaining them at whim, are absent. Simply put, they were Zionist collaborators with Israeli hubris, epitomized by an imperial “war of choice” (the 1982 Israel-Lebanon war). There and then, according to Hirst, Zionism’s inherent violence and aggression were laid bare: the “Sabra and Shatila [massacre] was not an ‘aberration.’ On the contrary, it was a culmination—and a dreadful one—for a state, a society, and the ideology which infused them.”

It is against this background that Hirst traces the creation of Hezbollah as a “Lebanonized,” anti-Israel, jihadist movement. To his credit, Hirst, does not believe that Hezbollah’s “Lebanonization” would transform the Islamist party into a disarmed, conventional one. But what Hirst fails to indicate is that its “Lebanonization” is only a

means to support its jihadist apparatus.

By withstanding Israel's onslaught in the 2006 war, Hezbollah emerges as the de facto caliph of the Arabs and Muslims. Hezbollah and the other non-state actors (Hamas) have arisen where the "official order was most eroded, or most glaringly deficient in its ability to promote and defend the basic interests and expectations of its people." This is Hirst's small state/great agent of change. The narrative concludes with a warning about a new war in which Israeli actions will be offensive and indiscriminately destructive, Hezbollah's merely defensive.

Despite an impressive intimacy with the Middle East, Hirst's narrative is both hackneyed and vindictive, as anyone looking at the unfolding events of the "Arab Spring" can plainly see.

Robert G Rabil
Florida Atlantic University

Contentious Politics in the Middle East: Political Opposition under Authoritarianism. Edited by Holger Albrecht. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010. 252 pp. \$69.95

The timing of the publication of this book, just before the outbreak of the 2011 uprisings throughout the Arab world, could not have been worse. If Albrecht and his authors had only been more prescient, the reader would not be faced with such a counter-factual conclusion as that offered by I. William Zartman: "Apparently everything has changed ... the Arab state is indeed remarkably durable."

The ouster of Tunisia's Ben Ali and Egypt's Mubarak, as well as the likely overthrow of Yemen's Saleh and perhaps Libya's Qaddafi and Syria's Assad, make the book dated even before libraries can begin the acquisition process. Although these uprisings surprised most, they did not occur without provocation. The fact that they have spread as fast and as far as they did suggests that the book's contributors were unaware of the Arab publics' explosive discontents that lay dormant for nearly two generations.

Apart from failing to account for the inception of the uprisings, the book suffers from fatal, methodological errors. The first three chapters present the reader with three different ap-

proaches to the study of contentious politics under authoritarianism but the gratuitous inclusion of a chapter by Peter Sluglett on political opposition in the Islamic tradition is out of place. It does not connect to the theme of political opposition under authoritarianism but is, instead, a historical narrative of religious opposition covering the past fourteen centuries. Thus, Albrecht undercuts the book's value, reducing the effect to that of mere historical narratives with little relevance to theories on contentious political opposition.

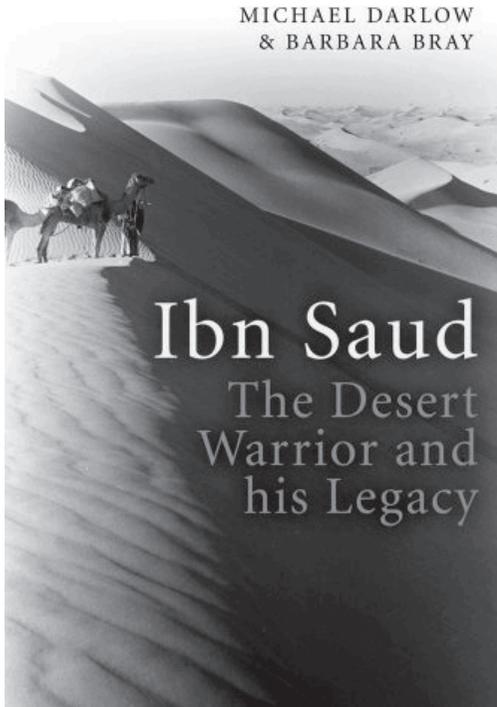
The fundamentals of scientific inquiry presuppose the ability of the researcher not only to identify correctly the existence of a problem but also to assess its magnitude. As if the book's failure to predict the current Arab insurgencies is not enough, the last chapter, Bassel F. Salloukh's "Remaking Lebanon after Syria: The Rise and Fall of Proxy Authoritarianism," delivers the coup de grace: "Syria's exit from Lebanon and the subsequent collapse of its proxy security regime" is prematurely celebrated since Syria's machinations have succeeded in turning the March 14 majority coalition into a parliamentary minority. It is hardly likely that anybody will find this book of utility except perhaps as a warning about the pitfalls of presumptuous scholarship.

