

Current Trends in Islamist Ideology

VOLUME 9

- ARE ISLAMIST DOCTRINES CONVERGING? / *Hassan Mneimneh*
- THE BROTHERHOOD VS. AL-QAEDA: A MOMENT OF TRUTH? / *Jean-Pierre Filiu*
- THE HYBRIDIZATION OF JIHADI GROUPS / *Thomas Hegghammer*
- THE BROTHERHOOD AND THE SHIITE QUESTION / *Israel Elad Altman*
- DILEMMAS OF PAN-ISLAMIC UNITY / *Mehdi Khalaji*
- HAMAS'S IDEOLOGICAL CRISIS / *Matthew Levitt*
- YOUNG BROTHERS IN SEARCH OF A NEW PATH / *Khalil al-Anani*
- TALIBANIZATION IN GAZA / *Jonathan Schanzer*
- DAWA AND THE ISLAMIST REVIVAL IN THE WEST / *Nina Wiedl*
- SAID QUTB ON THE ARTS IN AMERICA / *Translation by Daniel Burns*

HUDSON INSTITUTE

*Center on Islam, Democracy, and
the Future of the Muslim World*

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Contents

- 5 / Convergence? The Homogenization
of Islamist Doctrines in Gaza
Hassan Mneimneh
- 18 / The Brotherhood vs. Al-Qaeda:
A Moment of Truth?
Jean-Pierre Filiu
- 26 / The Ideological Hybridization
of Jihadi Groups
Thomas Hegghammer
- 46 / The Brotherhood and the Shiite Question
Israel Elad Altman
- 64 / The Dilemmas of Pan-Islamic Unity
Mehdi Khalaji
- 80 / Hamas's Ideological Crisis
Matthew Levitt
- 96 / The Young Brotherhood
in Search of a New Path
Khalil al-Anani
- 110 / The Talibanization of Gaza
Jonathan Schanzer
- 120 / Dawa and the Islamist Revival in the West
Nina Wiedl
- 151 / Said Qutb on the Arts in America
Translation by Daniel Burns

Convergence? The Homogenization of Islamist Doctrines in Gaza

By *Hassan Mneimneh*

ON AUGUST 14, 2009, A BLOODY CONFRONTATION TOOK PLACE IN Rafah, a city at the southern tip of the Gaza Strip, between Hamas security forces and supporters of Abd al-Latif Musa (aka Abu al-Nur al-Maqdisi), Imam of the Ibn Taymiyya mosque and leader of Gaza's *salafiya* movement. This violent clash seemed to usher in a new, more violent phase in the long-standing intra-Islamist quarrel between Hamas and the al-Qaeda-inspired constellation of salafist-inclined jihadist groups operating in the region. To many observers, the clash was yet more evidence that Hamas, the Muslim Brotherhood's most politically successful offshoot, was ideologically irreconcilable with the tenets of salafist-jihadism, and that the Hamas government could be trusted to serve as a firewall against al-Qaeda's penetration in Gaza. Indeed, in the aftermath of the August violence, the outpouring of salafist-jihadist denunciations, tracts and analyses labeling Hamas as a traitor to the cause of Islam, and even as an apostate organization, only underscored the breadth of the antagonism between these two Islamist rivals.¹

Yet beneath the surface of this ongoing conflict lie a number of developments within Gaza that have considerably narrowed, rather than widened, the gap between the contending and purportedly irreconcilable ideological currents represented by

Hamas and its salafi-jihadist detractors. This process, which is best described as one of ideological convergence and homogenization, is ongoing and, to be sure, its outcomes are not necessarily linear. But the process itself is not limited to the rivalry between Hamas and salafi-jihadists in Gaza; in fact, it affects both field and cyberspace Islamist movements, effectively testing the limits of ideological Islamist expression across the world. Understanding this process of convergence is thus crucial for any assessment of Islamism's plausible futures as a whole.

THE ARAB ORIGINS OF MODERN ISLAMISM, AS AN IDEOLOGY AND AS A SET OF disparate organizational structures, date back to the first half of the 20th Century. The 1924 abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate by the authorities of the newly-formed Turkish Republic created an impetus for a reactionary call for the restoration of the lost institution, whether as a symbolic act of anti-Western struggle or as the kernel of a broader Islamic renewal. This call was, however, distinctly less potent at the time than the ascendant ideas and ideals of modernist progress—national unity, state formation, and anti-colonialism. Indeed, the dominant cultural outlook in most Arab societies and communities had already appropriated for itself many of the elements to which the then-nascent and minority Islamist discourse sought to lay claim.

This was amply demonstrated, among other things, by the semantic evolution of terms that modern Arab Muslim political thought derived from the Islamic scholastic tradition. In hindsight, because of their organic affinities, one might have expected that the traditions of Islam would serve and even advantage the burgeoning Islamist discourse over its non-Islamist competitors. But instead, this tradition and its terminology was appropriated and invested with new meaning by Islamism's more secular and nationalist Muslim competitors with relative ease.

For instance, the word *umma*—the ancestral Arabic term for the “one Muslim community”—was effectively stripped of its original religious substance and identification with the global Muslim community, and was instead promoted as the Arabic answer to the European concept of nation. In its most unqualified usage, *umma* came to refer to the whole of the “Arab Nation”—that is, to an imagined political community that was decidedly not primarily Islamic in its identity, as it included both non-Muslims and Muslims, and excluded non-Arab Muslims. Likewise, the concept of *jihad*—which originally referred to the communal and individual obligation to the Divine to institute Islam as a comprehensive order through multiple means, with the martial aspect being invariably dominant—was thoroughly de-Islamicized, and reapplied by Arab nationalists and leftists to struggles that they deemed praiseworthy and necessary to the advancement of Arab society and nationhood.²

Indeed, for much of the 20th Century and throughout many key parts of the Arab

world (with the notable exception of Saudi Arabia), Arab nationalism, rather than Islam, was the dominant and most dynamic framework for political discourse and activity. Islam as a religion was implicitly or explicitly understood as one aspect of a historically-lived and created Arab civilization and culture. This permitted, among other things, a critical perspective on Islam, as Arab civilization could thus be credited or blamed for Islam's legacy as an actual lived tradition. It also effectively provided a powerful intellectual check on Islamist ideology.

But as Arab nationalism degenerated into an incubator of dictatorships, and as Arab nationalist ideology was further discredited for failing to deliver on the renaissance that it promised, the subsuming of Islam came to a gradual end. Subsequently, a role reversal in cultural constructions began to take effect in which Arab society and culture was recast as a more-or-less conforming offshoot of Islam, which was increasingly being seen as the dominant framework for cultural as well as political life. This was most readily visible in the so-called "Islamic turn" that swept the Arab world in the 1970s, which infused religious sensibilities and ideals into Muslim political life, and which ultimately helped catalyze the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, and the mobilization for the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan in the 1980s. Competing Islamist ideological propositions and groups thus emerged, more the result of the failure of its competitors, as well as field circumstances, than a result of the coalescence of a coherent Islamist ideological discourse.

Nonetheless, Islamism supplied a rough but ready ideology to fill the vacuum left by the receding grand narratives of the 20th Century. The slogan "Islam is the solution," championed and popularized in Arab societies most especially by the Muslim Brotherhood, provided a romantic alternative for the disillusioned base of the increasingly decrepit nationalist and leftist ideological movements that had yielded little more than repression and oppression to their own constituencies. Clearly inspired by its declining secular competitors, Islamism presented its ideals of an "Islamic state" as a more vigorous totalitarian alternative to Arab nationalism, and offered as well what it claimed as a comprehensive agenda of Islamic reform and revival in which individual, family, society, and state were all to undergo a process of "Islamization."

In the past few decades, Islamism has come to dominate the political discourse of many key Muslim societies. By and large, this has been the legacy of the assiduous efforts of the Muslim Brotherhood and similar revivalist movements such as South Asia's Jamaat-e-Islami. As pioneers of modern Islamism, these movements have sought to replace traditional Muslim pietism with Islamic activism, and through their combined efforts, they have effected a general re-orientation of considerable elements of Muslim cultural and political life into an expressly Islamic framework. To the extent that there has been ideological competition within these societies, it has largely been between contending strands of Islamism, rather than between Islamism and its non-

Islamist alternatives. In fact, thus far, Muslim thought has generally failed to offer a substantive and politically potent alternative to Islamist totalitarianism.

THROUGH MUCH OF THE 20TH CENTURY, ISLAMIST TOTALITARIANISM REMAINED more of an aspiration than a system. The details of the “Islamic solution” proposed by the early generation of revivalists remained largely unstated and unsettled, and Islamist movements were invariably incoherent about what they wished for and how they sought to achieve it. The closing decades of the past century witnessed the general emergence of competing Islamist ideological propositions and strategic approaches. The pioneering efforts of revivalist movements like the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and the Jamaat-e-Islami have certainly provided a productive base for adoption and adaptation in the emergent Islamist universe. Yet as a comprehensive system, the Muslim Brotherhood/Jamaat-e-Islami model has failed to impose itself as the essential expression of Islamism.

From Saudi Arabia, another model of Islamic revival emerged with considerable potency. The arrangement between the tribal leadership of Al Saud and the Salafi religious preacher Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab in the 18th century was revived in the 20th as a symbiosis between the Saudi monarchy and the Wahhabi clerical establishment. This revival intrinsically gave increasing power to the clerical establishment, both by enlarging its authority over Saudi society, and by endowing it with a considerable fraction of the oil revenue dividends that allowed it to further expand its role, locally and later globally. The original character of the Saudi-Wahhabi symbiosis, while empowering the clerical establishment to deepen its totalitarian grip on society, was still premised on the perpetuation of the absolute loyalty that the historical salafi school dictated as an obligation on subjects towards Muslim rulers (except in extreme cases of flagrant apostasy of the latter.) But in the 1960s, as the Brotherhood ideology began to insinuate itself into Saudi society, it incubated new salafist intellectual trends in which the regimented loyalism, quietism, and religious pietism imposed by the Wahhabi establishment was infused with a new political activism that saw it as a religious obligation to question, reform, and even violently oppose the authority of *de facto* rulers.

Nowadays, Islamism’s diverse manifestations have generally declared their adherence to one of two procedural-tactical formulations or approaches. These include first (1) an absolutist revolutionary approach, which insists on the immediate and total renunciation of any non-Islamist political order, and the implementation of its theoretical alternative—the “Islamic state”—when at all possible. The second (2) approach is best described as “gradualist” or “evolutionary.” This approach, favored by the Brotherhood and its constellation of offshoots, effectively limits or defers the rejection of non-Islamist political orders, and proceeds instead along a path focused

on incrementally preparing Muslim populations for the full implementation of the ideal of an Islamic state. Of course, these two formulations do not exhaust the procedural alternatives espoused by Islamist formations (one particular variant that accords both with the principled rejection of the first approach as well as the gradualist orientation of the second approach is espoused in theory by Hizb al-Tahrir), nor do these tactical approaches comprehensively determine the strategic vision of their proponents.

The strategic visions of various Islamist movements have also fallen into two main paradigms: (1) a globalized aspiration for a universal Islamic victory over all that is “un-Islamic,” and (2) a localized focus on a comparatively more delineated confrontation. When elaborated to a comprehensive theoretical framework, Islamist ideologies, despite their diverse strategic agendas, have fundamentally agreed that the global and universal paradigm, rather than the localized agenda, is indeed the ultimate strategic goal. However, considerable variations, as well as conflicts, within Islamism exist over the time frame for its eventual implementation. The postponement of such a goal is manifested either in the form of its declared relegation to a long-term or indefinite future, or through Islamism’s conspicuous silence on the matter. Yet whether explicit or implicit, no prominent Islamist movement has ever renounced the ideal of Islam’s global and universal victory over the un-Islamic.

Indeed, in this respect the modern Islamist position is clearly derived from the classical scholastic tradition—which stipulates an ultimate triumph for Islam—and from the fundamental understanding of Islam as a “mercy to all humankind,” which dictates that believers should carry the message of their faith globally. It is noteworthy that modern non-Islamist Muslim thought has provided few substantive alternatives to the intrinsically martial character and message of the Islamist universal paradigm. The absence of such alternatives has clearly enhanced Islamism’s predatory and opportunistic behavior.

Historically, these two binary sets of tactical approaches and strategic paradigms have yielded four combinations that have been variably espoused by Islamist groups: (1-1) an absolutist revolutionary approach with a globalist outlook, which is best exemplified today by al-Qaeda; (1-2) an absolutist revolutionary approach with a localized focus, which appears to be the current posture of the Taliban in Afghanistan and the *de facto* reality of Somalia’s Shabab; (2-1) a gradualist evolutionary approach with a globalist outlook, which is the not-so-muted aspiration of the Muslim Brotherhood as an international organization; and (2-2) a gradualist evolutionary approach with a localized focus, as is the declared position of Hamas in Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The most acute contrast, in tactics and strategy, is thus between what al-Qaeda and Hamas respectively represent: 1-1 and 2-2. Nowadays, al-Qaeda may be the most

visible symbol of global salafist-jihadism, while Hamas, as arguably the most politically successful Brotherhood offshoot and the custodian of active Palestinian Islamism, imposes itself as an actor to be accounted for by all Islamists worldwide. Still, an apparent structural antagonism opposes the two. The contrast is dramatically sharpened when Hamas's roots in religious ideology are de-emphasized and those of al-Qaeda are highlighted. If, according to this view, Hamas is to be understood as an expression of Arab resistance to occupation, and the last incarnation of the struggle of Palestinian society to oppose—even if self-destructively—acts of oppression and dispossession, Hamas's stated Islamist ideology has to be largely ignored; it is an artifact of the need to mobilize and solicit support, in light of the failures of other political propositions, whether internationalist, nationalist, or patriotic. Hamas's declared gradualist approach toward Islamizing Palestinian society might thus be dismissed as rhetorical, instrumental, or utopian—and hence, as unrealizable. Hamas's localized focus, on the other hand, can be trusted as consistent with Palestinian history and national aspirations, and therefore as reflective of the true character of the organization.

By contrast, al-Qaeda's militants could correctly be seen as ideologically detached from the suffering of the Palestinians; its sporadic use of the question of Palestine and the festering conflict there could thus be termed both insincere and utilitarian, aimed at gaining recruits through a most effective bait-and-switch method—catch by using Palestine as bait, keep and use later for the Islamic struggle for the caliphate.

Those who interpret away Hamas's ideological posture often do so in the hopes that Hamas might serve as a potential interlocutor in the resumption of the elusive Middle East peace process. These analysts may expect Hamas, as an organization, to be susceptible to a positive evolution in the direction of moderation. Thus Hamas would presumably constitute a firewall or a bulwark against al-Qaeda's efforts to establish itself in the Palestinian scene.

Naturally, the existence of pragmatists (and opportunists) in Hamas's ranks is well within the realm of possibilities. The pronouncements of Hamas leaders—notably Khalid Mishal³ from his Damascus exile, but also Ismail Haniyyah in Gaza⁴—often leave ample room for analysis that supports the expectations of those who would like to see Hamas play a constructive role in the peace process. More significantly, the actions of Hamas in repeatedly cracking down on the salafist-jihadists within the Gaza Strip seem, at face value, to confirm the Palestinian movement's anti-al-Qaeda credentials. However, focusing solely on the (still unrealized) promises of Hamas's pragmatists, and on Hamas's violent response toward the incoherent salafist-jihadist challenges to its own rule, effectively serves to conceal the long-term effect that Hamas has had on Gazan society in general, and on their own militants and ideology in particular.

Hamas's leadership has been trying to hold two positions at the same time. On the

one hand, they have issued statements declaring that it is not their intention to establish an Islamic state or emirate in Gaza. They've additionally indicated their willingness to enter into a lasting and potentially renewable truce of seven or even fifty years with Israel, based on a complete withdrawal to the 1967 borders. On the other hand, they have permitted—and in some instances, even encouraged—a broad-based discourse among Hamas's rank and file, in its broadcast media, and on the Internet, championing the effective Islamization of Gazan society. They stress further that any perceived delays in implementing measures consistent with the Islamist understanding of Islamic jurisprudence are only temporary, and that the putative truce that Hamas offers Israel is by necessity only provisional, even if its period is extended, until the means of eradicating the Jewish state are secured.

Three different analyses have competed in attempting to reconcile the apparent contradictions in Hamas's dual posture. The first is that Hamas's inclination towards compromise with Israel is potentially real, and that the leadership's permissiveness toward the more bellicose undercurrent is a means of mollifying frustrations at the movement's more intransigent base. The second view understands Hamas's language of compromise essentially to be a cover to improve its operational mobilization and readiness, and to confuse and divide its enemy. The third view is indifferent to the intentions of both Hamas's leadership and its base, and assumes that once Hamas is effectively engaged in a settlement process, however insincerely, the dynamics of that process will facilitate further engagement, hopefully productively.

Irrespective of which analysis ultimately proves correct, the current dual posture Hamas has settled on is incrementally shifting Gazan society and culture toward the embrace of more radical formulations of Islamism. Even in the most optimistic analysis, which hopes that the Hamas leadership is using ideological radicalism merely as a means of appeasing and securing its base, the increasing radicalization of Hamas's militants and base will likely work to dramatically curtail the leadership's ability to maneuver in the future. Meanwhile, this doctrinal position and the realities of Hamas's Islamizing policies are preparing the social, cultural, and political ground within Gaza for the future embrace of explicitly more radical ideologies and political agendas. This dynamic, needless to say, becomes all the more powerful in the event that Hamas's leadership becomes weakened, and by extension, its gradualist approach toward Islamization discredited.

THIS SCENARIO—GAZAN SOCIETY'S FULL-THROATED EMBRACE OF INTRANSIGENT AND totalitarian Islamism—represents the declared hopes of many salafist ideologues, and they have been actively pursuing this goal in their dealings with Hamas, and Gaza as a whole, in recent years. Indeed, the salafi-jihadists have sought to capitalize on the tension between Hamas's increasingly radicalized base, and its pragmatic-leaning

leadership, in hopes of reaching one of two outcomes: either force the leadership to adopt an ideological and political agenda consistent with al-Qaeda's, or drive Hamas to implosion in the hopes of creating opportunities for the emergence of even more radical alternatives within Gaza and elsewhere.

In recent years, this salafi-jihadist strategy has been instrumental in shaping the dynamics of the confrontation between Hamas and al-Qaeda.⁵ The intensity of the verbal conflict between these two rivals has ebbed and flowed as a function of events on the ground. Nonetheless, salafi-jihadism has been most responsible for setting the agenda and terms of this rivalry. Both the symbolic leadership and the ideologues of al-Qaeda have engaged in advising, chastising, and condemning Hamas for various actions and positions it has taken. At times they have also praised the militants within Hamas's ranks, and in other instances have even extended their praise to include the organization as a whole. Far fewer communications in this exchange have originated from Hamas. Occasionally, Hamas's leadership has replied dismissively to al-Qaeda's condemnations and invitations. But Hamas's responses have been largely defensive, and far from coordinated. In one instance, it was left to a junior field commander to disparagingly answer Abu Umar al-Baghdadi, the alleged leader of the al-Qaeda affiliated Islamic State of Iraq, when Baghdadi called on Hamas militants to mutiny against their leadership.

Meanwhile, all of the salafist-jihadist movement's communications to Hamas, whether in praise or challenge, have sought to push Hamas—and Gazan society as a whole along with it—toward the embrace of more radical social and political positions. In particular, salafist-jihadist ideologues, periodically joined by al-Qaeda's leaders, have assaulted Hamas for its dereliction in adhering to four of their defining principles in, respectively, the political, social, international relations, and military realms.

(1) Politically, Hamas has refrained from declaring an Islamic state or emirate. Furthermore, Hamas has contested (and won) parliamentary elections. Hamas is thus in blatant violation of the salafist notion of *al-hakimiyyah*—the recognition of the sole jurisdiction of divine revelation in legislation and political authority.⁶ Salafist-jihadist ideologues are willing to recognize that circumstances can delay the declaration of an Islamic entity. In Iraq, where such an entity was declared, some salafist-jihadists refused to pledge allegiance to it on the grounds that the declaration was premature. They were not chastised. However, Hamas's critics profess outrage at Hamas's willing embrace of the political order of the Palestinian Authority. In their view, the alternative to an Islamic state should be no state at all, not the acceptance of an order that transgresses Islamist principles.