Hilal Khashan
American University of Beirut

Ibn Saud: The Desert Warrior and his Legacy. By Michael Darlow and Barbara Bray. London: Quartet, 2010. 598 pp. \$30.

Saudi Arabia's founding monarch 'Abd al-'Aziz Ibn Sa'ud (c. 1876-1953) had a remarkable life. Already the subject of a slew of biographies, he is the subject of another study here, the first in over a decade. Though not an academic work, this sympathetic volume by Bray, a lecturer, translator, and broadcaster, and Darlow, a television producer, is aimed at a general readership. Though it draws on an impressive array of sources, its value lies less in its analysis than in its lively narrative. It is an accessible departure point for the interested reader.

Much of this biography centers on Ibn Saud's earlier years rather than on the kingdom that was later to bear his family's name. These were lean



MICHAEL DARLOW
& BARBARA BRAY

Ibn Saud

The Desert Warrior and his Legacy

years indeed for the future monarch, who was forced as a boy to take flight from his family's tribal enemies. The austerity of Ibn Saud's nomadic upbringing makes his life trajectory all the more notable. As poverty and flight gave way to conquest, expansion, and ultimately power, it is hard to envisage how stark a contrast this turn of fortune represented.

Anecdotes add welcome color to this portrayal: Ibn Saud's attempts to bring hundreds of sheep aboard a U.S. battleship so as to entertain his American guests with traditional Arab hospitality on one occasion is complemented by Winston Churchill's puffing cigar smoke in the king's face on another, while insisting that his "religion prescribed as an absolutely sacred rite smoking cigars and drinking alcohol before, after, and if need be during, all meals and intervals between them."

The focus is overwhelmingly on Ibn Sa'ud, the man and his life, rather than wider issues relating to Wahhabism or contemporary Arabian society. Indeed, the latter receive cursory exploration.

While too long to be a genuinely introduc-

tory guide, *Ibn Saud* will encourage students and interested readers to explore Saudi and Middle Eastern history further.

Richard Phelps
Quilliam Foundation, London

The Iran-Iraq War (Twentieth-Century Wars).
By Rob Johnson. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 192 pp. \$88 (\$29, paper).

Perhaps the most vicious war of the late twentieth century, the 1980-88 conflict between Iran and Iraq deserves a fresh appraisal. In *The Iran-Iraq War*, Johnson, a former U.S. army officer, intended to provide a politically neutral analysis of the conflict that would explain how it shaped subsequent events in the Middle East. Such an undertaking is a worthy goal as bias mars many works on the subject: Stephen C. Pelletiere's *The Iran-Iraq War: Chaos in a Vacuum*¹ astonishingly questions whether Iraq used poison gas against the Kurds at Halabja while Farhang Rajaei's *The Iran-Iraq War: Politics of Aggression*² downplays Khomeini's promotion of revolutionary activity in neighboring countries. Further, since most of the voluminous literature on the Iran-Iraq war was written during or shortly after the conflict, few books explain how the war influenced the region's history.

Unfortunately, Johnson's book leaves largely unfulfilled its promise to explain "how the war shaped the region and set in motion the events that followed." Reminding readers that Saddam Hussein's motivations for invading Kuwait in 1990 included increasing Iraq's oil reserves to pay potentially mutinous returning soldiers and to revive an economy shattered by war does not suffice.