Hamas's answer to this challenge refrains from any defense of the Palestinian Authority as a political system. One Hamas-affiliated major religious scholar provided

an apologetic explanation for this: Hamas Members of Parliament participate in the legislative council to ensure that no law that runs contrary to Islamic precepts is promulgated.⁷ Participation in the Palestinian Authority political framework thus falls under the doctrinal category of *makruh*—detestable actions that nonetheless might be needed to secure the larger, collective interests of Islam. This position may in fact be informed by fatwas that Lebanese salafist clerics have proclaimed in order to allow salafist voters to participate in national elections and to help deny Hezbollah a political victory. In any case, it constitutes a defense of Hamas's actions, not of the electoral political system to which Hamas, as a political organization, claims to adhere. As such, it underlines the merely temporary accommodation of Hamas to this Palestinian political system. Additionally, it also underscores that the rivalry between Hamas and salafist-jihadism is rooted in differing assessments of their respective current interests, and not in principle.

(2) Socially, Hamas has indeed engaged in a process of Islamization, surrounding Gazan society within an Islamic framework—from banning alcohol consumption for Muslims, to closing entertainment and other establishments deemed un-Islamic, to fostering and promoting activities focused on spreading Islamic sensibilities and values.⁸ By pursuing this path, Hamas appears to be striving to fulfill considerable aspects of the salafist understanding of the concept of *al-amr bi-l-maruf wa-l-nahi an al-munkar*—the call for virtue and the admonishing of vice. Still, salafist critics point out that Hamas's social agenda is compromised by the Palestinian movement's compliance with civil law and justified on the basis that it serves the public interest. In the salafist view, a purist, more authentic implementation of the sharia ought to be restricted to the measures stipulated by Islamic jurisprudence, and declared to be, in effect, solely in obedience to the divine order and not man-made law.

In reaction to this criticism, Hamas supporters once again haven't sought to contend with the salafi-jihadists by articulating an alternative principle. Instead, they've complained that their salafist critics are holding Hamas to a higher standard than the one that's been applied by salafists virtually anywhere else (with the exception of Saudi Arabia, from where much of such criticism originates). Hamas also invokes the approach of *tadarruj* (graduality) or *tadarrujiyyah* (gradualism) in its multi-faceted efforts to educate Palestinian society in Islamic law and to introduce punishments mandated by Islamic jurisprudence. Most of Hamas's salafist-jihadist critics appear to reject this gradualism as an unwarranted historical innovation in Islamic jurisprudence that is not rooted in the pure ways and practices of Islam's venerable ancestors. In response to these salafist-jihadist criticisms, Hamas's defenders resort themselves to salafist principles and modes of argumentation, seeking to provide counter-examples from the actions of the Prophet Muhammad that justify their gradualist strategy. As such, Hamas's ideological champions have sought to portray

it as agreeing in principle with salafist-jihadist doctrine, but disagreeing merely on procedural aspects.

(3) With salafist-jihadism as a whole presently consumed with attacking and disparaging Shiism in its rituals and beliefs, it is not surprising that it also denounces Hamas for its cordial relations and alliance with Hezbollah, Iran, and Syria. (Salafi-jihadist ideologues reject Hamas's relations with the former two on the basis of their Shia character, and they reject Hamas's connections to Syria on the basis of the Alawite sectarian identity of the state's leader and his inner circle.) Hamas's relations with these actors, compounded with Hamas's stated and implied rejection of al-Qaeda overtures, amount to a complete transgression against the salafist-jihadist understanding of the concept of *al-wala wa-l-bara*, (allegiance to Muslims, and rejection of non-Muslims).⁹ Further to this, a few of Hamas's harsher salafist critics have even accused it of being a propagator of Shiism in the Sunni world.

As one consequence of the pressures of this salafist assault, the rhetoric of Hamas's defenders on the Shiite question has changed dramatically in the past few years. Whereas they once defended Hamas's alliances with Shiites on the basis of the principle of pan-Islamic solidarity, nowadays they provide a more nuanced explanation, claiming that such alliances are a practical necessity in the absence of alternatives. Furthermore, a broad-based effort to reconfirm Hamas's Sunni credentials seems to be underway, with Hamas-affiliated forums replete with Sunni doctrinal works (with a preponderance of salafist standards), and with the occasional denunciation of Shiite faith and practice. Hamas's change of perspective on the Shiite question is also evident in the virtual absence of Hezbollah flags at Hamas events, in contrast with a recent past in which these yellow flags competed with Hamas's own. Once again, Hamas strives to cast its position as fundamentally in agreement with its salafist critics, albeit with operational distinctions.

(4) The core objection that many salafist-jihadists address to Hamas is the latter's current curtailment of active military jihad. Long gone are the days when Hamas used to dispatch its suicide bombers for lethal operations in Israel. Also long gone are the days when Hamas persistently launched its homemade rockets to hit random targets in Israeli towns near Gaza. Instead, Hamas, its Islamist critics complain, is now engaged in interdicting resistance operations that salafist-jihadist cells intend to undertake, serving effectively as a border guard for Israel.

Hamas supporters are seemingly unanimous in their rejection of this salafi-jihadist objection. Hamas, from their perspective, has and will engage in jihad when it deems it necessary and useful. When it does, it clearly has divine support: popular accounts of the participation of an army of angels in the December 2008–January 2009 confrontation with the IDF are exchanged and accepted as articles of truth. From Hamas's perspective, the Cast Lead confrontation alone ought to humble or

discredit its critics. Here, too, Hamas's response reveals that it is in basic agreement with its salafist critics on matters of principle.

IN THE AFTERMATH OF HAMAS'S SUPPRESSION OF SALAFI-JIHADIST ELEMENTS AT the Ibn Taymiyya mosque in Gaza in August 2009, Hamas's salafist critics have ramped-up their attacks on the Palestinian Islamist movement. The fact that Qassam fighters participated in the suppression of Abu al-Nur al-Maqdisi's group has meant that all of Hamas—not just its leadership—has been the target of the salafist-jihadist's wrath. Islamist cyberspace has since been flooded with a wave of anti-Hamas publications with such titles as *The Truth about Hamas*, *The Dissipation of Confusion about Hamas*, *An Alert on the Lies of Hamas*, and *Hamas Destroys its Image*. The arguments presented in these tracts are repetitive and simple. This, in addition to the ubiquity of these anti-Hamas tracts, may in part account for their apparent ideological potency.

Yet despite salafism's virulent anti-Hamas rhetoric, it would be a mistake to view the two movements as irreconcilably at odds with each other. In fact, even though Hamas has demonstrated its willingness to defend its political interests with violence, Hamas in recent years has grown closer to its salafist-jihadist critics than ever before in terms of its ideological outlook. This has been, in part, a consequence of Hamas permitting and even encouraging through its Islamization policies the spread of salafist sentiments and ideology within its ranks. Hamas's approach has thus created an increasingly unstable ideological situation in Gaza that will, at the very least, pose challenges for the future rule of Hamas's current leadership, unless it, or the next generation of Hamas leaders, moves openly to embrace salafist ideology for themselves.

Furthermore, and perhaps far more crucially, in its efforts to justify and to defend its policies and its rule in Gaza, Hamas has consistently conceded ideological primacy to its salafist-jihadist detractors, albeit indirectly and reluctantly. This, in effect, is bringing about the convergence and homogenization of the Islamist universe within Gaza, in a framework defined increasingly by salafism, and not by Hamas. In fact, the nature of the rivalry between the gradualist and revolutionary forms of Islamist militancy is fast becoming less about principle and content, and more about method and form, with salafist-jihadism successfully promoting its precepts as normative. Seen in this light, Hamas can hardly be considered an ideological bulwark or firewall against salafist-jihadism.

These developments in Gaza have potentially far-reaching consequences for Islamism's future as a whole. Today, the Islamist scene is still dominated by two major ideological and organizational trends: organizations such as Hamas that are born out of the Muslim Brotherhood and that remain more-or-less within its sphere; and formations adhering to one of the multiple expressions of salafism. In the competition

between these two broad-based trends, the Brotherhood, as the oldest and most well-established of the two movements, may still have certain organizational advantages. But salafist ideology has a distinctly more potent and coherent outlook that, in many contexts, appears to have gained the momentum.

That salafism seems to have seized the ideological upper-hand in Gaza is potentially indicative of where the overall struggle between the Brotherhood and salafism is heading. After all, Hamas is the ultimate Muslim Brotherhood success story: Never before has a component of the Brotherhood movement gained and wielded power for as long as Hamas has. It is also extremely significant that this Brotherhood success has occurred in Palestine, with its symbolic and catalytic power. Yet despite these successes, Hamas has been unable to impose its Brotherhood-inspired ideology on Gazan society as the essential expression of Islamism. Hamas and the Brotherhood as a whole have furthermore been incapable of supplying any substantive ideological alternative to salafism other than the claim that they are proceeding in the same direction that salafism is, albeit gradually. Salafist ideology thus remains effectively unchecked by the Brotherhood; in fact, if the developments in Gaza are any indication, the Brotherhood's gradualist approach has only served to clear the way for salafism's coming ascendancy in the Islamist universe.

NOTES

1. A prominent illustration of the ongoing assault is demonstrated by al-Falluja Islamic Forums, the flagship of the salafist-jihadist web presence, which has since August 2009 violence in Gaza maintained a dedicated section in Arabic, with the title "forum of the media raid of the martyr Abu al-Nur al-Maqdisi." <http://www.alfaloja.info/vb/forumdisplay.php?f=73>.
2. A demonstration of this latter transformation survives in the name of the Islamic Jihad Organization, which was founded in the 1970s in Palestine, in a cultural scene that required that the organization designate itself as Islamic. Without this qualifier, a "jihad organization" would've been in principle indistinguishable from its non-Islamist rivals.
3. See for example <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/13796114-4BC1-4E95-A0A3-CD24EE372117.htm>, a television interview in Arabic, in which Mishal underlines the "fundamental differences" between Hamas and salafist-jihadism.
4. See for example "Ismail Haniyah: Hamas does not want to establish an Islamic Emirate in Gaza" [in Arabic], 14 December 2009, <http://www.elnashra.com/news-1-380944.html>.
5. For a review of the phases through which this conflict has evolved, see H. Mneimneh, *The Jihadist International: Al Qaeda's Advance in the Levant* (May 1, 2009), <http://www.aei.org/paper/100015>.
6. See for example "A debate on al-hakimiyyah and the Emirate: Hamas and Jund Ansar Allah as examples" [in Arabic] on Muntadayat Shumukh al-Islam, a prominent Salafist-Jihadist bulletin board, <http://shamikh.org/vb/showthread.php?t=49736>.

7. Samih Dallul, a Hamas-supported cleric and host of religious programs on al Aqsa's television station engaged Hamas's critics at numerous occasions with an elaboration of the position. See, for example, the debate chronicled on *shabakat al-riyan li-l-hiwar*, between Dallul and a salafist critic, <http://www.jihadway.com/vb/forumdisplay.php?f=1>.
8. An example of a critical report on these measures can be found in " Hamas products in the Strip: A self-styled call for virtue gang chases the youth and the flags of Fatha?" (October 4, 2007), <http://www.palvoice.com/popup.php?id=3526>.
9. An example of the Salafist critique of Hamas on this subject is presented in Arabic at "Gaining allies does not justify aggressing al-wala wal-bara'" (February 18, 2008), <http://www.muslim.net/vb/archive/index.php/t-281038.html>.

The Brotherhood vs. Al-Qaeda: A Moment of Truth?

By Jean-Pierre Filiu

AL-QAEDA BUILT ITS IDEOLOGICAL DOCTRINE LARGELY IN OPPOSITION to the Muslim Brotherhood's pervasive and once dominant approach to Islam's political revival. For many years, the Muslim Brotherhood attempted to ignore al-Qaeda's challenge and concentrated instead on beefing up its own organizational and ideological alternative to the ruling secular regimes in the Arab world and elsewhere. This pattern changed dramatically after September 11, 2001, when it became more difficult for the Brotherhood to disregard al-Qaeda and the two movements began competing more openly for leadership of the overall Islamist movement.

At the core of the dispute between al-Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood lies a clash between two different conceptions of jihad and its purposes under contemporary circumstances. Al-Qaeda projects a global agenda, where every Muslim land—"from Granada to Kashgar," as Ayman al-Zawahiri has put it—needs to be "liberated" from non-Islamic rule. Jihad is conceived of as an individual duty that all Muslims must fulfil by struggling in word and deed against any representative of the "Jews and Crusaders," as well as against "apostate" Muslim governments. The Muslim Brotherhood, by contrast, has for reasons both ideological and tactical tended in recent decades to embrace a more limited conception of jihad combined with missionary activity and organized political struggle. The Brotherhood, for instance, has officially renounced the use of revolutionary violence to overturn existing Muslim states. Moreover, while the movement has fervently supported armed struggle against non-Islamic

forces in places like Iraq, they have also sought to offer an alternative jihadism to al-Qaeda's sectarianism, and the Brotherhood's Iraqi branch has come in recent years to embrace the U.S.-backed political system of post-Saddam Iraq. Likewise, the Brotherhood-offshoot Hamas, which since 2006 has officially ruled over the Gaza strip, is the first Palestinian militia to consistently limit its activities to the territory of pre-1948 Palestine—meaning Israel, the West Bank and Gaza.

In recent times, these two Islamist movements came to blows yet again after Hamas seized control of the Gaza strip and, in the process of consolidating its power, subsequently repressed Gaza's al-Qaeda-inspired groups. Nowadays, al-Qaeda's ongoing conflict with Hamas has become one of the main liabilities to al-Qaeda's propaganda and its efforts to establish itself as the leader of the worldwide jihadist movement. The outcome of this now generation-old intra-Islamist dispute will have important consequences for the future direction of jihadism.

Bitter Harvests

THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD'S NETWORKS WERE INITIALLY INDISPENSIBLE IN channelling funds and volunteers into the anti-Soviet Afghan jihad which laid the fertile ground from which al-Qaeda emerged. One of the key people behind the Brotherhood's activities in support of the jihad was Shaykh Kamal Sananiri, a prominent Saudi-based Egyptian Brotherhood militant who handled the political dimension of the Saudi Kingdom's support of the Afghan militant factions. Sananiri organized the formal rallying of the mujahidin groups around Abd al-Rasul Sayyaf, who became the patron of the Arab fighters. It was also Sananiri who convinced Abdallah Azzam, a lecturer at the University of Jeddah and former leader of the Jordanian Brotherhood, to move to Pakistan to support the Afghan jihad. When Sananiri disappeared from the scene in the aftermath of President Sadat's assassination (he was later arrested in October 1981 and died in detention), Azzam took over as the liaison between the Arab militants and the Afghan mujahidin.

Osama bin Laden first travelled to Pakistan as a Muslim Brotherhood envoy to the Pakistani Jamaat-e-Islami; he had been tasked with delivering material support to the Afghan mujahidin. Bin Laden joined Azzam in Peshawar, where in 1984 they together established the "Services Bureau," a worldwide network to foster volunteering and financing on behalf of the Afghan cause. Azzam had earlier clashed with the Jordanian Brotherhood's leadership over their reluctance to endorse military aid to the Afghan jihad. With the Services Bureau initiative, Azzam and bin Laden effectively emancipated themselves from the Muslim Brotherhood.

Azzam and bin Laden's breakaway from the Muslim Brotherhood occurred during

the disastrous collapse of the Brotherhood's uprising against the Syrian regime—a traumatic event that fuelled a violent debate among the Brothers over whether an Islamic state could ever be achieved through revolutionary jihad. Ultimately, the revolutionary or “military” option was defeated in this dispute, and political struggle and participation in existing political orders, with the intention of transforming them from within, became the Brotherhood's main focus.

For Brotherhood militants unhappy with their movement's new political direction, the Afghan jihad, and Bin Laden and Azzam's Services Bureau in Peshawar, soon became a major destination. Among these individuals was Abu Musab al-Suri (Mustafa Settmariam Nasar's moniker), a young militant from the Syrian “Fighting Vanguard” group. In Peshawar these disillusioned Brotherhood activists met diehard Egyptian radicals who shared a deep hostility towards the Brotherhood's “treacherous” ways. Two of these Egyptian leaders, Said Imam al-Sharif (who is perhaps best known today by his *nom de guerre*, “Doctor Fadl”) and Ayman al-Zawahiri, accused the Brotherhood of collaborating with “apostate” regimes.

This anti-Brotherhood background was crucial in the ideological formation of al-Qaeda when the movement was secretly founded in August 1988. Zawahiri collected his anti-Brotherhood materials in his landmark book *The Bitter Harvest*, which was published in Peshawar and circulated throughout the world through al-Qaeda's burgeoning networks. To this day, al-Qaeda condemns what it regards as the Muslim Brotherhood's chain of “betrayals” of Islam's cause—especially including their betrayal of the principle of God's sovereignty (*hakimiyya*, by forming political parties and embracing modern political life) and their “betrayal” of the Islamic obligation of jihad (by dropping the revolutionary option and embracing a more limited concept of jihad).

Hamas Emerges

HAMAS WAS ESTABLISHED IN DECEMBER 1987, WHEN THE PALESTINIAN BRANCH of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood seceded and formed an independent group. This development represented a departure from what had been for almost four decades the Brotherhood's policy and practice with respect to Israel. In 1949, the Jordanian branch of the Brotherhood had endorsed the Hashemite Kingdom's annexation of the West Bank and kept a unified apparatus on both sides of the Jordan River. This system was more or less preserved after the Israeli occupation in 1967, and the Brotherhood continued to support the Hashemite claim of sovereignty against the Palestinian nationalist camp.

By leaving the Jordanian realm, Hamas was effectively joining the Palestinian

nationalist camp. However, this new Islamist movement generally steered clear of the Fatah-dominated Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which was deemed too secular by Hamas's standards. At the same time, Hamas's main priority—and, by extension, the top priority of those elements of the Brotherhood movement as a whole that came to support Hamas's breakaway from the Jordanian Brotherhood—was anti-Israel militancy. This embrace of jihad represented somewhat of a shift for the Brotherhood away from the social activism and underground ideological work that had been its focus ever since government-led crackdowns on the movement in the 1960s. And through Hamas's ascendancy, anti-Israel militancy became increasingly one of the chief ways in which the Brotherhood as a whole attempted to establish its Islamist credentials and win new recruits to its organization.

In August 1996, bin Laden pledged to liberate Saudi Arabia from “infidel occupation” and declared jihad against the United States. But at the time, he also felt the need to align the al-Qaeda movement with the Palestinian cause, and so he praised Shaykh Ahmad Yassin, Hamas's charismatic leader, for rejecting the peace agreements signed between Israel and the PLO. A wave of Hamas suicide attacks in Israel had triggered, in March 1996, the convening of a peace summit in Sharm al-Sheikh; al-Qaeda propaganda increasingly used the images of the Arab leaders embracing their US or Israeli counterparts as powerful illustrations of the collusion between the “apostate regimes” and the “Crusaders.” Al-Qaeda was also inspired by the posthumous statements of Hamas “martyrs” and imitated this public relations tactic with its own suicide-bombers. But on the whole, Palestinian nationalism was too strong to fall for global jihad and al-Qaeda could only recruit a few militants of Palestinian origin, all of whom had been born and raised in the Gulf.

After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, bin Laden went on invoking the Palestinian cause as a way of fostering his global outreach. But al-Qaeda's anti-Israeli attacks in Mombasa in November 2002, which left 15 dead including 3 Israeli tourists, were barely noticed among Palestinian fighters in West Bank and Gaza. After the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi tried to persuade bin Laden to establish a power base in Iraq's guerrilla-controlled areas; from there, he proposed that al-Qaeda could move into Jordan and, eventually, wage war against Israel. But at that time, al-Qaeda was absorbed in its own terror campaign in Saudi Arabia, and it was not until late 2004 that al-Qaeda endorsed Zarqawi's strategy.

During his reign of terror in Iraq, one of Zarqawi's favorite targets was the Iraqi branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, known as the Islamic Party, which joined post-Saddam Iraq's US-backed and secured government and began participating in the country's political system. Zarqawi also managed to expand al-Qaeda's jihadist networks into his home country of Jordan, and in August 2005, a rocket was fired by al-Qaeda militants onto Israeli territory. Hamas was, at that time, busy trying to make

the most of Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza, and Palestinian militants were publicly angered by Zarqawi's provocations.

In January of 2006, when Hamas political candidates ran for Palestinian legislative elections, al-Qaeda's propaganda turned entirely against the Palestinian movement. During this period, Zawahiri's *Bitter Harvest* polemic against the Brotherhood was recycled against Hamas. When Hamas decided to field candidates, for instance, al-Qaeda accused it of behaving like other regional Brotherhood branches by betraying God's sovereignty and embracing the "infidel" system of democracy. Furthermore, al-Qaeda propagandists argued that Hamas's participation in Palestinian elections was tantamount to recognizing Israel, since the Palestinian electoral institutions had been a by-product of Israel-PLO agreements. Al-Qaeda's ideological assault on Hamas flared up again when the latter formed a government; it escalated further in February 2007, when the Saudi king sponsored an agreement between Hamas and its rival Fatah in Mecca. When Hamas ousted Fatah from the Gaza strip in June 2007, al-Qaeda rejoiced over the expulsion of what it deemed "apostates," and then demanded that Hamas proclaim an "Islamic emirate" to rule over the area. In spite of this, the intra-Islamist conflict between al-Qaeda and Hamas only continued to deteriorate.

Target: Gaza

AFTER OUSTING FATAH, HAMAS SWIFTLY MOVED AGAINST THE ARMED GROUPS that had spread throughout the Gaza strip during previous years. Hamas's goals in seeking to purge Gaza of militant groups other than itself and to consolidate its power over the strip were multi-fold: to wipe-out all remaining pockets of Fatah supporters and to deter the threat of a Ramallah-inspired military roll-back; to restore law and order, which was one of the main concerns of the local population; to stop the kidnapping of foreign nationals (24 foreigners, including 16 Westerners, had been abducted in Gaza from 2004 to 2006); and to attempt to boost its international image.

Hamas moved quickly in particular against a shadowy group known as the "Army of Islam" (*Jaysh al-Islâm*), which had been embedded in the powerful Dughmush clan, one of the most heavily armed factions in the Gaza strip. The Army of Islam had abducted a BBC correspondent in Gaza and subsequently demanded the release of two al-Qaeda-linked detainees—a failed Iraqi suicide-bomber imprisoned in Jordan, and the charismatic cleric Abu Qutada, who was jailed in the UK. While the Army of Islam indulged in inflammatory rhetoric against Hamas that echoed al-Qaeda's own polemic, Hamas attacked the group. It first secured the British hostage's release, then dismantled the Army of Islam, and finally crushed the defiant Dughmush stronghold.

Armed to the teeth, Hamas took the same repressive steps against all the other jihadi factions operating within its territory, including the “Army of the Muslim Nation” (*Jaysh al-umma*) and the “Soldiers of the Companions of God” (*Jund Ansar Allah*). Radical mosques were raided and al-Qaeda-inspired militants were rounded up. Even Afghan attire, which is typically worn by salafi fighters, was banned by Hamas. The only faction that was tolerated by Hamas was its long-term anti-Israel ally Islamic Jihad. But while Islamic Jihad’s militants were sent to the frontlines to join Hamas’s fighters against Israel, Hamas banned them from patrolling the streets of Gaza.

Hamas’s liquidation of al-Qaeda-linked and inspired groups in Gaza scandalized the leadership of the global jihadist movement. In December 2007, bin Laden himself accused Hamas of “neglecting its religion” and “recognizing international treaties” with non-Islamic entities, while Zawahiri excoriated Hamas for having “surrendered four-fifths of Palestine.” In February 2008, Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq and its self-proclaimed caliph, called for Hamas’s militant wing to declare that it would sever ties with the movement’s “deviant and corrupt political leadership.” This call for an internal coup inside the Islamist movement had the effect of spurring Hamas’s leadership to tighten its grip on Gaza strip and to clamp down on other Islamist factions.

Al-Qaeda’s hostility toward Hamas ultimately backlashed when, during the fall of 2007, Said Imam al-Sharif—better known as “Dr. Fadl,” one of the founding members of al-Qaeda—turned against bin Laden and Zawahiri. This public repudiation struck a devastating blow to al-Qaeda’s prestige in jihadi circles—a blow that Zawahiri later hoped to deflect in an online chat session that he hosted with militants. In the course of these exchanges, most of al-Qaeda’s critics expressed disapproval either with al-Qaeda’s massacres of fellow Muslims in countries like Iraq or with al-Qaeda’s vocal condemnations of Hamas.¹

After this episode, al-Qaeda’s leaders toned down their attacks against Hamas and focused more on what they described as the Islamic duty to wage war against Israel and to lift the “siege of Gaza.” In doing so, they accused Hosni Mubarak’s government in Egypt of collaborating with Israel in enforcing the siege, called upon the Egyptian “masses” to rebel against their rulers, and then criticized the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood for accepting the *status quo*.

Al-Qaeda’s globalization of the Islamist propaganda surrounding Gaza effectively allowed it to benefit from the conflict without directly confronting Hamas. This continued throughout Israel’s Cast Lead offensive in Gaza, which was launched in the last days of 2008. In January 2009, bin Laden called for a worldwide campaign of terror against the USA and Israel, while reiterating his pledge once again to topple what he dubbed as apostate Arab regimes. In this, Gaza appeared to be no more than one piece on the ambitious chessboard of al-Qaeda’s global jihad.

Without a doubt, al-Qaeda was disappointed that Hamas's leadership and militia did not suffer greater losses during the Israeli offensive. As long as Hamas's control over Gaza remains, al-Qaeda has little opportunity of developing its own networks in that closely-knit territory. As of now, it is only in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon that Palestinian nationalism has partially dissolved and been replaced by salafist "globalism."² The fact that Hamas always refused to develop a military presence in Lebanon and in its refugee camps, even after the decline of the PLO as well as pro-Syrian factions, has left a security vacuum especially around the cities of Saida and Tripoli that salafi-jihadi groups have managed to penetrate.

In the winter of 2006-2007, the northern Lebanon camp of Nahr al-Bared became a laboratory where veterans of the jihad in Iraq, al-Qaeda-inspired Islamist preachers, and "post-national" militants converged in the creation of the movement known as "Fatah al-Islam." This new movement lost its Nahr al-Bared stronghold in September 2007, after months of fighting with the Lebanese army, but retains strong links with al-Qaeda through its Iraqi branch. However, Fatah al-Islam's dubious record pales in light of Hamas's prestige within the wider Palestinian arena. Unless an unforeseen catastrophe transforms Gaza into a new Nahr al-Bared, it is difficult to see how al-Qaeda will be able to contest Hamas's grip on its own turf.

From the Muslim Brotherhood's perspective, Hamas has succeeded in reviving the political atmosphere of the 1940s, when jihad in Palestine secured the loyalties and desires of Islamist militants throughout the region. As a practical matter, Hamas's emphasis on the national struggle against Israel as a way of unifying its constituency and establishing its rule means postponing—and even confronting—any other Islamist project that might potentially prove ideologically and organizationally divisive. This includes global jihadist movements such as al-Qaeda and their ideologies. Hamas has even attempted to transcend religious sectarian lines by accepting support from Hezbollah and from the Islamic Republic of Iran. In the same spirit, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood is the only Sunni Islamist party whose leaders have refrained from attacking what Islamists throughout the region describe as an Iranian-led "Shia plot" to dominate the Arabs and convert them to Shiism.

The Muslim Brotherhood movement, and especially Hamas, has achieved significant political gains and established a considerably broad political base by championing itself as the leader of a nationalist version of jihad, with deep roots in a people and a territory. Meanwhile, al-Qaeda's ideology of "global jihad" seems more and more irrelevant and out of touch with Muslim reality and the very Muslim populations it seeks to mobilize. The gamble of rejecting Islamic sectarianism is fascinating for an organization like the Muslim Brotherhood, which is historically associated with the most militant forms of Sunnism—for instance, in Syria. This could prove to be another blow the Brotherhood and Hamas have struck at al-Qaeda—a blow that

has only worsened the global jihadist movement's current crisis. For the time being, the extreme violence with which Hamas forces crushed the salafist group known as "Soldiers of the Companions of God" in August 2009 leaves virtually no doubt that any al-Qaeda-affiliated or even inspired militancy will have few prospects in the Hamas-controlled Gaza strip.³

NOTES

1. The whole exchange was released on-line by Al-Sahab, the AQ-linked media company, on April 2, 2008. An English transcript is available at <http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/FeaturedDocs/nefazawahiri0408.pdf>.
2. The landmark study of the dissolution of Palestinian national identity in the global Islamic identity in the refugee camps in Lebanon is Bernard Rougier's *Everyday jihad*, (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2008).
3. 24 members of the *Jund Ansar Allah*, including their spiritual and military leaders, were killed when Hamas security stormed the Ibn Taimiyya mosque in Rafah, on August 15, 2009.

The Ideological Hybridization of Jihadi Groups

By Thomas Hegghammer

THERE IS BROAD CONSENSUS IN THE ANALYTICAL LITERATURE ON Islamism on the need to disaggregate the various sub-currents of Islamist ideology. And while there is considerable disagreement among observers about what constitutes the right typology for differentiating between these sub-currents, there is general agreement on a handful of key analytical distinctions. Of these, perhaps the most common is the so-called “near enemy-far enemy” divide, which is often used to distinguish between groups that target primarily local Muslim regimes, and groups that focus on Western targets.¹

And yet, as anyone who has followed militant Islamism closely in recent years will testify, the distinction between near enemy and far enemy groups seems less and less relevant. Many jihadist groups are displaying ambiguous rhetoric and behavior with regard to who they consider as their main enemy. In the past five years, “far enemy groups” such as al-Qaida Central² have adopted a more hostile and explicitly takfiri rhetoric toward Muslim regimes. Conversely, “near enemy” activists such as the militants in Algeria have become more anti-Western in both words and deeds. A process of ideological hybridization has occurred, with the result that the enemy hierarchies of many jihadist groups are becoming more unclear or heterogeneous than they used to be.³

Why is this process of ideological hybridization occurring? The central argument of this paper is that this hybridization is a result of strain and a sign of weakness. When enemy hierarchies become unclear, undefined, or heterogeneous, then this

is most often a sign of increasing radicalization and political isolation. Groups often adopt ambiguous enemy hierarchies because they are experiencing recruitment problems; by addressing a wider range of grievances they hope to widen their prospective recruitment base. Groups can also afford to have more enemies because they have fewer allies. For the jihadists, there are short-term advantages to having unclear enemy hierarchies, but the long-term liabilities are probably more serious.

Ideal Typologies

THE TERM “HYBRID” PRESUPPOSES THE EXISTENCE OF DISCRETE IDEAL TYPES. When we speak of ideological hybridization, we are assuming there was a time when ideologies were not hybridized. What were these ideal type ideologies? More importantly, did they ever exist in “pure” form?

Let us start by clarifying what we mean by “ideology” in this context. The term ideology has been used to describe belief-systems of very different sizes, from broad intellectual traditions to specific doctrines. In this article, ideology is defined narrowly as a set of principles that guides the political behavior of a subset of militant Islamist groups. A shorter term would be “rationale for Islamist violence.”

Implicit in this ad-hoc definition is the observation that militant Islamists fight for different things and in different ways. Islamist groups may share a number of long-term aims and political inclinations, but they differ in their short-term and mid-term priorities. This is a view shared by the vast majority of scholars since the early 1980s, when people realized that monolithic notions of Islamism did not help understand the ever more varied patterns of Islamist behavior observed on the ground. Islamism needed to be disaggregated; the question was how. Over the years, scholars have proposed a wide range of typologies to capture the differences between Islamist groups, without reaching a consensus. Broadly speaking there are two different approaches to disaggregating radical Islamism. The first looks for differences in theological orientation, the second for differences in political preferences.

A common theology-based distinction distinguishes between *Ikhwanism* and *salafism*, the former being associated with the political pragmatism of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, and the latter with the puritanism and literalism of the Wahhabi religious tradition in Saudi Arabia. At the radical end of the spectrum, a related distinction is often drawn between *Qutbism* and *jihadi-salafism*, the latter representing a socially more conservative, doctrinally more rigid and politically less compromising ideology than the former.⁴

In this article I will not consider theology-based typologies since the categories they generate are notoriously difficult to apply systematically to the analysis of

Islamist political behavior.⁵ For example, while the label jihadi salafi has been applied to many contemporary militant groups, no clear definition of jihadi salafism has thus far been articulated, and few scholars have attempted to specify exactly which groups are jihadi salafi and which are not. Moreover, the universe of groups that have been called jihadi salafi is so large and politically heterogeneous that the label arguably blurs more distinctions than it elucidates. As employed in the current literature, the label jihadi salafi covers almost the entire landscape of militant Islamist groups, except irredentist ones such as Hamas.

Partly to address these problems, scholars have articulated typologies that focus on more easily observable political and operational preferences, such as declared enemy hierarchies, or declared short-term objectives and targeting patterns.⁶ The most basic such distinction is the abovementioned near enemy–far enemy divide.⁷ Another well-known typology distinguishes between irredentist or nationalist groups such as Hamas, revolutionary groups such as Algeria’s GIA, and global jihadist groups such as al-Qaeda.⁸ A slightly more elaborate but also more contested typology distinguishes between five types of militant Islamism: revolutionary, irredentist, pan-Islamist, vigilantist and sectarian.⁹ For the sake of simplicity, this paper focuses primarily on the near enemy–far enemy dichotomy, although I will also briefly test the hybridization hypothesis on the more elaborate typologies.

The near enemy–far enemy dichotomy is shorthand for an analytical distinction which is slightly different from the one evoked by Muhammad Abd al-Salam Faraj in the 1981 pamphlet *The Forgotten Obligation* (where the terms “near enemy” and “far enemy” first appeared in writing).¹⁰ The original terms are insufficient because they suggest that the difference is merely one of targeting, and because the notion of the far enemy is ambiguous (potentially referring to both the US and Israel) and may thus lead to the inclusion of Hamas as a far-enemy group. In the following, I shall refer instead to the distinction between *revolutionary* and *global jihadist* ideologies. Revolutionary Islamism advocates military confrontation with Muslim regimes in order to topple them and capture the state. Global jihadism promotes military confrontation with the United States and her allies, to avenge and deter non-Muslim oppression of Muslims.

These ideologies can be identified through observation of group actions and discourse. Revolutionary violence is directed against representatives and symbols of Muslim regimes, such as security forces and police stations, ministers and ministries, etc. Global jihadist violence is directed at representatives or symbols of non-Muslim oppression of Muslims, such as Western embassies, military bases, and tourists in the Muslim world, or the home capitals of the nations considered the most hostile to Muslims. Revolutionary discourse stresses the perceived or actual injustices of the Muslim ruler and tends to list a range of grievances including secular legislation,

corruption, repression, and treason to the cause of Islam and the Muslim Nation. Global jihadist discourse emphasizes the suffering of Muslims at the hands of non-Muslims, and is recognizable by long enumerations of occupations, alleged massacres, prisoner humiliation and blasphemy by non-Muslims against Muslims.

Of course in practice, a group's behavior and rhetoric will rarely be exclusively revolutionary or global jihadist, but rather a mixture of the two (in addition to other ideological influences, such as sectarianism). However, the relative influence of a given type of ideology varies between groups and may vary within one group over time. To measure the influence of a given ideology on a given group in a given period, we have two indicators. The first is quantifiable, namely the proportion of a group's total number of premeditated attacks that can be seen as revolutionary (or global jihadist) violence. The second is the space and prominence given to revolutionary (or global jihadist) discursive themes in a group's ideological statements. These indicators allow us to speak of groups displaying more or less revolutionary (or global jihadist) features.

A central part of the argument presented here is that until the early 2000s, individual militant Islamist groups displayed more homogenous behavioral and discursive features—and thus had clearer enemy hierarchies—than do current groups. In short, the distinction between revolutionary and global jihadist groups used to be clearer than it is today.

An Ideal Past?

TO BE SURE, MILITANT ISLAMISTS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN HOSTILE BOTH TO MUSLIM rulers and to the West. Overlapping motivations and ideological flexibility have been permanent features of Islamist activism.¹¹ Early Islamist revolutionaries in Egypt, for example, were virtually always anti-American.¹² Algerian jihadists in the 1990s were equally hostile to the French.¹³ In the 1990s, both Egyptian and Algerian militants attacked Western targets while they simultaneously confronted their respective regimes.¹⁴ Conversely, global jihadists were always hostile to regimes. Ayman al-Zawahiri spent thirty years fighting the Egyptian regime before merging his organization with al-Qaeda.¹⁵ Osama bin Laden funded attacks on South Yemen communists in the early 1990s, focused most of his statements in the early 1990s on criticizing the Saudi royal family, and said disparaging things about Arab rulers throughout the 1990s.¹⁶

Moreover, it might be argued that ideal typologies have been constructed entirely by Western analysts, and that at best, these categories of analysis only capture fleeting tactical variations within jihadism, which exist along a relatively fluid ideological and operational continuum. For example, al-Qaeda's attack-America-first strategy could

be seen merely as a short term means to a longer-term revolutionary aim of toppling Muslim regimes. In the writings of Ayman al-Zawahiri and other jihadi strategists, attacking America helps undermine regimes, because the latter are dependent on US support for their survival.¹⁷ To some extent, therefore, one might argue that global jihadists are actually revolutionaries in disguise.

However, I am not arguing that such ideal typologies were crystal clear in the past, only that they were relatively more clear than today. By the measures indicated above—namely, an organization’s targeting patterns and dominant discursive themes—there is little doubt that in the 1990s and early 2000s, jihadi groups were displaying more observably consistent behavior and rhetoric pertaining to enemy hierarchies than they have been doing in recent years.

This trend toward hybridization, and toward the breakdown of ideal typologies, is most obvious when we look at jihadist targeting patterns. For a start, Sunni Islamists virtually never attacked Western targets before the 1990s.¹⁸ In fact, between the late 1940s and the early 1980s, the vast majority of known instances of Sunni Islamist violence were directed against Muslim regime targets.¹⁹ In the 1980s, groups emerged that attacked non-Muslim non-Western targets, but these groups conducted operations in the context of local struggles of national liberation (notably in Palestine and Afghanistan) or in the context of local Muslim-Christian conflicts (for example, in Egypt). Individuals, to be sure, might have chosen over the course of their jihadist careers to engage in more than one type of jihadist activity. For example, many revolutionaries from the Middle East famously traveled to and fought for the liberation of Afghanistan. But organizations as a whole stuck to one targeting pattern.²⁰ Ambiguous targeting was relatively rare.

Of course, given that global jihadi organizations such as al-Qaeda Central did not emerge until the early 1990s, the most relevant period for our analytical purposes ranges from the early 1990s to the early 2000s. In this period, jihadism came to reflect only slightly more ambiguous or heterogeneous targeting. Algerian and Egyptian militants, for instance, attacked westerners throughout the 1990s, but the number of such attacks was minuscule compared to the number of attacks perpetrated by these same militants against regime targets. In fact, while good data on violent incidents in 1990s Algeria and Egypt is hard to come by, a mere glance at the available datasets and chronologies is enough to confirm that anti-regime attacks outnumbered anti-western attacks by several orders of magnitude.²¹ Conversely, from the time al-Qaeda embraced the global jihad doctrine (internally around 1993, publicly in 1996), the organization focused virtually all its attacks against Western targets. While the total number of al-Qaeda operations during this period was much smaller than that of the Algerian and Egyptian groups, the organization’s targeting pattern remained consistent and clear.

The same relatively homogenous targeting behavior may also be observed among groups that were neither revolutionary nor global jihadist. For instance, nationalist Islamist groups in Palestine, Kashmir, Bosnia, Chechnya and elsewhere attacked almost exclusively their respective local non-Muslim enemies or occupiers.²² Sectarian Sunni groups in 1990s Pakistan also consistently targeted Shiites.²³

The discourses and ideologies of jihadist groups during the 1990s similarly tended to remain consistent and clearly focused. While revolutionary groups did express anti-Western views, and global jihadists anti-regime views, this hostility was expressed with considerably less frequency and intensity than their hostility toward their respective principal enemies. While difficult to measure quantitatively, this general phenomenon may be observed in several ways.

First, many groups in the 1990s and early 2000s explicitly ranked their targets according to a hierarchy of enemies; these rankings accorded with their primary ideological orientation as revolutionary, nationalist, or global jihadist groups.²⁴ Second, the number of texts or pronouncements issued by a group's ideologues about that group's primary declared enemy was much larger than the number of pronouncements denouncing the organization's secondary enemies.²⁵ Third, an organization's criticism of its secondary enemies was less harsh than criticism it reserved for its primary enemies. For example, Osama bin Laden may have criticized the Saudi regime throughout the 1990s, but only from the mid-1990s did he begin to call for the monarchy's overthrow and rarely, if ever, did he explicitly declare the Saudi royal family apostates or infidels. (This is not to say that he did not view the Saudi monarchy as infidels, only that there was little explicitly takfiri rhetoric in his public statements.) Fourth, and finally, global jihadist hostility toward Muslim regimes was not rationalized in quite the same way that revolutionary jihadists discussed and plotted their own struggle against regimes—and vice versa. For instance, bin Laden's primary accusation against the Saudi regime was one of treason, not of repression. While he did claim the monarchy was guilty of corruption and repression, his principal problem with the regime was the latter's subservience to the United States.²⁶ Conversely, Algerian and Egyptian Islamist revolutionaries rationalized their attacks against westerners in the 1990s with reference to the struggle against the regimes they were fighting. French targets were singled out for attack because France supported the Algerian generals politically, and tourists were attacked in Egypt because they helped the regime economically.²⁷

Taken as a whole, then, the distinction between revolutionary and global jihadist ideologies, while never quite absolute, was indeed operational in the world of pre-2003 Islamist militancy, and this was expressed in important and concrete ways. The majority of groups displayed relatively consistent behavior and discourse regarding enemy hierarchies over periods of several years. In other words, there was

indeed a time when the universe of jihadi ideology was less complicated. But things have changed in the past five years.