While Johnson avoids repeating as fact the wartime propaganda of either belligerent, he promotes the discredited "October Surprise" conspiracy theory. That story maintains that, to increase Carter's unpopularity and win the 1980 presidential election, Ronald Reagan secretly promised to supply the Iranians with weapons if they would prolong the hostage crisis until after

1 Praeger Publishers, 1992.

2 University Press of Florida, 1993.

the vote. Investigations by *The Village Voice*, *Newsweek*, and *The New Republic*, as well as two congressional inquiries, exposed the allegation as a fraud.³

Although Johnson claims that the time is ripe for a reappraisal of the conflict illuminated by over two decades of hindsight, the book relies too heavily on aging secondary sources and not enough on newly available primary ones. The 2003 invasion of Iraq provided access to much archival material relevant to the Iran-Iraq war, including 2.4 million pages recovered by the Iraq Memory Foundation documenting the Anfal campaign against Kurdish insurgents at the end of the war. Hopefully, authors of future books on the Iran-Iraq war will avail themselves of these resources.

Despite these shortcomings, Johnson does masterfully describe the military operations without getting bogged down in technical information. This book, along with Efraim Karsh's *The Iran-Iraq War*,⁴ is a good primer on the brutal 8-year conflict. For a more technical account, consult Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner's *The Lessons of Modern War, Vol. II: The Iran-Iraq War*.⁵

Micah Levinson
American Foreign Policy Council

The Iraq Effect. The Middle East After the Iraq War. By Frederic Wehrey, Dalia Dassa Kaye, Jessica Watkins, et al. Santa Monica: RAND, 2010. 187 pp. \$40.

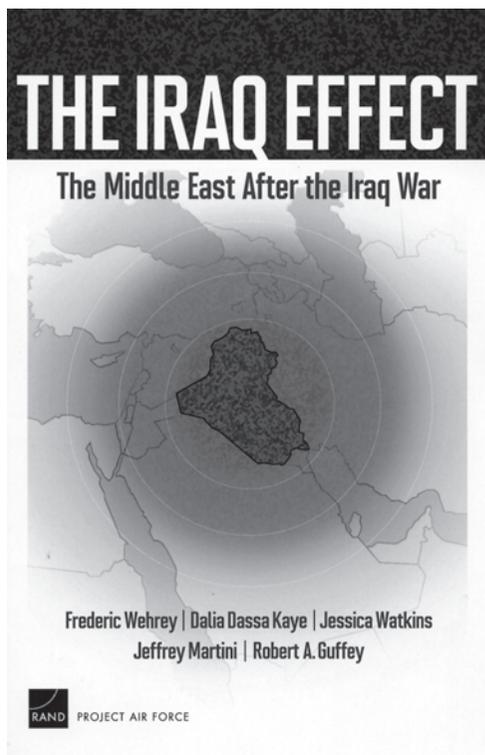
The Iraq Effect is a thought-provoking but flawed study commissioned by the U.S. Air Force on the regional implications of the 2003 Iraq war. Trends discussed may be real, but their presence before Operation Iraqi Freedom suggests that they should not be attributed only to the war.

For example, while the authors are certainly correct that the Iranian regime exploited Iraq's postwar leadership vacuum, attributing Iran's "growing aggressiveness" to the war alone ig-

nores more than two decades of Iranian nuclear threats, its support for Hezbollah, or its efforts to undermine stability in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. That Tehran's boldness might be less due to Iraq's fall and more to do with a long history of Western concessions and voided red-lines indicates a skewed and uncritical perspective.

While the authors correctly mark Turkey's rise as an important regional development, their attribution of the Turks' antagonism toward Washington to the Iraq war is less certain. While Ankara certainly had its reasons for opposing Saddam's ouster, the authors fail to ask whether Turkey's Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) encouraged anti-Americanism on ideological grounds which, at their core, had nothing to do with Iraq.