Hybridization

BEFORE GOING INTO EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS, IT WILL BE USEFUL TO SPECIFY EXACTLY what we mean by hybridization. The term “hybrid ideology” is relatively uncommon in the scholarly literature. Where it does appear, it is used to describe a wide range of different phenomena, from mixtures of very distinct cultural paradigms and ideological systems (tradition and modernity, for instance, or Islam and socialism) to amalgams of specific undercurrents of Islamism (such as Ikhwanism and Wahhabism.)²⁸ The phenomenon I seek to describe is even more specific—namely, the mixing of ideal rationales for violence and the attendant blending of their associated enemy hierarchies.²⁹

An ideologically hybridized group is one whose behavior and ideological discourse display influences of more than one type of ideal rationale in near equal measure. Put simply, they are groups that defy ideological classification—for example, as global jihadist or as revolutionary jihadist groups, simply—because their enemy hierarchies are unclear. Groups may be more or less hybridized; the more equal the influences of the various rationales, the more hybridized the groups. Ideological hybridization, in this sense, is not the same as organizational collaboration or affiliation. For instance, the Uighur “Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement” rubs shoulders with al-Qaeda Central in the Pakistani tribal areas, but the movement cannot be considered ideologically hybridized so long as most of its physical and verbal attacks are aimed at China.

Modern jihadist organizations have always been somewhat ideologically hybridized. What is unique about the contemporary era of jihadism is that since the early or mid-2000s, more groups are displaying a higher degree of ideological hybridization than ever before. It is not easy to date exactly when this trend toward hybridization as a collective phenomenon began to occur, since different groups began to hybridize at different times and have done so in different ways. As a general matter, the ideological hybridization of today’s main jihadist movements began accelerating at some point in the first half of the 2000s and was well under way by 2005. During the last half decade, we have seen several different types of hybridization processes at work. Three of these processes will be highlighted here (though by no means should this be regarded as a comprehensive or exhaustive list.)

The first type of hybridization process is one whereby global jihadist groups are becoming more revolutionary. One prominent example is al-Qaeda Central. Since

approximately 2003, Osama bin Laden and other top al-Qaeda spokesmen have spoken more often and more harshly about Arab regimes than they did between 1995 and 2002. Explicit takfiri rhetoric used to be rare in statements from al-Qaeda's leaders; now it is much more common.³⁰ Importantly, this shift in al-Qaeda's enemy hierarchies and rhetoric is not complete, since the dominant theme of the movement's statements remains the Western oppression of Muslims. Nor has this shift been matched by a change in targeting patterns, since most known attacks by al-Qaeda Central have continued to be directed at Western targets.³¹ As such, al-Qaeda Central still displays a relatively low degree of ideological hybridization. Yet an important shift has occurred, and it is significant because of al-Qaeda's prominence and influence on other activists.

Another example is al-Qaeda's Saudi branch, al-Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), which launched a terrorism campaign within Saudi Arabia in May 2003.³² In the beginning of that campaign, AQAP displayed a clear orientation toward global jihad: its major operations targeted Westerners, its declared main enemy was the United States, and its dominant discursive theme was the suffering of Muslims at the hands of non-Muslims.³³ Over time, as the group came under increasing pressure from the police, it became more revolutionary. Six months into the campaign, it began attacking individual police officers, and in April 2004 it attacked a police station with a suicide car bomb. AQAP's rhetoric became markedly more hostile to the regime in the same period.³⁴ By 2005, the group was almost fully hybridized, though also very weak operationally.

The second type of hybridization process operative in the contemporary era is the inverse of the above, namely revolutionaries becoming more global jihadist. One of the best examples of this is the Algerian Groupe Salafiste pour la Predication et le Combat (GSPC), whose rationale for violence remained almost purely revolutionary from its founding in 1998 to the mid-2000s. With a handful of exceptions, the group had focused all its operations against the regime in this period.³⁵ But following a leadership change in 2003, the group's rhetoric became gradually more anti-Western.³⁶ In 2006 the GSPC formally pledged its allegiance to al-Qaeda Central and later changed its name to "al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb" (AQIM.) From 2007 onward it began conducting systematic attacks against Western targets in addition to its regular anti-regime operations.³⁷ As of 2009, AQIM may be described as a moderately—though not yet fully—hybridized group, since the majority of its operations strike regime targets and its discourse and pronouncements arguably display an emphasis on the "near enemy," or the Algerian regime.

Another example is the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), which emerged in the mid-1990s with a clear agenda to topple the Libyan regime. Despite being based mostly in Afghanistan in the late 1990s, the group's statements and operations

focused almost exclusively on the Libyan government.³⁸ However, after the US-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, the group's discourse became markedly more anti-Western. Several LIFG leaders continued to be based in Pakistan and Afghanistan together with al-Qaeda Central, and in 2007, the organization formally joined al-Qaeda.³⁹ However, given that we know very little about the group's independent operations in the 2000s, it is hard to assess the extent of its shift toward global jihadism.

A third manifestation of ideological hybridity includes what might be described as “born hybrids”—that is, new organizations whose enemy hierarchies were ambiguous from the start. These organizations all had deep roots in preexisting jihadi communities, but only emerged as clear and active organizational entities in the mid-2000s. They include several of the most active and prominent groups in the world of jihadism today. These groups are also among the most hybridized in the current landscape of jihadi actors; their enemy hierarchies are so unclear it is almost impossible to tell what they are fighting for.

A good example is the Lebanese group Fatah al-Islam, which emerged in late 2006 in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.⁴⁰ Since its creation, the group displayed a pattern of behavior and discourse which suggested almost equally strong influences of both revolutionary and global jihadist ideology, and even elements of sectarian and nationalist motivations, too. On the operational side, the group has been involved in extensive fighting with the Lebanese army (revolutionary violence), has attacked a UNIFIL convoy (global jihadist violence), and has tried to enter Palestine to fight Israel (nationalist violence). Its discourse has proven to be equally ambiguous, oscillating between revolutionary, global jihadist and sectarian (specifically, anti-Shiite) themes.

Another prominent example of the born hybrid is the current Yemeni branch of al-Qaeda, which emerged following a February 2006 jailbreak by 23 jihadists. This core rebuilt a Yemeni al-Qaeda network after the first generation had been crushed in 2002-2003.⁴¹ From 2006 to 2008 the new network operated under two names: “al-Qaeda on the South of the Arabian Peninsula” and “al-Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula—Soldier's Brigades of Yemen;” in early 2009 the network merged with the remnants of Saudi al-Qaeda under the name “al-Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula.”⁴² Al-Qaeda in Yemen is ideologically almost fully hybridized. Since 2006 it has launched numerous operations against both regime targets and western targets.⁴³ The group's discourse, as conveyed in the magazine *Sada al-Malahim* (established in early 2008), combines revolutionary and global jihadist themes in nearly equal measure. Its rhetoric is notably much more revolutionary and explicitly takfiri than that of its Saudi sister organization was in 2003-2004. On balance, the global jihadist rationale seems to be slightly more important than the revolutionary one, but

al-Qaeda in Yemen now has one of the most ambiguous enemy hierarchies in contemporary jihadism.

A third example of a born hybrid is the Somali militia known as Shabab al-Mujahidin, which rose to prominence in late 2006 as a splinter group from the Islamic Courts Union following the latter's loss of power to the Ethiopia- and US-backed Transitional Federal Government.⁴⁴ Shabab al-Mujahidin has been waging a revolutionary struggle against the non-Islamist regime in Mogadishu, while displaying strong global jihadist (anti-American) as well as nationalist (anti-Ethiopian) motivations. While the bulk of the group's operations are directed against the incumbent regime, it has also targeted Westerners and UN-sponsored African Union peacekeepers within Somalia. The group has yet to operate internationally, though a recent terrorist plot in Australia may have involved Shabaab.⁴⁵ In its rhetoric, the group combines revolutionary, global jihadist and nationalist themes.⁴⁶ The Shabab has also sought to portray itself as an international group, expressing admiration for al-Qaeda Central and actively recruiting foreign volunteer fighters from the Arab world and the West.⁴⁷ The Shabab remains slightly more revolutionary than global jihadist or nationalist, and thus represents somewhat less hybridized group than Fatah al-Islam and al-Qaeda in Yemen.

In addition to the aforementioned amalgams of revolutionary Islamism and global jihadism, we can also note the recent emergence of hybrids involving other types of ideologies. For example, al-Qaeda in Iraq (in its three successive manifestations: al-Tawhid wal-Jihad, al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia, and the Islamic State of Iraq) has displayed strong influences of both global jihadist and sectarian motivations, combining physical and verbal attacks against both US soldiers and Iraqi Shiites.⁴⁸ In Afghanistan, the Taliban combines nationalist and global jihadi rhetoric and attacks Western targets locally.⁴⁹ In Pakistan, the nationalist (Kashmir-focused) Lashkar-e Taiba has displayed more anti-Western rhetoric and behavior, while the Pakistani Taliban seems to display both nationalist and revolutionary behavior and rhetoric.⁵⁰

Finally, it is worth noting that not all militant Islamist groups have become hybridized or yet appear to be moving in that direction. Many nationalist groups such as Hamas, the Chechen mujahidin (now called the Caucasus Emirate) and the Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement seem to have maintained a relatively clear rationale for violence and clear enemy hierarchies. Some nationalist groups—such as the Taliban—have adopted more anti-Western rhetoric, but this remains a partial hybridization which must be seen in the light of the Western military presence in Afghanistan.

Despite these exceptions, and although this overview is not comprehensive, it appears that ambiguous or heterogeneous enemy hierarchies are becoming a prevalent feature of contemporary militant Islamism. As a consequence, it is becoming

more and more difficult to determine what exactly jihadists are fighting for. Why is this happening?

Explanations

AS THE PREVIOUS SECTION SUGGESTS, HYBRIDIZATION HAPPENS IN DIFFERENT ways. Moreover, our measure for hybridization—namely inconsistencies in targeting and discourse—is a rather superficial one that does not capture micro-level processes behind military operations and ideological production. In fact, we may well be dealing with several different phenomena, each of which may have different explanations. Moreover, when analyzing ideological change, it is often difficult to distinguish between tactical choices and fundamental changes in preferences. For instance, when a group declares more enemies, is it merely adapting its rhetoric to a new situation or is it genuinely convinced that more enemies deserve confrontation?

Needless to say, these are difficult questions, with answers that vary from group to group. To fully explain hybridization, we would need to conduct detailed case studies of a wide range of different groups—an undertaking that obviously exceeds the scope of this article. What we will do here is identify four sets of factors that have played a role in facilitating hybridization. The precise workings and relative importance of each set of factors are subjects for further research.

The first explanation is that hybridization reflects changes in the political environment of jihadist groups. Put simply, international political developments since 9/11 may have given jihadists more reasons to hate both the near and the far enemy. For a start, the years since 9/11 saw a substantial increase in the depth and range of Western military involvement in the Muslim world, while the situation in Palestine has worsened. These factors, combined with the numerous other coercive measures taken in the name of the war on terror, helped fuel a surge in Muslim anti-Americanism and anti-Westernism during the first half of the 2000s. These same factors may have influenced certain revolutionary groups to embrace some, if not all, of the global jihadist perspective, either by making them fundamentally more anti-American or by prompting them to exploit the rising anti-Americanism in their respective constituencies for mobilization purposes.

In addition to generating more anti-Americanism, increased western military involvement in the Muslim world also produced new political constellations within which previously distinct enemy types overlap. In Afghanistan and Iraq, for example, the United States was no longer just the far enemy but also the local occupier. This effectively blurred the past operative distinction between nationalist and global jihadist ideologies. In post-Saddam Iraq, the Baghdad government was not just the

near enemy, but also a Shiite-dominated and heavily US-supported entity. This made it hard to distinguish between revolutionary, sectarian, nationalist and global jihadist motivations.

Also, there are many reasons why Islamist hostility toward Muslim regimes may have increased since 9/11, making global jihadist groups more revolutionary in their targeting patterns. In many, though not all, Muslim countries, structural economic problems have persisted if not worsened, and repression, especially of Islamist parties, has increased.⁵¹ Thanks to western pressures among other things, there are also fewer jihad-friendly regimes willing to support or turn a blind eye to Islamist militancy. Saudi Arabia, for instance, completely changed its policy toward militancy in 2003, while the Pakistani and Yemeni governments have become gradually less complacent toward militant activism. The War on Terror has also dramatically increased intelligence collaboration between Western governments and most governments of Muslim-majority countries. While jihadist movements may have once easily distinguished between near and far enemies, the two collaborate so closely nowadays that, for many militants, they've become one and the same, and there are thus fewer incentives for groups to avoid antagonizing either of them.

A second possible explanation is that hybridization is the result of changes in the media and communications environment of jihadist groups. The Internet revolution in the 2000s has, of course, greatly facilitated the production and distribution of jihadi propaganda, and this has made it easier for groups to borrow talking points and operational ideas from each other. As such, new communications technologies may have had a homogenizing influence on jihadist groups. For example, the increasing global jihadist influence on revolutionary groups since 9/11 reflected, at least partly, the realization by local groups of the formidable propaganda value of the al-Qaeda brand name. The Internet also produced fierce competition between jihadist groups for the attentions of prospective recruits and supporters, as well as for the attention of the world's mainstream media. Thus, in an effort to extend their reach and influence, groups may have sought to opportunistically escalate their rhetoric on issues where they used to be relatively moderate. Global jihadist groups would have had more room for rhetorical escalation on matters pertaining to Muslim regimes, while revolutionary groups would have had more room for escalation on issues relating to the West.

A third possible explanation is that hybridization is the result of organizational changes within the world of militant Islamism. Two organizational dynamics in particular may have been at play, namely factionalization and alliance-building. In some cases, what we see as inconsistent targeting or rhetoric by one group may in fact be relatively consistent behavior by two or more factions within an organization, each with a different ideological orientation. Often, ideological splits hide deeper

divisions within the movement along social, ethnic or geographical lines, or over local disputes with deep historical roots. The precise reasons for group factionalization most likely vary from case to case, but it is reasonable to assume that a general cause is organizational strain caused by, for example, resource scarcity and pressure from law enforcement.

Another organizational dynamic that may have facilitated hybridization are the many coalitions and mergers that have taken place between disparate elements of the jihadist movement since 9/11. Hybridization might be the result of alliance compromises. The 2000s have seen many alliances and mergers, in particular between al-Qaeda Central and various regional groups. These mergers may have been motivated more by organizational considerations than ideological ones. The eviction from Afghanistan in 2001 made al-Qaeda Central more dependent on franchises to maintain operational reach, while local groups were attracted by the strength of the al-Qaeda brand name.

A fourth possible explanation is that hybridization is the result of increased radicalization and/or increasing political isolation. A well known characteristic of groups and movements in late stages of radicalization is the tendency to see enemies everywhere. In her study of leftist extremists in Europe, Donatella Della Porta showed how groups became increasingly conspiratorial as they went “deeper and deeper underground.”⁵² Many of the groups that have undergone hybridization in recent years are composed of veteran militants in late stages of radicalization. Moreover, many of the same groups are relatively smaller and less embedded in their respective populations than nationalist groups such as Hamas. This suggests that hybridization may be correlated with political isolation. If this is the case, hybridization might reflect a strategic hedging of bets by groups facing recruitment challenges. Ideological ambiguity or heterogeneity may be seen by some groups as a way to appeal to a broadest possible constituency. By addressing a wider range of grievances—global as well as local—they hope to widen their prospective recruitment base.

A Sign of Strength or Weakness?

WHAT DOES IDEOLOGICAL HYBRIDIZATION MEAN FOR THE FUTURE OF JIHADISM? More specifically, does it constitute an advantage or a disadvantage for the jihadist movement? On the one hand, it might be argued that hybrid ideologies carry certain advantages. For a start, an unclear or heterogeneous enemy hierarchy makes it harder to predict the direction of a group’s future operations. For example, in 1990s Algeria, one could be fairly certain that the GIA’s next operation would strike a regime-related target, while today it is almost impossible to predict the likely target

of the AQIM's next attack.⁵³ The same is true for al-Qaeda in Yemen and several other groups.

In addition to operational flexibility, ideological ambiguity offers jihadist ideologues a certain degree of rhetorical agility. The more declared enemies a group has, then the wider the range of available rhetorical points for justifying a movement's struggle. This creates a certain redundancy vis-à-vis contemporary political developments: While a global jihadist group reaps PR benefits primarily from new examples of non-Muslim aggression against Muslims, and revolutionary group primarily from new examples of regime repression, a hybrid group can benefit from both.

By the same logic, the wider the range of grievances a movement seeks to address, the wider the range of that movement's prospective audiences and recruitment pools. Certain parts of a given population care more about domestic issues than international issues, and vice versa. While global jihadi rhetoric appeals primarily to people inclined to act on international developments, ambiguous rhetoric might appeal to several constituencies at once. Some sociologists studying non-violent social movements have argued that "the larger the range of problems covered by a (discursive) frame, the larger the range of social groups that can be addressed within the frame and the greater the mobilization capacity of the frame."⁵⁴

However, the disadvantages of ideological hybridization for a jihadist group seem, on balance, more significant than its advantages. After all, if heterogeneous enemy hierarchies and ambiguous aims were always good for mobilization, then all groups would be hybrids. Instead, historical experience suggests that groups with clear limited objectives mobilize more people and are more likely to achieve their strategic objectives.⁵⁵ Thus, there are several reasons why ideological hybridization might be a long-term liability for jihadist groups. First, there is a fine line between ambiguity and inconsistency, and between flexibility and opportunism. The literature on framing in social movement theory suggests the resonance, or mobilizing potency, of a given frame depends in part on the frame's consistency. Inconsistencies between claims or between a claims and actions limit resonance.⁵⁶ Groups with many enemies and without clear political projects might expose themselves to ideological attacks by critics while facing problems in convincing significant numbers of recruits to join. Blurring enemy hierarchies may increase mobilization to non-violent protest, but not necessarily to high-risk activism. Most people who risk their lives want to know what it is for.

Second, hybridization produces or enhances latent ideological divisions within a movement. Ideal type ideologies may become temporarily less relevant but they are unlikely to be forgotten, given the history of disputes over them within the jihadi movement. A hybrid group or movement faces a substantial risk of factionalizing along ideological lines in the future.

Third, hybridization may provoke unnecessary enemies or inadvertently create alliances of enemies. One of the main reasons why revolutionaries refrained from confronting America before the late 1990s was the fear that the U.S. would wield its influence to further frustrate their struggle for regime change. Conversely, Osama Bin Laden refrained from launching operations in Saudi Arabia in the late 1990s in order to avoid regime crackdowns on al-Qaeda's essential support networks. Hybrid groups have to face the ire of both local regimes and western security services, which combined can bring significant pressure to bear on the organization.

Conclusion

THIS ARTICLE HAS HIGHLIGHTED A PREVIOUSLY UNIDENTIFIED—BUT VERY SIGNIFICANT—ideological development in the post-9/11 world of militant Islamism, namely the ideological hybridization of jihadi groups. Some might argue that this trend reflects natural adaptations of inherently malleable ideologies to shifting political circumstances. More likely, however, it is a sign of weakness. The fact that hybridization in many individual cases has coincided with operational setbacks, and that it seems more common among small organizations than larger ones, suggests that it is most often, though not always, a response to strain. If the hybridization trend continues, it is likely to further weaken the jihadist movement as a whole. Unclear or heterogeneous enemy hierarchies have a number of tactical advantages, including lower attack predictability and higher rhetorical flexibility, but in the long run they are likely to limit mass mobilization, foment internal divisions and attract repression. The trend does seem likely to continue in the short term, because of the self-perpetuating dynamic whereby the actions of hybrid groups promote counterterrorism cooperation between the near and the far enemy, which in turn fuels hybridization. However, we cannot preclude within the movement a future reaction to the practical problems caused by ideological ambiguity.

More research is needed on the drivers of ideological change in general and on the blurring of enemy hierarchies in particular. The link between a lack of ideological clarity and group weakness, while yet to be firmly established, is a potentially important contribution to the nascent theoretical literature on militant group decline.⁵⁷

If ideological hybridization is indeed a response to strain, it represents another indicator that the jihadi movement as a whole is weaker today than it was in the first half of the 2000s. Other symptoms of weakening highlighted by observers include the decrease in the number of large attacks by al-Qaeda Central, the weakening of its branches in key regions such as Saudi Arabia and Iraq, the decrease in the flow of foreign fighters to Iraq and other battlefronts, and the emergence of dissident

and revisionist voices. Nobody is suggesting that al-Qaeda is dead or that the war on terror is over. The security situation in certain regions may well deteriorate and there will be more attacks in Western capitals. But the evidence of a slow structural weakening of the jihadi movement is compelling.

NOTES

1. Fawaz Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
2. By “Al-Qaeda Central” I mean the core al-Qaeda organization based in the border areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan, as distinguished from affiliated regional groups that may have al-Qaeda in their name, such as “al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.”
3. This phenomenon has not been systematically analyzed before, but a number of recent articles have observed it in individual organizations; see e.g. Guido Steinberg and Isabelle Werenfels, “Between the ‘Near’ and the ‘Far’ Enemy: Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb,” *Mediterranean Politics* 12, no. 3 (2007) and Jean-Luc Marret, “Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb: A ‘Glocal’ Organization,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 31, no. 6 (2008); Tine Gade, “Fatah al-Islam in Lebanon: Between Global and Local Jihad,” (Kjeller: Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI), 2007).
4. Thomas Hegghammer, “Jihadi Salafis or Revolutionaries? On Theology and Politics in the Study of Militant Islamism,” in *Global Salafism*, ed. Roel Meijer (London/New York: Hurst/Columbia University Press, 2009).
5. Ibid.
6. For examples of political preference-based typologies of Islamism, see for example Quintan Wiktorowicz, “Anatomy of the Salafi Movement,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 29, no. 3 (2006); “Understanding Islamism,” (Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2005); Barry Rubin, “Islamic Radicalism in the Middle East: A Survey and Balance Sheet,” *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 2, no. 1 (1998); R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World*, 2nd ed. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995).
7. Gerges, *The Far Enemy*.
8. Ibid. pp. 1-2.
9. Hegghammer, “Jihadi Salafis or Revolutionaries?”
10. Johannes Jansen, *The Neglected Duty: The Creed of Sadat’s Assassins and Islamic Resurgence in the Middle East* (New York: Macmillan, 1986).
11. Matthew Herbert, “The Plasticity of the Islamic Activist: Notes from the Counterterrorism Literature,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 32, no. 5 (2009).
12. Gerges, *The Far Enemy*, p. 47ff; Ibrahim Ghanem, *The West in the eyes of the Egyptian Islamic movement* (Cairo: Ummah Press Service, 1994).
13. Alain Grignard, “La littérature politique du GIA algérien des origines à Djamel Zitouni. Esquisse d’une analyse,” *Maghreb-Machrek*, no. 184 (2005) pp. 91-92.
14. See e.g. Salah Eddine Sidhoum, “Chronologie d’une tragédie cachée, 1992-2002,” www.algeria-watch.com, March 2003, and “Chronology of attacks on tourist targets in Egypt: a detailed history from 1992 to the present,” <http://www.usdivetravel.com/T-EgyptTerrorism.html>.

15. Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (New York: Knopf, 2006), p. 32ff.
16. See e.g. Bruce Lawrence, ed. *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama Bin Laden* (London: Verso, 2005).
17. Ayman al-Zawahiri, "fursan taht rayat al-nabi [Knights Under the Prophet's Banner]," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, 2-12 December 2001.
18. Exceptions include the so-called "secret apparatus" of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, which attacked British and Jewish targets in Egypt in the late 1940s; see Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969) pp. 58-79.
19. Exceptions include the late 1960s *fedayeen* attacks on the Jordanian-Israeli border which saw the participation of a handful of Islamists, and the 1979 storming of the Mecca mosque by an apocalyptic sect led by Juhayman al-Utaybi; see Khalid Abu al-Umrayn, *hamas, harakat al-muqawama al-islamiyya: judhuruha, nash'atuha, fikruha al-siyasi [Hammas, the Movement of Islamic Resistance: Its Roots, Development and Political Thought]* (Cairo: Markaz al-Hadara al-Arabiya, 2000) and Yaroslav Trofimov, *The Siege of Mecca: The Forgotten Uprising in Islam's Holiest Shrine and the Birth of al-Qaeda*, 1st ed. (New York: Doubleday, 2007).
20. Exceptions include the Egyptian Gamaa Islamiyya which attacked Copts and symbols of moral corruption in addition to regime targets in the late 1980s; see e.g. Steven Brooke, "Jihadist strategic debates before 9/11," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 31, no. 3 (2008): pp. 207-09.
21. The Algerian civil war in the 1990s is believed to have cost between 100,000 and 200,000 lives; of these, less than a hundred were Westerners. In Egypt, 897 civilians and police were killed between 1992 and 1997; of these, 97 were tourists; Nachman Tal, "Islamic Terrorism in Egypt: The Challenge and the Response," *Strategic Assessment* 1, no. 1 (1998).
22. Exceptions include the July 1995 kidnapping and decapitation of five westerners in Kashmir; the October 1993 and January 1994 killings of a Danish doctor and a British humanitarian worker in Bosnia; and kidnappings and killings of Western aid workers in Chechnya in the late 1990s. See *Al Faran and the Hostage Crisis in Kashmir* (SAPRA India Foundation, 1996), available at http://www.sub-continent.com/research/sapra_documents/tr_1996_03_001_s.html; Evan F. Kohlmann, *Al-Qaeda's Jihad in Europe: The Afghan-Bosnian Network* (London: Berg, 2004) p. 107ff; Paul Murphy, *The wolves of Islam: Russia and the faces of Chechen terror* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 2004) p. 67ff).
23. Vali Nasr, "The Rise of Sunni Militancy in Pakistan: The Changing Role of Islamism and the Ulama in Society and Politics," *Modern Asian Studies* 34, no. 1 (2000).
24. For example, in 1998 Osama bin Laden said "Our hostility is in the first place, and to the greatest extent, leveled against these world infidels, and by necessity the regimes which have turned themselves into tools for this occupation." *ABC News Interview*, December 1998. In 1995, Ayman al-Zawahiri, then leader of Egyptian Islamic Jihad, published an article entitled "The road to Jerusalem passes through Cairo" (*Al-Mujahidun*, April 1995), saying the near enemy must be confronted before the far enemy.
25. See e.g. the tables of contents of Algerian and Egyptian jihadi magazines published in the early 1990s, such as *al-Ansar*, *al-Qital* or *al-Mujahidun*.
26. In 1997, Bin Laden said, "Regarding the criticisms of the ruling regime in Saudi Arabia and the Arabian Peninsula, the first one is their subordination to the US. So, our main problem is the U.S. government while the Saudi regime is but a branch or an agent of the US ... The people and the young men are concentrating their efforts on the sponsor and not on the sponsored. The concentration at this point of jihad is against the American occupiers," *CNN Interview*, March 1997.
27. Luis Martinez, "Le cheminement singulier de la violence islamiste en Algérie," *Critique Internationale*,

- no. 20 (2003) p. 173; Heba Aziz, "Understanding attacks on tourists in Egypt," *Tourism Management* 16, no. 2 (1995).
28. For Nasserism as a "hybrid" of Islam and socialism, see Geneive Abdo, *No God But God: Egypt and the Triumph of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) p. 53; for Official Turkish Islam as a "hybrid" of Sufism and local traditions, see John L. Esposito, John O. Voll, and Osman Bakar, *Asian Islam in the 21st century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) p. 134; for Hizbollah and Hamas as "hybrids" of nationalism and Islamism, see Mohammed Ayoob, *The many faces of political Islam: religion and politics in the Muslim world* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008) p. 112; For Sururism as "hybrid" of Salafism and Ikhwanism, see Jarret Brachman, *Global Jihadism: Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2009) p. 37.
29. A similar, though not identical, use of the term "hybrid ideology" was made by Toby Dodge who noted that post-invasion militias in Iraq "attempted to legitimize themselves by the deployment of hybrid ideologies—sectarian, religious and nationalist;" Toby Dodge, "Grand ambitions and far-reaching failures," in *America and Iraq: Policy-Making, Intervention and Regional Politics Since 1958*, ed. David Ryan and Patrick Kiely (London: Routledge, 2009) p. 99.
30. The interested reader may search for the term "infidel" in digital compilations of Bin Laden statements, such as Thomas Hegghammer, "Dokumentasjon om al-Qaeda: Intervjuer, kommunikéer og andre primærkilder, 1990-2002 [Documentation on al-Qaeda Interviews, Communiqués and Other Primary Sources, 1990-2002]," (Kjeller: Norwegian Defence Research Establishment, 2002); Thomas Hegghammer, "Al-Qaeda Statements 2003-2004: A Compilation of Translated Texts by Usama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri" (Kjeller: Norwegian Defence Research Establishment, 2005) and "Compilation of Usama bin Ladin Statements, 1994-2004," *FBIS Report* (2004). It is very hard to find pre-2003 statements by Bin Laden that explicitly use the term *kafir* (or its variants) to refer to Muslim regimes, let alone ordinary Muslims. Instead, Bin Laden would cite Q5:51 ("if any amongst you takes [the infidels] as supporters, then he is one of them"), discreetly implying that Muslims can become infidels by associating with original infidels. From late 2003 onward, we find more and more instances of Bin Laden bluntly calling other Muslims infidels. In October 2003, he said, "Those who assist (the Americans), irrespective of the names, are renegades and infidels. This applies to those who support parties of infidels such as the Baath party, the Kurdish parties and the like;" Hegghammer, "Al-Qaeda Statements 2003-2004," p. 46. In May 2004 he said "jihad becomes the individual duty of Iraqis not only against the crusaders but also against the infidel government and its supporters," Hegghammer, "Al-Qaeda Statements 2003-2004," p. 60. In December 2004 he said "for example: the Jordanian regime is a pagan infidel regime [...] Just as there is no difference between Bremer, the former American ruler in Baghdad, and Allawi, the present ruler, with regard to carrying out American policies in Iraq, so there is no difference between Bremer and the rest of the rulers of the region in carrying out America's policies [...] The doctrine of rebelling against an apostate ruler is not a doctrine that I invented, but rather, it is a doctrine held by the consensus of all the great religious scholars. Such is the dictate of religious law in a situation such as ours. Therefore, it is obligatory for all Muslims to take action for reform, taking into consideration the dimension of the conflict and the fact that these regimes are nothing but a part of the system of global heresy;" Hegghammer, "Al-Qaeda Statements 2003-2004," pp. 77-78. Later in December 2004 he said, "whoever participates, knowingly and willingly, in the elections we have just described, becomes a non-believer [...] the Iraqi who joins this apostate government and fights the Jihad warriors and those resisting the [foreign] occupation is considered an apostate and an infidel, even if he belongs to the [ancient] Arab tribes of Rabia or Mudar," Hegghammer, "Al-Qaeda Statements 2003-2004," pp. 83-84.

31. There is disagreement over which attacks should be considered orchestrated by al-Qaeda central (see e.g. Marc Sageman and Bruce Hoffman, "Does Osama Still Call the Shots? Debating the Containment of al-Qaeda's Leadership," *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 4 [2008]), but virtually none of the candidate incidents targeted regimes. Some have argued that al-Qaeda central were involved in anti-regime attacks in Pakistan, such as the 2003 assassination attempts on General Musharraf and the post 2006 wave of suicide bombings against police targets, but such links have not yet been confirmed. See Don Rassler, "Al-Qaeda's Pakistan Strategy," *Sentinel* 2, no. 6 (2009).
32. Nawaf Obaid and Anthony Cordesman, "Al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia: Asymmetric Threats and Islamic Extremists," (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2005); Bruce Riedel and Bilal Y. Saab, "Al-Qaeda's Third Front: Saudi Arabia," *The Washington Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (2008); Thomas Hegghammer, *Jihad in Saudi Arabia: Violence and Pan-Islamism since 1979* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
33. Thomas Hegghammer, "Jihad, yes, but not revolution: Explaining the extroversion of Islamist militancy in Saudi Arabia," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 35, no. 3 (2009).
34. See especially Abu Bakr al-Husni, "*hidayat al-sari fi hukm istihdaf al-tawari*" [The Prophet's Guidance on Targeting Emergency Forces] (2004) and the statements and videos issued in December 2003 and April 2004 in the name of the Haramain Brigades; see also the 29 issues of the jihadi magazine *Sawt al-Jihad* published between October 2003 and April 2005.
35. Pre-2007 exceptions include the February 2003 kidnapping of 32 Western tourists in the Sahara and the December 2006 attack on US contractor Brown Root and Condor.
36. Evan Kohlmann, "Two Decades of Jihad in Algeria: The GIA, the GSPC, and Al-Qaeda," (NEFA Special Report, 2007), available at <http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/nefagspc0507.pdf>, p. 16ff.
37. For more on the GSPC and AQIM, see Steinberg and Werenfels, "Between the 'Near' and the 'Far' Enemy;" Marret, "Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb;" Hanna Rogan, "Violent Trends in Algeria Since 9/11," *Sentinel* 1, no. 12 (2008); Jean-Pierre Filiu, "The Local and Global Jihad of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghrib," *Middle East Journal* 63, no. 2 (2009).
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The Brotherhood and the Shiite Question

By Israel Elad Altman

THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD (MB) IS A TRANSNATIONAL MOVEMENT THAT shares a common *Ikhwani* doctrine of Islamic reform and revival that was originally formulated by the movement's founder, Shaykh Hasan al-Banna. Despite this common doctrine, however, the Brotherhood's assorted local organizations and affiliated offshoots have interacted with the specific socio-political conditions of their respective arenas. As a consequence of this, the Brotherhood's branches have pursued a range of strategies for acquiring power and establishing an Islamic state that has, over time and from place to place, helped create a considerable diversity of political agendas and perspectives within the movement as a whole.

One area in which this intra-Ikhwani diversity is clearly visible today is in the different Brotherhood perspectives of and positions toward what might be broadly called the "Shiite question." That question has been at the forefront of Sunni Arab religious and political ideology and debate, and especially in recent years due to the growing power and prestige of the Islamic Republic of Iran throughout the region. This, in turn, has led to Shiism's increasing influence throughout the Middle East in general, and it has also intensified the ongoing clash between some streams of Sunnism and Shiism. The Sunni world has been deeply divided over how to react to these new regional dynamics caused by Iran's and Shiism's political and religious resurgence. Likewise, the Brotherhood movement is internally divided over the Shiite question, with some of them supporting and championing Shiism's new religious and political influence, and other elements of the movement wary of and even hostile to Shiite power.

The Shiite question hasn't always been an issue for the Brotherhood. At its core,

the Brotherhood's basic ideological doctrine is pan-Islamic and religiously inclusive. Since the movement's creation in 1928, Brotherhood leaders have emphasized the political importance of Islamic unity and have sought to downplay the religious differences among various Islamic legal schools, including between Sunnism and Shiism. Hassan al-Banna considered all of Islam's many sects—except for the Bahais and Qadianis—as belonging to the worldwide Muslim Nation (*umma*). In this spirit, Banna additionally took part in 1948 in the establishment of the “Association for Rapprochement between the Islamic Legal Schools” (*Jamiyyat al-Taqrīb bayna al-Madhāhib al-Islamiyyah*). This organization was designed to bridge the religious divides between Sunnis and Shiites, and due to this organization's leadership and influence, Shaykh al-Azhar Mahmud Shaltut declared Twelver Shia worship to be valid and recognized it as a legal tradition to be taught in al-Azhar. As such, Banna and the organization he created originally adhered to an ideological outlook for which the “Shiite question” did not exist.

Given this ecumenical background, the Brotherhood was initially enthusiastic about the Islamic revolution that took place in Iran in 1979. The revolution was inspiring to the Brotherhood as a model of a popular Islamic movement that had arisen to topple a pro-Western secular regime and had successfully set up an Islamic state. Moreover, the Brotherhood came to see Iran's Islamic regime as an admirable alternative to secular Arab regimes: Unlike the latter, revolutionary Iran enjoyed both Islamic and popular political legitimacy; also unlike the Arab regimes, Iran was able to defend herself without having to rely on foreign support.

The Brotherhood also shares deep affinity with the Khomeinist political ideology that defined the Iranian revolution and that has been championed by Iran ever since. In traditional Islamic political thought, it is the community which cradles the sharia. Therefore, through its consensus (*ijma*) the community is the basis of legitimacy and the source of authority, and can thus empower one of its members, through *shura* (consultation) and *bayah* (pledge of allegiance), to become the ruler. By contrast, both the Brotherhood's concept of God's sovereignty (*hakimiyyah*) and the Khomeinist doctrine of the “Rule of the Jurist” (*velayat-e-faqih*) are rooted in the view that it is the sharia, not the community, which is the true source of legitimacy and authority. For example, in Brotherhood ideology, the concept of *hakimiyyah* signifies Allah's rule through the implementation of the sharia, and what legitimizes the ruler is his implementation of the sharia, not the will of the people expressed when they elect a ruler. Similarly, the legitimacy of the ruling jurist in Khomeinist doctrine stems from his implementing the sharia on behalf of the Hidden Imam.¹

Because of this ideological kinship, the connections between the Brotherhood and Shiite Islamists have been well-established. Indeed, the two revivalist streams were already exchanging ideas in the early 1950s (if not earlier), through the contacts

established between the Egyptian Brotherhood and Navab Safavi, the leader of the Fadaian-e Islam organization that carried out a series of assassinations in Iran in the early 1950s in an effort to “purify Islam.” Safavi once was quoted as saying, “Whoever wants to be a real *Jafari* [Shiite] should join the Muslim Brotherhood.”²

In the 1970s Brotherhood representatives were in close contact with exiled Iranian activists in Europe and the US who were agitating for the overthrow of the Shah’s regime. Moreover, senior Brotherhood figures were the second foreign group to arrive in Tehran right after Khomeini’s triumphal comeback (preceded only by PLO leader Yasser Arafat). After the revolution, the Brotherhood helped the Iranian state bypass the American sanctions that had been imposed on it following the takeover of the US embassy by providing badly needed essential products.³

The Brotherhood’s initial enthusiasm and support for the Iranian revolution was soon dampened, however, when the revolution did not turn out to be what its Sunni Islamist admirers had expected it to be. By the mid 1980s, Brotherhood relations with Iran had soured significantly as the nature of revolution was increasingly perceived not in universal and pan-Islamic terms, but as a Persian nationalist and distinctly Shiite revolution. These perceptions became widespread in Sunni Arab societies, especially as Iran attempted to export its revolution to Gulf Arab states, and also as Iran formed an alliance with the Syrian regime, which was engaged in an open clash with the Brotherhood’s Syrian branch. The Iraq-Iran War only further inflamed Sunni Islamist animosity across the region against the revolutionary Iranian state. The Brotherhood was initially critical of Iraq for launching the war against Iran, but then turned against Tehran when it extended the war in the hopes of toppling the Iraqi regime and occupying Iraqi territories. For many in the Brotherhood, Iran appeared increasingly to be a nationalist and sectarian power, and hardly the champion of Islamic cause that it had hoped and expected from the self-proclaimed Islamic Republic.

Events of the 1980s thus infused a new acrimony into the Brotherhood’s relations with Iran. Ayatollah Khomeini, the chief of Iran’s revolutionary courts, reportedly referred to the Brotherhood then as “the devil’s brethren.”⁴ In 1987, Shaykh Said al-Hawa, the prominent Syrian Muslim Brotherhood scholar and leader, published his book *Khomeinism: Deviation in Faith and Deviation in Positions*. Most recently, relations between the Brotherhood and Iran have become further strained since the Second Gulf War, when the Brotherhood took Iran to task for not coming to Iraq’s aid against the West, and then for supporting the Iraqi Shia uprising against Saddam.⁵

Nowadays, the Shiite question remains a deeply controversial and divisive issue within the Brotherhood, especially as a consequence of recent developments related to Iran’s growing power. These developments include Iran’s quest for regional hegemony at the expense of the traditional regional powers, Saudi Arabia and Egypt;

Iran's efforts to spread its influence into Arab societies; and Iran's re-emergence as a major player, through her proxies, in key regional trouble spots—including most notably Iraq, Palestine and Lebanon. The Brotherhood is torn as a whole over the Shiite question between, on the one hand, its identity as a pan-Islamic movement that desires unity with Iran to advance its agenda, and on the other, its identity as a distinctly Sunni and Arab movement that not only operates within unique socio-political contexts, but that has reason to be suspicious and even hostile to Shiite power. The outcome of this intra-Brotherhood debate, which has both a political and a religious dimension, will have an important impact both on the Brotherhood's future as well as Iran's own prospects in the region.