While *The Iraq Effect* does not break new ground, its discussion of al-Qaeda terrorism after Iraq is valuable. The authors note that terrorists have used Iraq as a laboratory to develop new tactics, which they seek to apply in Lebanon, Gaza, and elsewhere. But, at the same time, al-Qaeda



3 Daniel Pipes, "Remember Ronald Reagan's October Surprise? It Never Happened," *History News Network*, Mar. 29, 2004.

4 Osprey Publishing, 2002.

5 Westview Press, 1990.

has struggled to unite nationalist and transnationalist agendas and win sympathy among the broader Muslim publics, attempts which have largely failed.

The book also performs a valuable service by calling attention to the problem of Iraqi refugees and their potential destabilizing impact on neighboring countries. While this challenge may not have earned headlines, it should be of concern to policymakers.

Alas, most policy recommendations are both tired and predictable. If Iran is resurgent, should it follow that Washington ought to strengthen confidence building measures between Iran and its neighbors, rather than build a broader anti-Iran coalition among the Islamic Republic's neighbors? Likewise, just because the Turkish government seeks a new leadership role, why should U.S. policymakers encourage Ankara if its policy choices promote anti-Western sentiments and encourage Hamas and Hezbollah terrorism?

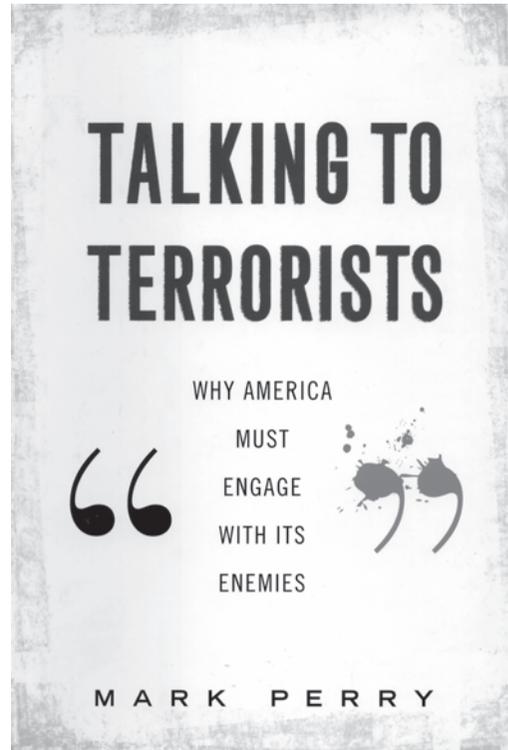
Michael Rubin

Talking to Terrorists. Why America Must Engage with Its Enemies. By Mark Perry. New York: Basic Books, 2010. 253 pp. \$26.95.

Should the U.S. government talk to terrorist groups? Freelance foreign affairs analyst Perry offers a resounding “yes.” His argument, however, is based on a specious reading of recent events in Iraq, which he then extrapolates to other violent players in the Middle East.

Perry contends that it was dialogue rather than the military surge that ultimately ended Iraq's civil war. “The real gamble in Iraq did not actually take place in Iraq,” Perry argues, it “took place in Amman” where U.S. officials engaged Sunni insurgents. The assumption that these talks occurred in a vacuum is a consistent flaw throughout the book. To argue that military pressure does not affect terrorists' decision-making is to deny reality.

Denying reality seems to be Perry's strong suit. When he turns his attention to Hamas and Hezbollah, he describes how, after a series of talks with Western interlocutors, both groups abandoned their maximalist positions. Here, he lacks introspection, never considering the possibility that terrorists lie. Hamas, for example, is said to



have backtracked on its goal to eradicate Israel and agreed to limit its demands to Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem, this despite the fact that Hamas' unrepudiated charter continues to call for the destruction of the Jewish presence in historic Palestine.

Likewise, he takes a Hezbollah spokesman at his word that the group is just anti-Israel and not anti-Semitic but ignores ample evidence to the contrary. Hezbollah's leader Hassan Nasrallah, for example, has quipped, “If they [the Jews] all gather in Israel, it will save us the trouble of going after them worldwide.”⁶

Not only are Perry's arguments weak but so too is his grasp of facts. He embraces Internet-circulated conspiracy theories about U.S. decision-making, misrepresents officials' positions, and presents hearsay as dialogue. Officials Perry dislikes—Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz and Coalition Provisional Authority head Paul Bremer—become cartoon characters.