The Brotherhood and Iranian Power

IN RECENT YEARS, WHILE SEEKING TO EXPAND ITS POWER AND INFLUENCE IN THE Middle East, Iran has sought to portray and position itself as the leader of a unified Islamic resistance bloc against what's widely regarded in the region as the "American-Zionist project." The Egyptian Brotherhood, for its part, has played an important role in helping facilitate Iran's political and religious expansion in the region.

For example, Iran's strategy to spread its influence in Sunni Arab societies might have been seriously hampered if regional politics were framed (as Wahhabi scholars are prone to do) along Shia-Sunni lines, or along Persian-Arab lines. But the Egyptian Brotherhood's vocal support for Iran has tended to lend credence to the pan-Islamist argument that the real fault line in the region isn't between Muslims (i.e., between Sunni and Shia), or for that matter, between ethnic groups (i.e., between Arabs and Persians). Rather, the defining regional political issue is the struggle between Islam and the West, or as it is more commonly put in Brotherhood rhetoric, between those who support "the American-Zionist project for the region" and those who resist it, including Iran and her allies in the "Resistance" bloc.

In the view of the Egyptian Brotherhood—the "mother" movement of the Brotherhood, which poses a serious domestic challenge to the future of the Egyptian regime, and whose leadership still exercises considerable influence over other regional Brotherhood branches—Iran is generally seen as the leader of the regional Islamic struggle against the U.S. and Israel. Iran has sought to win support in the Arab world through its support of the Palestinian cause and of Hamas. More broadly, however, Iran is seen by elements of the Brotherhood as a partner in the long-term struggle to dismantle the regional order of secular Arab states, as well as in the Islamic struggle for Egypt itself. For its part, Iran has been interested in weakening the Arab states in order to advance her regional dominance, whereas the Brotherhood has

always sought to weaken the Arab state to improve its chances to acquire influence and set up a *sharia* state.

The Egyptian Brotherhood's support for Iran in recent years has also been partly a function of the movement's own domestic difficulties. Since its successes in the parliamentary elections in late 2005, the organization has come under relentless pressure from the Mubarak regime, which has imprisoned senior Ikhwhani leaders, cracked down on its financial and charitable networks, and implemented legislation that further restricts its access to electoral processes. Iran has helped the Brotherhood by seeking to delegitimize and embarrass the Mubarak regime. For example, during the Gaza War (December 2008-January 2009), Iran first sought to instigate the war—against Egyptian state interests—and then launched propaganda attacks against the Egyptian regime over its policies during the war, which were portrayed as being against Islamic interests and accommodating toward Israel. Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, continued this line of attack when he urged the Egyptian people and the commanders of its armed forces to disobey their government regarding Gaza.⁶

In response to this, the Brotherhood's General Guide Muhammad Mahdi Akif took the course of championing Iran and Hezbollah during the Gaza War. He further rejected the charge leveled by some in the Arab world that Iran was merely using the Palestinian cause and Hamas to achieve regional objectives, including its goal of currying regional goodwill and support for its nuclear ambitions. There are two political agendas at play in the region, Akif said. One agenda calls for capitulation to the West and to Israel, and this agenda is followed not only by the Egyptian regime but by other Arabs who unwittingly support Israel by worrying instead about Iran's regional ambitions. The other agenda is that of "the Resistance axis," which calls for resistance and *jihad* to drive away the Jewish state and the West. The Brotherhood, Akif said, is avowedly a part of this second agenda, as is its leading advocate, Iran. Who is wrong in the crisis of Gaza, asked Akif, Iran or the Arabs? "It is Iran who is noble, manly and humane and helps miserable people who are besieged by the Arabs,"⁷ he said.

The Egyptian Brotherhood's position on Iran soon became more muddled in early 2009, when a Hezbollah cell was discovered in Egypt. In the Egyptian national debate that ensued over Iran's growing presence, the Brotherhood's position on Iranian power within Egypt became more ambiguous. The Brotherhood's Guidance Bureau initially dismissed the whole issue and supported Nasrallah. General Guide Akif repeated his argument about the "two agendas" in the region—that of Islamic resistance, and that of capitulation. Yet for other Brotherhood officials, the Hezbollah cell presented an infringement on Egypt's sovereignty. They criticized Hezbollah for failing to coordinate its efforts in Gaza with the Egyptian government in the first

place, and Brotherhood parliament deputies declared that Egypt's national security constitutes a "red line" that should never be violated, because "Egypt comes first."⁸ The Brotherhood's leadership issued a communiqué that lauded Hezbollah for its assistance to "the resistance" in Palestine. It stressed, however, that there was no contradiction between that support and the organization's commitment to Egypt's national security.⁹

This back and forth reflected the inherent tension that exists within the Brotherhood between, on the one hand, its identity as a pan-Islamic movement that adheres to an ideology that doesn't recognize the legitimacy of nation states, and, on the other hand, its Sunni Arab identity and claim to be an Egyptian political party with a national agenda. Meanwhile, the regional political contest between Sunnis and Shiites will likely keep this internal division over the movement's identity at the forefront of intra-Brotherhood debates. Most recently, as Saudi Arabia has been drawn into the Yemeni Zeidi al-Huthi insurgency, which is widely believed to be supported by Iran, the Brotherhood has come out in support of the Huthis; it has called upon the Saudi King to immediately halt the Saudi military offensive launched to push the Huthis back across the border.¹⁰

Meanwhile, in Syria, where the Brotherhood is officially illegal and membership in the movement is punishable by death, the Brotherhood's response to Iran has been much more straightforward. The Syrian Brothers view Iran as the closest ally of the Assad regime, and hence, as complicit in their subjugation. As such, they have fiercely criticized Iran's Shiite missionary activities in Syria and have accused the Syrian regime of allowing the country to be turned into an Iranian province.¹¹ The Syrian Brotherhood has also been critical of Iran's nuclear project,¹² and has denounced Iran's stated territorial ambitions in Bahrain.¹³

In early 2009, when it became clear that the Obama administration was seeking engagement with Damascus rather than regime change there, the Brotherhood, which operates in exile, sought a *détente* with the regime in the hope that it would be allowed to return to Syria. It announced that, in view of the Gaza War, it had suspended its opposition activities, and then walked out of the main Syrian opposition grouping, the National Salvation Front. Yet in November 2009 the Syrian Brotherhood announced that its "truce" with the regime and the suspension of its opposition activities were over. And unlike the Egyptian Brotherhood, it came out fiercely against the al-Huthi insurgency in southern Arabia, depicting it as part of a wider project to invade and destabilize the Arab states.¹⁴

In Lebanon, the Brotherhood-affiliated Islamic Group (*al-Jamaah Islamiyyah*), which is led by the prominent scholar Shaykh Faisal Mawlawi, has been allied with the Sunni establishment associated with the Hariri family. It formed part of Saad Hariri's anti-Syrian "March 14 Alliance," and has been openly critical of both Hezbollah

and Iran. In late 2006, when Hezbollah launched its campaign to topple the “March 14” government, Shaykh Mawlawi condemned Hezbollah, claiming that Iran had started to implement its grand plan of expanding its influence in the region, and that Hezbollah had proven to be a part of this plan.¹⁵ Moreover, following Hezbollah’s military humiliation of the Sunnis and Druze of the March 14 Alliance in May 2008, Shaykh Mawlawi stated that the “Islamic Resistance” was now in the service of sectarian and political projects.¹⁶

By contrast, Hezbollah was vocally supported by Shaykh Fathi Yakan, a well known Brotherhood thinker and preacher and former leader of the Egyptian movement *al-Jamaah al-Islamiyyah*. In 2005, Yakan formed and led a rival to *al-Jamaah al-Islamiyyah* called the “Islamic Action Front,” a coalition of Sunni groups whose power base was in Tripoli, in the stronghold of Sunni opponents of the Hariri family. Shaykh Yakan stated that he was proud of being an ally “of all the free and noble people in the world,” including Hamas, Hezbollah, Syria, Iran, and (after it voiced its support for Hamas in the 2008-2009 Gaza war) Turkey.¹⁷ He also denied charges that Shiite leadership of the “resistance movement” to Western hegemony in the Middle East was having the effect of turning Sunnis into Shias.¹⁸ On December 8, 2006, Yakan led, as the Imam, the Friday prayer of the Shiites who were laying siege to the offices of the “March 14” Prime Minister Siniora.¹⁹ (Yakan died on June 13, 2009.)

The attitude of the Jordanian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood toward Iran in recent years has reflected the fact that Jordan is flanked by the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to its West and the sectarian conflict between Shias and Sunnis in Iraq to its East. The organization has traditionally promoted the view of Iran as an allied Islamist force that has been unjustly targeted by the West. Because of the Jordanian Brotherhood’s deep connections to Hamas, it has highly valued and praised Iran’s support for the Palestinians,²⁰ and it has also supported Iran’s nuclear aspirations. During the 2006 war in Lebanon, the Jordanian Brothers organized mass demonstrations in support of Hezbollah, and after the war it supported the Lebanese opposition camp against the “March 14” government.

At the same time, the Jordanian Brotherhood supported Saddam Hussein’s regime, deplored its collapse, and accused Iran of facilitating the US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq as well as the plight of Iraqi Sunnis.²¹ It was totally opposed to the Shia-led Iraqi government, and supported the Sunni insurgency and rebellion against the ascendant Shiite majority in Iraq. Recently it denounced Iran’s claims for Bahrain,²² and a newspaper affiliated with Jordan’s Brotherhood bitterly criticized Iran’s treatment of its Sunni population.²³

The views of the Iraqi branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, known as the “Islamic Party,” have been largely critical of Iranian involvement in their country and of the country’s new Shiite majority. At the same time, they have participated in the post-

Saddam political process and urged their supporters early on to join the new Iraqi army and police. Their leader—Tariq al-Hashimi—has served as Vice President of Iraq. The argument behind the Islamic Party’s decision to participate fully in Iraqi political life, in spite of the Shiite dominance and the state of occupation, was that Iraq was caught between two occupations—one led by America, and the other by Iran and the Shia. The Iranian-Shiite occupation was considered so dangerous to the Sunni Islamic Party that they argued it was necessary for Sunnis to integrate as fully as possible in state institutions in order to reduce Shia domination. So far, this policy has held, even though some Islamists see it as legitimating the American occupation.²⁴

Finally, the Brotherhood offshoot Hamas’s alliance with Iran has been rooted in Iran’s need for a powerful Palestinian asset giving her a major say in the Palestine issue and, by extension, in Arab affairs. Hamas has taken advantage of this Iranian need. But Hamas has gone beyond being an Iranian ally. Khalid Mashaal, Hamas’s top leader, has made gestures signifying that Hamas is effectively under Iran’s command. Mashaal, for example, told the Iranian Parliament that he had presented a report on the Gaza War to Iran’s Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, “the ruler of the Muslims” (*waliy amr al-muslimin*).²⁵ In this and other statements, Mashaal lent credence to the claim made by Iran that Hamas was not only an Iranian asset or ally, but an Iranian creation. For example, Muhammad Akhtari, who was for years Iran’s man in Syria and Lebanon, claimed that Hamas (and also the Palestinian Islamic Jihad) was formed and inspired by Imam Khomeini and by the regional Islamic resistance movement that he established. Based on this logic, the Palestinian resistance, just like Hezbollah, is the legal son of the Islamic Republic.²⁶

Yet on the Shiite question, it is clear that Hamas, like the Brotherhood as a whole, remains divided. Mashaal’s expressions of loyalty to Iran raised concerns inside Hamas that he was alienating the organization’s Sunni-Arab supporters. As a consequence, senior Hamas figures in Gaza asserted that Hamas did not recognize Khamenei as the ruler of the Muslims.²⁷ They further claimed that there is a strong pro-Arab trend inside Hamas, which is interested in strengthening the movement’s Sunni character and its existing ties with countries like Egypt and Saudi Arabia.²⁸

The Shia Conversion Controversy

THE GROWTH OF IRANIAN POWER IN RECENT YEARS HAS HELPED TO INFLAME THE historically-rooted political and ideological rivalry between some streams of Sunnism and Shiism. This has been further fueled by popular fears among sectors of the Arab Sunni populations that Iran is trying to convert Sunnis to Shiism as a way of furthering its political agenda of regional domination. These fears have generated a great deal

of controversy within the Brotherhood movement and the Sunni world in general.

In some ways, the Egyptian Brotherhood's efforts to downplay Sunni-Shia religious differences in the spirit of Islamist unity and resistance have helped make this religious controversy within the Sunni world possible. For instance, by dismissing as secondary the religious differences between Shiites and Sunnis, and by arguing that Twelver Shia are Muslims and that Twelver Shiism is the fifth school of jurisprudence, elements of the Egyptian Brotherhood have effectively supplied an ideological counterbalance to the Wahhabi-Salafi campaign to vilify the Shia and Iran. Over time, this proactive Islamist ecumenicism has helped make it seem acceptable for Sunnis not only to identify politically with Iran, but also to be open to Shia *dawa* (proselytization).

In the debate among the Sunnis over Iran and the phenomenon of Sunni conversions to Shiism, neither Iran's supporters nor its detractors have seriously denied that "Shiitization" (*tashyi*) or conversions to Shiism among Sunni populations is taking place. They've also not denied the doctrinal divergences between Sunnism and Shiism. Iran's detractors in the Sunni world have warned that Iran's efforts to spread Shiism pose a clear and present threat to Arab-Sunni societies, and have sought to stress the fundamental nature of Sunni-Shiite doctrinal differences. But Iran's Sunni advocates have dismissed the importance of Iran's efforts to spread Shiism, and have described doctrinal divergences between Sunni and Shia as insignificant.

The attack on Iran's conversion campaign has been led to a large extent by Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi. A former senior member of the Egyptian Brotherhood and one of the movement's leading ideologues, Qaradawi is often described as the "spiritual guide" of the Brotherhood. He claims to have declined past offers to assume the position of the General Guide²⁹ because he considers himself as "the Guide of the Muslim Nation" as a whole (*murshid al-ummah*).³⁰ In this way, he often competes directly with the Brotherhood's Egyptian leaders for influence within the movement. This intra-Brotherhood rivalry has clearly been a contributing factor to the divided opinions within the movement regarding the Shiism question and the controversy surrounding Shia conversion.

Qaradawi has traditionally adhered to an ecumenical approach toward the Shiite question. He has advocated for rapprochement (*taqrib*) between the Sunni and Shiite revivalist movements, and has argued that while differences between Sunni and Shia do in fact exist, they pertain to matters of jurisprudence that are of secondary importance to the principles of faith.³¹ During the 2006 Lebanon war, Qaradawi was a vocal defender of Hezbollah—a position he took against *fatwas* issued by Saudi Wahhabi scholars that forbade supporting the Shiite militia movement. Qaradawi has also championed Iran's right to acquire peaceful nuclear technology and has claimed that Iran's nuclear capability would not pose a threat to the security and interests of Gulf Arab states.³²

Despite this ecumenical track record, however, Qaradawi became a fierce critic of Iran and the Shia in the summer of 2006, in the aftermath of the war between Israel and Hezbollah. At the time, Qaradawi launched a vicious attack on the Shia, accusing them of trying to penetrate Egypt and other predominantly Sunni societies and to convert their people to Shiism. The motives behind Qaradawi's reversal subsequently became clearer when he denounced the Shia for trying to exploit what was perceived region-wide as a Hezbollah victory over Israel and to use this to their political advantage.³³ Moreover, for the first time, Qaradawi also denounced the Shiites for their religious beliefs and practices, claiming that most Shiites believe that the Koran is imperfect (*tahrif al-Quran*) and seek to curry favor with Allah by cursing the Prophet's Companions (*sabb al-Sahabah*). At a conference to promote Sunni-Shia reconciliation in Iraq that was held in Doha on January 20-22, 2007, he subsequently reiterated his attack on Iran's efforts to spread Shiism in the region.³⁴ He made a similar attack in an interview to the official Arabic website of the Egyptian MB in July 2008.³⁵

Qaradawi's string of anti-Shia pronouncements from 2006-2008 met with little controversy in Egypt and elsewhere. It is therefore unclear why remarks Qaradawi made in an interview in the Egyptian daily *al-Masri al-Yaum* in September 2008,³⁶ where he once again criticized Iran's proselytizing efforts, generated the heated controversy that it did.³⁷ In that interview, Qaradawi first criticized Wahhabi preachers for their fanaticism, and then he took aim at the Shia. He claimed that the latter may be considered Muslims, but that they are *mubtadiun*—or, those who introduce unauthorized innovations to Islam. He argued further that Shiites are endangering Sunni societies by trying to infiltrate them, and he called on Sunnis to defend their societies against the Shiite "invasion" (*ghazu*). Qaradawi moreover enumerated the points of difference in the religious doctrines of Sunnism and Shiism.

This time, there was a fierce Iranian reaction to Qaradawi's interview, which only led the Sunni shaykh to ramp-up his invectives against Iran. This, in turn, set off a much larger dispute among religious scholars in Egypt and elsewhere in the region. Many Sunni scholars spoke out in support of Qaradawi and denounced what they saw as Iran's campaign to convert Sunnis to Shiism. But other Sunni scholars criticized him for raising the issue in the first place.

Internally, the Muslim Brotherhood movement throughout the region was sharply divided on whether to come to Qaradawi's side in this dispute or not. Several Brotherhood organizations and scholars have been critical of Iranian influence in their societies, and they naturally rallied behind Qaradawi. For example, the Controller General of the Syrian Brotherhood, Ali Sadr al-Din al-Bayanuni, complained that Iran seeks to spread Shiism everywhere in the Muslim world, adding that Syria has been singled out for Shiite proselytizing because of Iran's political alliance with the Syrian regime. Iran's project of spreading Shiism, Bayanuni said, and Iran's

influence in Syria pose a clear danger not only for Sunni Syrian society but for all the states in the region.³⁸

The Muslim Brotherhood affiliate based in Iran itself, “The Group of the Call to Islam and of Reform” (*Jamaat al-Dawah wal-Islah*), reportedly supported Qaradawi and criticized both Iranian Shia conversion attempts and the Egyptian Brotherhood for its support of Iran and for its failure to condemn Iran’s treatment of her own Sunnis.³⁹ The Controller General of the Jordanian Brotherhood, Shaykh Humam Said, criticized the Shia for some of their beliefs and practices, like the Imams’ infallibility and the cursing of the Companions. He denounced what he saw as Shia expansionism and predicted that a rapprochement between Sunnis and Shias would never materialize.⁴⁰ Rashid al-Ghannushi, the prominent Islamic scholar and ideological leader of the Brotherhood-affiliated Tunisian al-Nahda movement fully supported Qaradawi’s positions.⁴¹

Other Brothers, however, have defended Iran and the Shia. The Egyptian Brotherhood’s leadership has consistently sought to avoid entanglement in the Sunni-Shia controversy and have downplayed Shia efforts to convert Sunnis as marginal.⁴² They have further claimed that Sunni-Shia strife has been instigated by the U.S. as a way of dividing Muslims; Sunnis and Shias, they argue, comprise one Muslim Nation that must unite in order to confront “the American Zionist project that seeks to eradicate Islam.”⁴³ During the 2006 Lebanon War, General Guide Akif declared that Hezbollah has successfully led the resistance against Israel and therefore the Brotherhood should recognize Hezbollah’s leadership in that struggle. The arguments between Sunnis and Shias, he stressed, must be suspended until after the battle with the common Zionist enemy ends with the Arabs regaining all their rights, because that battle must take precedence over any other issue.⁴⁴ Akif has also said that he supports Iran’s President Ahmadinejad because of his steadfast efforts to resist American hegemony in the Middle East.⁴⁵

After Qaradawi’s 2008 *al-Masri al-Yaum* interview, Akif stiffly rebuked Qaradawi, saying that whoever speaks of an Iranian agenda to penetrate and dominate the region speaks in the language of the Muslim Nation’s enemies.⁴⁶ He declared also that he had no objection to Shiite expansionism, because compared to the 56 Sunni states, there is only a single Shia state, Iran, and there is nothing to fear about it.⁴⁷ Akif’s first deputy, Dr. Muhammad Habib, also reacted to Qaradawi’s statements by stating: “Which is more worthy of warning from, the Shia expansion and Iranian danger, or the Zionist danger? There are priorities, Dr. Qaradawi.”⁴⁸

Nothing perhaps could serve Iran better than the fact that the defense of the Shia, and the appeal to stop the Sunni-Shia debate and to close Muslim ranks, have been made by Qaradawi’s own former comrades and disciples. When Muhammad Habib, the First Deputy to the General Guide, said sarcastically, “There are priorities, Dr. Qaradawi,” he was referring to a central theme in Qaradawi’s own scholarly work,

“The Jurisprudence of Priorities” (*fiqh al-awlawiyyat*). Qaradawi’s critics have clearly set an order of political priorities in direct opposition to his own. Unlike him, they give priority to the struggle with “the American-Zionist project” over whatever differences they may have with Iran and the Shiites.

This dilemma regarding which conflict takes priority—the conflict with Israel or the one with the Shia—is not unique to the Brotherhood. During the 2006 Lebanon War, Saudi Salafi shaykhs were divided over whether Muslims should support Hezbollah against the Israelis. The well-known *Sahwah* (“Awakening”) leader, Sheikh Salman al-Awdah, supported Hezbollah and rejected the anti-Hezbollah *fatwa* of Sheikh Jabrin. It can be argued that Sheikh Awdah’s position reflects the *Ikhwani* influence on his generation of Saudi Salafi thinkers.

As for the question of religious doctrinal divergences between Sunnis and Shias, the standard Muslim Brotherhood position has been that the Shia are Muslims for all intents and purposes, and that the differences between Sunnis and Shiites pertain to matters of jurisprudence which are of secondary importance, not to principles of faith.⁴⁹ But this general formula, which was once Qaradawi’s position also, became insufficient in view of the Shia conversion debate and Qaradawi’s attacks on Shia beliefs and practices. An internal debate has emerged, reflecting a deep division within the organization on this matter.

One side of the debate was presented in an article⁵⁰ posted on the Egyptian Brotherhood’s official Arabic website and signed by Yusuf Nada, a senior Brotherhood official. Nada originally set up the Brotherhood’s relations with the Iranian revolutionary regime in 1979 and has maintained close contacts within Iran ever since. In his article, Nada minimized the differences between Sunnis and Shias and refuted many of the criticisms leveled by Sunnis against the Shias. The Brotherhood’s position, Nada wrote, is that Twelver Shiism is recognized as the fifth school of Islamic jurisprudence. Twelver Shiism differs from the four Sunni schools not in matters of faith, which are fundamental to Islam and required of all true believers, but in matters of jurisprudence. These matters are of secondary importance and are a source of disagreement among the four Sunni schools as well. Noticeably, Nada made no mention of Iran’s proselytizing efforts in the region.

A rebuttal of Nada’s article was offered by Mahmud Ghuzlan, a member of the Brotherhood’s Guidance Bureau, which is the highest executive body under the General Guide.⁵¹ Ghuzlan accused Nada of absolving the Shia of the various faults that have been attributed to them by the consensus of Sunni scholars. He also accused Nada of misrepresenting the Brotherhood’s position on the Shia. The high esteem Iran has gained throughout the region because of its leadership in resisting the West, Ghuzlan wrote, has encouraged Iran to attempt to further penetrate the states in the region by spreading Shiite ideology. The aim of this Shiite proselytizing is to

turn the people's political solidarity with Iran into a deeper loyalty and religious affiliation. This is what prompted Shaykh Qaradawi to launch his attacks on the Shia. "We," Ghuzlan wrote, "agree with the essence of Qaradawi's critique of the Shia. The Brotherhood prefers not to enter into religious polemics in order to preserve the unity of the Muslim Nation, but Iran should respect that approach too and not take advantage of it by acting to spread Shiism."

Following this exchange between Nada and Ghuzlan, General Guide Akif weighed in on the intra-Brotherhood dispute, claiming that Nada's article represented only his personal views and not those of the movement. Yet in fact, Nada's views reflected the views of many within the Brotherhood's leadership, and it was reported that Akif was actually behind the publication of Nada's article, against opposition from members of the Guidance Bureau.⁵² As this debate went on, and Nada accused Ghuzlan of embracing a *takfiri* approach toward the Shia,⁵³ Ghuzlan argued that all the members of the Guidance Bureau had rejected Nada's position.⁵⁴ Akif subsequently chimed in again, declaring that both Nada and Ghuzlan were expressing their own personal views and that neither one expressed the view of the Guidance Bureau.⁵⁵ Quite obviously, the Bureau itself was divided on this issue.

The Brotherhood and the Crisis of the Iranian Regime

AS THIS INTRA-BROTHERHOOD DEBATE OVER IRAN'S PROSELYTIZING IN SUNNI-ARAB states has continued to fester, the government-led crackdown within Iran following the disputed presidential elections in June 2009 generated a further disagreement within the Brotherhood that posed yet another dilemma for the Brotherhood's leadership. In the interests of Islamic solidarity, the leadership probably would have preferred not to have to criticize the Iranian regime. But remaining silent while the Iranian government was criticized everywhere else in the region for its harsh suppression of internal dissent made silence for the Brotherhood increasingly difficult. Moreover, had the Brotherhood's leadership remained silent, it would have been taken as a sign affirming the arguments of the Brotherhood's critics—that the movement, despite claiming to have reformed itself, is not really committed to fair elections and democracy.

In any case, there is a divergence of views within the Brotherhood about how to respond to Iran's crackdown. At the heart of this was a disagreement within the Brotherhood over the nature of the Islamic regime in Iran. Iran's constitution and its state structure, argued Dr. Issam al-Aryan, who represents the reformist trend in

the Egyptian Brotherhood, must undergo a fundamental reform. This sweeping reform will require a redistribution of powers among Iran's presidency, the parliament, the military and the people, who are to be represented by political parties. Furthermore, the Khomeinist doctrine of the Guardianship of the Jurist (*velayat-e faqih*) needs to be thoroughly re-assessed, while the theocratic institutions that have been built around this principle should be treated merely as symbolic and limited in their authority. At the same time the powers of the Revolutionary Guard Corps should be subject to a review. Aryan also urged Iran's leaders to shed the Shia and Persian-nationalist character of the Iranian state.⁵⁶

The turmoil within Iran has also forced a reappraisal of what most have seen as Iran's growing power and influence in recent years. One commentator argued on the official Arabic language website of the Egyptian Brotherhood⁵⁷ that Iran's bid to dominate the region has been thwarted. The Shia minorities in the Gulf states have failed to expand their power; Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army in Iraq has been successfully reined in; the activities of the Revolutionary Guard's al-Qods force from Iraq to Oman and Yemen have been undercut; Hezbollah was roundly defeated in the recent Lebanese elections; and Hamas is still besieged in Gaza.

Despite these calls for reform within Iran, other Brotherhood members defended the regime and pleaded with Sunni Arabs to support it. One article that appeared on the Egyptian Brotherhood's website five days after the Iranian elections claimed that the country should be proud of its honest elections and the ordered transfer of power within the regime.⁵⁸ Iran is a strong Islamic state, which is not ruled by corruption and electoral rigging, and it is a power respected around the world, claimed the author of the article. Moreover, the Arabs who criticize Iran, and who ignite controversy and conflict between Sunni and Shia, do so in order to divert attention from their own political failures and incapacity to stage an Islamist struggle. Had the Arabs supported the Islamic resistance in Iraq, Iran would not have intervened there; had they formed a strong Sunni Islamist resistance in Lebanon, Hezbollah would not have been the only armed resistance there; and had they embraced Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Iran would have had no foothold in Gaza and the West Bank.

As this controversy came to a boil, the movement's leadership eventually decided to announce its own position.⁵⁹ They stated that "events in Iran are a purely internal matter and concern only the Iranians." They further rejected "any foreign intervention in Iran's affairs, especially by the US, Western Europe and the Zionists"—a statement obviously intended as an endorsement of the Iranian regime's contention that its internal dissent was being fomented by outsiders. The Brotherhood leadership further affirmed "the right of peoples to elect their representatives and rulers in complete freedom and to choose the regimes and constitutions which rule them without anyone's interference."

This affirmation might be regarded as somewhat of a concession to the reform-minded critics of the Iranian regime within the movement's ranks. But the Brotherhood leadership did not criticize the regime explicitly. Instead, it effectively endorsed the regime's justification for cracking down on internal dissent by insisting that it is either solely an internal affair to the Islamic Republic, or that the dissent is being fomented by non-Muslim outsiders.

Conclusion

AS THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN ATTEMPTS TO SPREAD ITS INFLUENCE THROUGHOUT the Arab and Muslim worlds, the Muslim Brotherhood's political and ideological support of the Shiite state has proven to be an important Iranian asset. When leaders of the Egyptian Brotherhood downplay the religious differences between Shias and Sunnis, and argue that Twelver Shiism should be recognized as an acceptably orthodox school of Islamic jurisprudence, they effectively serve as counterbalance to the Wahhabi/Salafi-led campaign to vilify Shiism, as well as nationalist Arab efforts to contest Iran's growing political power. In this way, the Brotherhood's ecumenical approach has helped make it acceptable for Sunni Arabs to align themselves politically with Iran, and it appears that it has also made Sunni societies increasingly more open to Shiite religious proselytizing.

In the future, how far might the Egyptian Brotherhood go in supporting Iranian interests? During the Gaza War, the Brotherhood was careful not to cross the regime's "red lines" in its protests and demonstrations. It pursued its strategy according to which, as long as the movement has not reached the stage when it can seize power, it should avoid taking steps that could put its very survival at risk. These, then, are the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's priorities: The joint struggle with Iran against "the American-Zionist project" takes precedence over religious or ethnic divergences with her. However, the survival of the organization is the highest priority.

It is within this context that the intra-Brotherhood political and religious debate surrounding the Shiite question should be considered. The pro-Iranian element within the Brotherhood will, in all likelihood, continue to support Iran as long as the reason for that support exists—namely, for as long as Iran continues to play the same regional role she has in recent years, as a champion of Islamic interests and as the leader of the regional "resistance." The Brotherhood's underlying motivation to support Iran will likely diminish, however, if Iran abandons this leadership role and shifts from confrontation with the US to accommodation with it. To be sure, Iran's territorial claims regarding Arab states and growing concerns over Shia conversion efforts, reflected in the divided internal debate in the Egyptian Brotherhood on that

issue, will make the Brotherhood's alliance with Iran uneasy and, at times, strained. But the Brotherhood-Iran relationship will not end so long as the latter's regional role does not change.

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The Dilemmas of Pan-Islamic Unity

By Mehdi Khalaji

THROUGHOUT THE 20TH CENTURY, THE COUNTRIES OF IRAN AND EGYPT have had a very complex relationship with one another. Among other things, Iran, a leading majority Shiite country that is also ruled by Shiites, and Egypt, the cultural and theological center of Sunni Islam, are home to two of the most important streams of modern Islamist revivalism—Shiite Islamism, and the Muslim Brotherhood, respectively. While the relations between Shiite and Sunni states and non-state movements have often been adversarial and even prone to violence, the relations between these two streams of Islamism, both of which stress as a matter of doctrine the ideals of pan-Islamist unity, have tended toward ideological convergence and collaboration. As one writer recently put it in an article on the Muslim Brotherhood’s website:

Many commentators in the West still believe in the fairy tale that Sunni and Shia Islamists are at odds. Though most Sunni jihadists tend to see Shias as heretics and Hezbollah as a Zionist tool (go figure), the Muslim Brotherhood, by far the most popular of the Middle East’s radical Islamists, and the Shia Islamists’ history of mutual influence and collaboration traces back to the first Islamic revivalists of the 19th century and the political thought of the Brotherhood’s own founder.¹

The Brotherhood’s origins may in fact be traced back to a Shiite cleric. The Persian activist-intellectual Said Jamal Assadabadi, who is perhaps more widely known today as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, was a key architect of the first wave of religious revivalism

that swept across the Sunni world during the latter part of the 19th Century. After migrating to Egypt in 1871, Afghani began spreading his reformist teachings, and influenced a new generation of Egyptian scholars who became passionate advocates of pan-Islamist ideals. Afghani's most famous disciple, Mohammad Abduh, would become the rector of Cairo's al-Azhar Seminary and a pioneer of the reformist socio-political approach to interpreting the Quran that underpinned the rise of salafism and its various streams. Later on, one of Abduh's leading students, Rashid Rida, would take his teacher's socio-political approach to the Quran in an increasingly more polemical and radical direction, becoming one of the first theoreticians of the Islamic state. Rida's writings were enormously influential on the thinking of Hassan al-Banna, and by extension, Rida became one of the spiritual godfathers of the Muslim Brotherhood, which until today remains the most influential and the broadest of all Islamist movements.

But the story doesn't end there. In yet another twist in Muslim history, the Muslim Brotherhood would in turn requite Afghani's gift to Sunni revivalism by directly stimulating the emergence of a unique form of Shiite Islamism in Iran in the 1950s. Indeed, the Islamic paradigm of pre-revolutionary Iran was profoundly shaped by the ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood as well as by kindred Sunni movements such as the Indo-Pakistani Jamaat-e-Islami and its founder Sayyed Abul Aala Maududi.² In this way, Sunni revivalist ideology helped pave the way for the 1979 Iranian revolution that culminated in Shiite Islamism's greatest achievement: the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Since the founding of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Shiite Islamism and the Egyptian Brotherhood have continued to find ways to collaborate with each other in what they've sought to portray as their common Islamic struggle against the West and the reigning regional political order. Moreover, the Islamic Republic has been a continued source of inspiration for the Egyptian Brotherhood in its unfulfilled struggle for an Islamic state of its own. Yet despite their long history of cooperation in the spirit of pan-Islamism, religious differences have also complicated the relationship between Shiite Islamism and the Brotherhood, rendering their ideals of Islamic unity difficult, if not impossible, to implement in political practice.

The Return to the Quran

THROUGHOUT ISLAMIC HISTORY, SUNNIS HAVE OFTEN CRITICIZED SHIITE THOUGHT and practice for neglecting or, at best, paying insufficient attention to the Quran. That criticism—which is sometimes used to support the further claim made by radical Sunnis that Shiites are “rejecters” of Islam properly understood—is rooted in

part in the fact that Sunnis privilege the Quran in their juristic or legal reasoning practices much more than Shiites do.

Sunni jurisprudence, for instance, relies principally on the Quran and the Sunna of the Prophet Mohammad as expressed by the *hadith*, as well as on the consensus of scholars (*ijma*) as passed down through the four recognized legal schools. While Twelver Shiite jurisprudence makes use of these sources, it also draws heavily from the example put forth by the twelve Imams—from Ali ibn Abu Talib to the so-called “Hidden Imam,” Muhammad Ibn al-Hassan. Shiite tradition recognizes these Imams as having had a special connection to God, and their knowledge of Islam is believed to be infallible. Indeed, to many Shiites, the *hadith*, or recorded sayings and traditions of these twelve Imams, carry the same legal and theological weight as the Prophet’s *hadith*. Some Shiite scholars even equate the Imams’ *hadith* to the Quran. This view, which is scandalous to many Sunnis, maintains that the early Imams had the authority to interpret the Quran and to reveal its hidden sense. This is the case even if, Shiites insist, an Imam’s interpretation appears to be in conflict with the generally accepted apparent meaning of the Quran.³

Because of these divergent Islamic paradigms, Quranic exegesis has historically not occupied as significant a place in the traditional curriculum of Shiite seminaries as it has in Sunni seminaries. In fact, for a long time, in the Shiite seminaries of Iran and Iraq, teaching and studying the Quran was not considered a suitable calling and was not prestigious enough for a high-ranking cleric. Quranic exegesis was appropriate to professional preachers, but it was not seen as the highest form of religious practice or scholarship, at least not as reflected in the *faqih* style of education and discussion that predominated in the Shiite seminary. Indeed, Quranic exegesis was even perceived as being potentially damaging to a Shiite scholar’s religious prestige—a traditionalist view that has persisted into the modern era in important ways. This is one reason why the late Ayatollah Abul Qassem Khoi—one of the most influential of 20th Century Shiite scholars, and the predecessor to Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Sistani at the Najaf seminary—was deeply criticized by the Shiite faithful in the 1960s for publishing the first volume of a Quranic commentary, *Al-Bayan fi Tafsir Al-Quran*. The outcry over his focus on the Quran led Ayatollah Khoi to decide against publishing the rest of his commentary.⁴

In the modern era, however, Shiism’s traditional reluctance to engage in Quranic exegesis has been deeply challenged. This has been especially true as traditional Shiism has come into contact with certain reformist tendencies in the Sunni world, including the salafist call to “return to the Quran.” In fact, Egypt’s early 20th century Quranic commentators, which include most notably Mohammad Abduh (1849-1905) and his student, Rashid Rida (1865-1935), were instrumental in encouraging a similar tendency within Shiism. Under the influence of these Islamist reformist thinkers,

Shiite scholars, especially those based in Iran, increasingly began to reorient the focus of their scholarship on the Quran and the practice of Quranic exegesis.

Rashid Rida was perhaps the most important modern Sunni scholar of the Quran in influencing the growth of modern Shiite exegesis. The founder and editor of the reformist journal *Al-Manar*, Rida's prolific Quranic commentary is regarded widely by Sunni and Shiite scholars as groundbreaking and a herald of a new era of socio-political exegesis of the Quran. Since Rida had a solid upbringing in Islamic theology, *Al-Manar* reflected a classical Sunni point of view as well as a more traditional mode of theological argumentation (especially when compared with the works of later revivalists such as Said Qutb's *Fi Zilal al-Quran*). Although Rida did not succeed in finishing his commentary on the entire Quran, he did manage to publish his exegesis of the holy book from its beginning chapter until Sura Tawbah, the ninth chapter.

While Shiite scholars learned from and appropriated many aspects of modern Sunni Quranic exegesis, they also sought to develop their own distinctively Shiite exegetical perspective. The Iranian scholar Sayyed Mohammad Hossein Tabatabai (1892-1981) is widely regarded as the author of the most important work of Shiite exegesis in modern times, the 20-volume *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir-s al-Quran*. In many ways, *Al-Mizan* can be read as a counter-argument to Rashid Rida's *Al-Manar* as well as a Shiite commentary. Tabatabai frequently mentions Rida throughout the work, and like Rida, his innovative interpretations of the Quran also seem to stop abruptly at Chapter 9, Sura Tawbah. On many key issues—from the ideal Islamic society, to justice, jihad, and other topics of Islamic jurisprudence—Rida's influence on Tabatabai is undeniable. Yet at the same time, Tabatabai clearly went to great lengths to develop a uniquely Shiite socio-political exegesis of the Quran. This exegesis rejected outright Rida's characteristically Sunni criticisms of the Shiite theory of the imamate, as well as Shiism's belief in the infallibility and knowledge of imams.

One of the most significant implications of the modern Shiite scholars' turn away from their tradition and toward the Quran is that it has helped pave the way for the emergence of a distinctly modern ideological and political interpretation of the Quran. In fact, the general discourse on "the return to the Quran" found a most receptive audience among a new generation of thinkers that included clerics but also writer-intellectuals from the non-clerical class. These thinkers believed that the theological paradigm of traditional Shiism was not adequate to address the range of modern social and political challenges that Iranian society was confronting.

This intellectual ferment, caused by Shiism's increasing interaction both with Sunni reformists (*islahiyun*) or revivalists and Western political ideology, led to the development of a special school of religious thought. For the first time in Shiism's history, a religious view emerged from outside the clerical establishment. These new ideas emanated from doctors, engineers and other university-educated intellectuals

who, thanks to their direct engagement with the Quran, felt themselves experienced and knowledgeable enough about Islam to render the traditional Islamic sciences and institutions unnecessary.

Once freed from the structural and ideological encumbrances of Shiite tradition, groups like Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK, the Islamic Socialist organization), and engineers like Mehdi Bazargan (Iran's first prime minister after the 1979 revolution), and even revolutionary clerics like Mahmoud Taleqani (who blended Shiism with Marxist ideals, inspiring a generation of clerical revolutionaries) produced a new and unique type of Quranic commentary. This was intended to respond to the new socio-political requirements of the time, and its contributors were influenced by the secular ideologies of positivism and Marxism.⁵ They sought to present Islamist ideology as a superior alternative to secular political ideologies—one that provided a cure for all of humankind's problems, both on earth and in the hereafter.

It is true that these Iranian intellectuals greatly benefited from Shiite sources and notions. However, their emphasis on concepts like jihad and martyrdom were profoundly inspired by Sunni writer-intellectuals.⁶ Just as jihad and martyrdom were central to the thought of Sunni intellectuals like Said Qutb, these issues also came to be two pillars of Islam for Iranian Islamic lay writers like Ali Shariati. In the works of Shariati and others, jihad and martyrdom are colored and formulated with reference to Shiite culture and literature. But the idea of highlighting those notions among many others, as an attempt to create an Islamic ideology, was greatly inspired and shaped by the Muslim Brotherhood's writers and members.