⁶ *The Daily Star* (Beirut), Oct. 22, 2002.

Tunnel vision also plagues his arguments: He can counsel appeasement to end terror campaigns, but he never considers the impact on those whom terrorists oppose. For example, empowering Sunni rule in Iraq would likely have led to far bloodier backlash among the majority Shiite population. Nor should sacrificing Israel—or any democracy—to autocratic, Islamist terrorists ever be a viable policy option. The question of whether talking to terrorists has a place within U.S. policy options is an important one, but the answer offered here is essentially worthless.

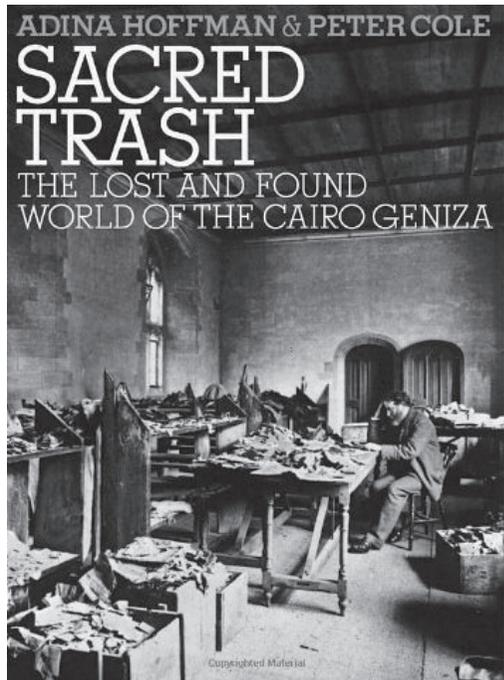
Michael Rubin

Sacred Trash: The Lost and Found World of the Cairo Geniza. By Adina Hoffman and Peter Cole. New York: Schocken, 2011. 386 pages. \$26.95.

With the skill of historians and the style of novelists, Hoffman and Cole tell the remarkable story of the medieval document trove that came to light in the 1890s and has kept scholars busy for over a century.

A *geniza* is a repository for writings with Hebrew letters on them—sometimes even in other languages—which Jews traditionally preserve because God’s name often appears on them and because of a general reverence towards the Hebrew language. The actual content of the texts could be religious, literary, commercial, legal, or personal. The trove found in the Ben Ezra synagogue in Fustat near Cairo contains 331,351 of such pieces of writing dating from as early as 870 C.E. and up to a millennium later.

The authors approach their topic by alternating between the stories of the modern scholars who worked with the materials and the *geniza*’s revelations themselves. Solomon Schechter, Jefim Hayyim Schirmann, Ezra Fleischer, and S.D. Goitein unearthed and studied the materials while the “sacred trash” included the first Hebrew versions of the apocryphal book of Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus), works by the schismatic Karaite sect, Andalusian poetry, and letters of the revered medieval sage, Maiminides. Perhaps most importantly, they bring the daily life of the Jewish community of medi-



eval Egypt and other areas of the Levant to life.

Hundreds of specialists, deploying a great array of linguistic and disciplinary skills, now aided by the Friedberg Genizah Project to inventory and digitize the entire collection, have studied this extraordinary collection of materials, chipping away at the immense volume, contributing brick by brick to the building of a unique scholarly edifice. There is probably no other learned pursuit so detailed, unexpected, ironic, singular, and humane as this one. In the words of Fleischer, “The recovery of the Geniza has meant ... the spectacular completion of a breathtaking landscape, the perfect, harmonious, and inevitable unity of which all of a sudden seems revealed.”

Sacred Trash traces the evolution of focus on the *geniza* from biblical criticism to poetry to history. The book is beautifully written and commended to all who would gain insight into both the painstaking work of dedicated scholars and a world long past.

Daniel Pipes