The Revolutionary Clerics

THE AGGRESSIVE SECULARIZATION POLICIES IMPLEMENTED BY REZA SHAH PAHLAVI, who ruled Iran as Shah from 1925 to 1941, aimed to block the Shiite clerical establishment from two institutions that they had traditionally ruled: the schools and the judiciary. These policies created a new generation of ambitious young Shiite clerics who became more and more alienated from Iran's ruling elites and culture. In addition to their growing disaffection, these young clerics found themselves increasingly with little reason to continue to adhere to traditional Shiite thought and political practice, in which the clergy was seen as the source of legitimacy for the monarchy. For this generation of scholars, traditional Shiism seemed unresponsive and ill-equipped to address the dramatic transformations taking place in Iranian society. In their view, the Muslim Brotherhood's teachings on the Islamic state provided a fresh, religiously authentic, and politically compelling solution to the challenges they faced.

One of Shiite Islamism's most important founding fathers was a young cleric

named Sayyed Mujtaba Mir Lowhi, also known as Navab Safavi (1924-1955). Safavi established a group called *Fadaian-e Islam*, or the “Devotees of Islam,” which led a popular movement against the Shah’s regime, and against the perceived corruptions of Iranian society from 1945 and 1955 that included a string of political assassinations. Like the early Brotherhood, the Fadaian-e Islam believed in a pan-Islamic ideology of religious purification and political revival. They rejected nationalistic ideology as inherently un-Islamic, and held that revivalist Shiites and Sunnis should unify in the face of Islam’s enemies, and struggle to repel modernity and its ideas from Islamic lands. The Devotees also held that Islam presents a perfect, comprehensive system for governing every aspect of human life. In their view, the only solution to the contemporary problems facing the Muslim world—including its backwardness and political weakness relative to Western countries—was the creation of a genuinely Islamic state that would implement the sharia.

Fadaian-e Islam’s ideological view and agenda not only paralleled that of the Muslim Brotherhood, but it appears to have been directly inspired by it. In 1954, Safavi traveled to Jerusalem, where he participated in an Islamic conference. There he addressed the Palestinian cause and intermingled with Sunni revivalists. After speaking at the conference, he traveled to Egypt and met with Brotherhood leaders, where he became intimately aware of the Sunni movement’s plight under the iron-fisted rule of Gamal Abd al-Nasser, Egypt’s nationalistic, secularizing and autocratic leader. During his time in Egypt, Safavi actually penned a letter to the Egyptian president, excoriating him for his policies on the Brotherhood. Safavi wrote that the president’s “harsh reaction to the Muslim Brotherhood has provoked deep resentment in the heart of Muslims. Reconsider this issue and try to do something that would not bring you a painful regret.”⁷

After returning to Iran, Safavi began a campaign to promote the Muslim Brotherhood’s pan-Islamic ideology within his Persian homeland, and he successfully introduced the Brotherhood’s ideology to a new generation of Shiite clerics. When his Fadaian-e Islam was established, its members represented the first modern attempt within Iran to build an independent Islamic society—along with a militia—whose purpose was to reform Islamic life and to endeavor to establish an Islamic state.

The Palestinian cause lay at the center of Fadaian-e Islam’s revivalist ideology, and in retrospect, the Devotees appear to have played a pioneering role in making the anti-Israel struggle a central issue for the Iranian religious community, which hitherto had generally not concerned itself with Arabian affairs. In Safavi’s view, the battle against Israel wasn’t simply a local conflict, but part of a larger, regional Islamic struggle against modern government, including the Iranian monarchy.

In fact, one of the reasons for Safavi’s hostility toward the monarchy stemmed from an incident in which the Shah prevented Safavi from mobilizing and deploying

5,000 volunteers to fight against Israel. In a speech at the Faiziya religious school, Safavi said, “If we want to destroy Israel, we have to start from Tehran; that is to say we have to first eliminate [the] Pahlavi regime in order to be able to fight Israel.”⁸ For Fadaian-e Islam, the Shah’s regime was politically and morally corrupt, and complicit in supporting the “Jewish occupier” of Palestine. The movement unleashed a campaign within Iran to delegitimize the monarchy on the basis of its relationship with Israel and its lack of an Islamic identity. The group encouraged high-ranking Shiite clerics to take a stand against both Israel and the Shah.⁹

The Shah’s regime eventually apprehended Safavi, and in the course of his interrogations, the Devotees’ leader revealed extensive contacts between his organization and the Sunni revivalist movement, including the Iraqi *Jamyyat Montade Al-Nashr*, the Syrian *Jamyyat Al-Ulama*, the Egyptian *Shobban Al-Muslemin*, as well as the Muslim Brotherhood’s various branches in Egypt, Syria and Iraq.¹⁰ Because of these unorthodox relationships with foreign movements and the assassination of government officials like General Haj Ali Razmara, the Shah’s regime dealt with Fadaian-e Islam aggressively and condemned its leaders to death. Not surprisingly, the Arabian Muslim Brotherhood eventually emerged as a leading critic of Mohammad Reza Shah and his policies against Shiite Islamism.

Safavi’s Brotherhood-inspired Fadaian-e Islam left an indelible mark on Iranian religious and political life. Among other things, it helped to steel popular Muslim enmity against the monarchy, and ultimately laid the philosophical groundwork for the Khomeinist Revolution of 1979. One of the Devotees’ most decisive achievements, which lasts to this day, was its radicalization of the culture, ideas, and institutions of the Shiite clerical establishment.

For its part, the clerical establishment was initially split over Fadaian-e Islam and how to regard Safavi’s heterodox teachings. Safavi was of course himself a cleric, and many other younger scholars, including Ayatollah Abulqassem Kashani and Ayatollah Rouhollah Khomeini, the father of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, became early supporters of the Devotees against the regime and the perceived corruptions of Iranian society.

Yet despite the Devotees’ emergence from within the clerical class, the traditional strata of the Iranian clerical establishment—including the most revered and emulated religious authority of the time, Ayatollah Mohammad Hossein Boroujerdi—shunned the Fadaian-e Islam and their ideas. Safavi dismissed the charges of the clerical establishment, claiming his movement followed a higher authority and ideals than the clerics and their traditional mores. For example, when Ayatollah Boroujerdi renounced Fadaian-e Islam’s use of coercive tactics in securing funding from the people to aid its struggle of creating an Islamic state, Safavi replied, “Our intention is to borrow from people. What we take is for establishing a government based on the model of

Imam Ali's government. Our goal is sacred and prior to these tools. When we established an Ali government-like state, then we give people their money back."¹¹

Fadaian-e Islam unleashed a string of pronouncements against the clerical establishment's higher-ups. They found fault with the jurisprudence of Boroujerdi without explicitly naming him, and argued that traditional Shiite jurisprudence was irrelevant and unresponsive to the requirements of the modern era. Here, the Devotees' assault on traditional authority resembled the attacks of revivalist movements like the Brotherhood and the Jamaat-e-Islami on the established ulama in the Sunni world. The Devotees even proposed a plan for dramatically transforming the clerical establishment so that it would best serve the establishment and goals of an ideal Islamic state.¹² Eventually, this line of attack went so far as to call for the excommunication of Boroujerdi from the clerical establishment and a call to defrock him of his clerical turban and mantle.¹³ This request to forcibly remove a religious leader was the first of its kind in Shiite history. A few decades later, however, the defrocking of religious scholars who opposed Shiite Islamism had become common practice in the Islamic Republic.

Revolutionary Iran's founders—including Ayatollah Rouhollah Khomeini and Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's current Supreme Leader—were all deeply influenced by Fadaian-e Islam, and by extension, by the Brotherhood revivalist ideology that undergirded Safavi's teachings. In his autobiography, Ali Khamenei says that he entered into the world of politics under the influence of Navvab Safavi. Today's Supreme Leader himself became an early champion and translator of the works of the Brotherhood intellectual, Said Qutb.

Had it not been for Fadaian-e Islam's early sympathetic support of the Muslim Brotherhood, many of the philosophical writings of the Muslim Brotherhood might never have been as influential in Iran. But a massive process of translating Sunni revivalist authors from Arabic to Persian started less than a decade after Safavi's execution. In addition to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's translations of Said Qutb, other Brotherhood revivalists—including Said's brother, Mohammad Qutb—were also extensively translated into Persian. Besides the works of these Egyptian writers, the main writings of Abul Ala Mawdudi and other Pakistani and Indian Islamists were translated into Persian at around the same time. These books became the main source of nourishment for Iranian militant clerics' sermons and writings during the pre-revolution era.¹⁴

Iran's revolutionary generation discovered in the works of the Brotherhood a new conceptual apparatus that permitted them to both reject the sources of traditional Shiite authority and to elaborate a new Islamic ideology that aimed at being fully competitive with secular and modernist ideologies. Among other things, the Brotherhood's writings provided enticing depictions of a militant Islam that sought political power,

the implementation of the sharia, and resistance against the West and communism that helped shape the political rhetoric of Iran's revolutionary era. But the Brotherhood thinkers also supplied theoretical nourishment for the development of a uniquely Shiite theory of the Islamic state. In fact, Ayatollah Khomeini's own theory of Islamic government, or "the Guardianship of Jurist" (*vilayat-e-faqih*), was elaborated under the influence of Rashid Rida's *Al-Imamat al-Uzma va al-Khilafat al-kubra*, in which Rida theorized about the construction of an Islamic government ruled by Muslim jurists.¹⁵

Sectarian Conflict and Ideological Alliance

THE HISTORICALLY-ROOTED RIVALRY BETWEEN SHIITE AND SUNNI ISLAM IS SELDOM addressed in the writings of modern Islamism's spiritual fathers. In fact, writers like Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Mohammad Abduh were more inclined toward the ideals of pan-Islamism and unity among Islam's various sects. They sought to discover a common ground between divergent Islamic traditions on the basis of what they perceived as Islam's original unity and its forgotten spirit of intra-Muslim solidarity. The ideal of Islamic unity also appealed to traditional Shiite and Sunni authorities such as the aforementioned Mohammad Hossein Boroujerdi at the Shiite seminary in Qom, and Shaykh Mahmoud Shaltut of Cairo's Al-Azhar Seminary.¹⁶

Gradually, however, under the influence of Rashid Rida (who was more influenced by Wahhabi ideology than was his teacher, Abduh) and Said Qutb, Arabian Sunni revivalism began to exhibit some anti-Shiite leanings. In fact, the Muslim Brotherhood's anti-Shiite inclinations were noticed by some Shiite clerics, including Hossein Modarresi Tabatabai, who traveled to Lebanon and Egypt during the 1970s. In his travelogue Tabatabai wrote that it seemed as if the Brotherhood believed that it is a religious "duty to avoid Shiite books, not to read them and not to let others to read them, because [they believe that] Shiite books are 'religiously misleading' [i.e. they contain theological errors or immoral points]."¹⁷

As we've seen, Tabatabai's motivation for writing *Al-Mizan* wasn't simply to produce a modernist commentary on the Quran on the model of Rida's *Al-Manar*. Rather, he sought to develop a uniquely Shiite exegetical mode that was critical of Rida's Sunni views and supplied a Shiite alternative to them. One of Tabatabai's most prominent disciples, Ayatollah Abdullah Javadi Amoli, taught a course in which he insisted that clerics should study *Al-Mizan* in order to inoculate themselves against the anti-Shiite influence of *Al-Manar*. *Al-Manar*, Ayatollah Amoli argued, "did nothing but ignore the hadith [in which the Prophet appoints Ali as the first caliph of Muslims] and hence, beginner students should avoid reading *Al-Manar*... unfortunately our [Shiite] seminaries, instead of following the path of *Al-Mizan*, are following the model of *Al-Manar*."¹⁸

Ayatollah Amoli's concern, that Sunni revivalist influences were leading Shiites away from Shiism as such, was an anxiety shared by many Shiite scholars at the time, including both traditionalists and reformists. In the politically-charged atmosphere in Iran, into which Islamist revivalist ideology was introduced, the underlying anti-Shiite tendency of the Muslim Brotherhood tended to be overlooked. In fact, some revolutionary clerics who translated the Muslim Brotherhood's works mentioned in their "translator's notes" that, while they might not personally agree with certain ideas expressed in those books, their concerns over intra-Islamic sectarianism were secondary to their primary goal of disseminating the ideological core of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Nonetheless, the doctrinal differences between the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Shiite Islamism that it helped inspire, could not be completely overlooked in favor of their mutually shared political agendas and pan-Islamic identity. This especially proved to be the case once the Shiite Islamists managed to seize power in Iran in 1979. Rather than merely reflect upon and advocate the creation of an Islamic state, Iran's new rulers were forced to actually attempt to govern one. And while both Sunni and Shiite Islamism agree on the principle that the essential goal of the Islamic state is to implement the sharia, there are important discrepancies between different Islamic legal schools over what this actually means and requires. In a predominantly Shiite country like Iran, it was not surprising that Shiite clerics decided to propagate their own uniquely Shiite understanding of the sharia.

Thus, while Iran's revolutionaries insisted on the pan-Islamist character of their revolution, their uniquely Shiite identity, and the Shiite character of their regime stoked concerns and even fears among Sunnis. These have served to complicate Iran's subsequent efforts to export its revolution and to become the leader of the pan-Islamist revival.

The Dilemmas of Transnational Ideology

THE CONCEPT OF MUSLIM UNITY LIES AT THE CORE OF MANY, THOUGH CLEARLY NOT all, streams of Sunni and Shiite revivalism. As a political ideal, Islamic unity has often proven to be a powerful rhetorical tool in efforts to mobilize diverse peoples in the service of a common political agenda. Indeed, that political agenda often becomes the reason for Islamic unity itself: Sunni and Shiite Islamists routinely claim, for example, that resistance against the West requires that Muslims put aside their religious differences. Perhaps most notoriously, Iran's championing of Hamas, the Muslim Brotherhood offshoot in Gaza, is one way in which the largely Persian and Shiite Islamic Republic has sought to curry political favor and prestige within Arab

and predominantly Sunni countries. This has certainly been a successful strategy for Iran in that it has helped the Islamic Republic win the hearts and minds of many elements, not only within Hamas but also within the larger Brotherhood universe in Egypt and elsewhere in the region.¹⁹

Yet despite its political utility, and despite the fact that both Brotherhood and Shiite Islamists see Muslim unity as a requirement of religious law, Islamic unity is difficult to justify much less sustain by existing Sunni and Shiite religious paradigms. In fact, from the perspective of traditional Islamic jurisprudence and theology, neither Sunnis nor Shiites are able to find sufficient common ground for convergence, since the points of divergence between these two branches of Islam are over concepts that define their respective religious beliefs and practices. Even the concept of God in both sects is shaped differently, and by two separate conceptual apparatuses. Of course, this has not prevented modern Sunni and Shiite Islamism, with their expressed contempt for the pieties and other encumbrances of Muslim tradition, from striving to find new ways to transcend their historically-rooted differences.

The 1979 Iranian revolution—and the Islamic Republic’s subsequent efforts to export its revolution across the Muslim world, including to Sunni Arab societies—has marked the most ambitious effort to date to overcome these differences. Both the Brotherhood and the emergent revolutionary Shiite state have continued to seek to work together in a cross-national framework to promote Islamist ideology and political unity. Yet this agenda has also presented challenges for both movements. Among other things, it has required these movements to effectively ignore or to seek to minimize the legal and religious aspects of their respective traditions, and to focus more on Islam’s political dimension. Yet as a purely political matter, the spirit of transnational, intra-Islamic solidarity has proven difficult to sustain over the long term in an era where politics is shaped not only by religion, but also by national and other identities.

The triumph of the 1979 revolution alarmed the Arab regimes. This was so because of revolutionary Iran’s belligerence toward them and its consequent expansionist regional policies. The Arab regimes were also fearful because Shiite Islamism’s success in toppling the Shah’s pro-Western, secular government encouraged Sunni Islamists to think that their own secular rulers could be overthrown. Within this context, it was not surprising that Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood at first welcomed the Iranian revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini, despite their divergent religious identities.

But the Brotherhood’s public support for Iran faded after Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat was assassinated by Khalid al-Islamboli on October 6, 1981 and the Egyptian government unleashed a new wave of repression against groups espousing pan-Islamist ideology. The Muslim Brotherhood subsequently became more reticent in its praise of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Tehran, for its part, would eulogize Sadat’s assassin

Islamboli as a martyr). Under Mubarak's rule, crackdowns on the Brotherhood in Egypt forced the group to conceal its pan-Islamic ambitions. Other developments—including the Iran-Iraq War, which lasted for nearly a decade from 1980-1988, and exacerbated already tense relations between Sunni and Shiite and Arab and non-Arab populations throughout the Middle East—further worked to exert pressures on the pan-Islamist rhetoric and agenda of the Brotherhood.²⁰

In part, as a consequence of the new pressures to downplay its pan-Islamic ideals in its political discourse, the basic religious differences between Sunnism and Shiism became a central problematic for the Brotherhood's ideology. For instance, in January 1982, Umar Tilmisani, then the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, told the Egyptian weekly magazine *al-Msuwwar*: “We supported him [Khomeini] politically, because an oppressed people had managed to get rid of an oppressive ruler and to regain their freedom. But from the doctrinal point of view, Sunnism is one thing and Shiism is another.”

The more the Sunni-Shiite divide was conceived by the Brotherhood as a problem of religion, the more the Brotherhood's thinkers sought to develop religion-based means to overcome it. In 1985, for example, Tilmisani wrote in the Egyptian magazine *Addawa* (no.105) that “the convergence of Shiism and Sunnis is now an urgent task for the jurists.” He added, “The [early] contact between the Muslim Brotherhood and [Iranian clerics] was not done in order to make Shiites convert to Sunni Islam, but the main purpose was to comply with Islam's mission to converge the Islamic sects as much as possible.”

Despite this and subsequent efforts to discover a new basis for Sunni-Shiite convergence, political developments have continued to frustrate the Brotherhood's search for Islamic unity. In recent times, the general resurgence of Iranian power and influence has stirred up considerable controversy within Sunni Arab circles, including within the Brotherhood, over what Iran ultimately seeks, and what, in turn, should be the proper Sunni and Arab reaction to it. On this issue, the Brotherhood is deeply divided between those who adhere to a pan-Islamist ideology and those who primarily see the Brotherhood as a Sunni, Arab, or nationalist movement. This internal Brotherhood debate will continue to be a defining dynamic in Sunni revivalism's future, with no clear resolution in sight.

Meanwhile, Shiite Islamism has sought its own resolution to the Sunni-Shiite divide and the dilemmas posed by the contradictions between its identity as a pan-Islamist movement and its actuality as ruling over a predominantly Shiite state. This resolution was found in a ruling elaborated by Ayatollah Khomeini that held that the Islamic Republic's Supreme Leader is authorized to overrule what is prescribed by the sharia in favor of the regime's interests. Khomeini made it clear that in any contradiction between Islamic law and the interests of the regime, the ruling jurist

is obligated to prioritize the interest of the regime and to ignore the sharia. Accordingly, the Islamic government remains in an emergency state and considers safeguards to its survival its top priority, above both national and religious laws. On October 27, 2009, in a public speech, General Mohammad Ali Jafari, the commander-in-chief of Revolutionary Guard said, “The Islamic Republic is a divine sacred government whose safeguarding is prior even to performed prayer”—(that is, the defense of the republic has priority over *Salat* or *Namaz*, the obligatory Islamic prayers).

In practice, this view has meant that Iran has pursued Islamic unity as a principle of its foreign policy while simultaneously pursuing more exclusivist and discriminatory policies at home in accord with regime interests. The Iranian government, for example, has destroyed Sunni mosques and seminaries in the politically restive southeastern provinces of Sistan and Baluchistan, and exercises a comprehensive discriminatory policy against Sunni Kurds in Iranian Kurdistan. The government appears to be less biased toward the Brotherhood’s Iranian-based branch, whose activities actually appear to be favored by the government.²¹ Internationally, however, the government uses its relations with Sunni groups to serve its own agenda, with little concern for religious differences or for that matter, for stirring up sectarian conflict. The Islamic Republic has even forged strong working relations with anti-Shiite Islamists.²²

Conclusion

DESPITE THE HISTORICALLY-ROOTED POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS RIVALRY BETWEEN Shiism and Sunnism, various currents of modern Islamist revivalism, including most especially Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood and Iran’s Shiite Islamism, have sought to overcome their respective traditions and to forge ever closer ties between Islam’s two branches in the spirit of Muslim political unity. Present day circumstances have given rise to new common ground, new boundaries and new frameworks between the two groups for ideological convergence and cooperation. As a consequence of this, both sects have taken on roles radically different from those they once played in the traditional world.

And yet, none of modern Islamism’s various ecumenical efforts to bridge the Sunni-Shiite divide have been particularly fruitful or politically sustainable over the long-term. Despite their common sources in modern reformism and decades of efforts by both Sunni and Shiite clerics to peel away their traditional differences, problems inevitably arise when one of these branches of Islamism exercises power. These problems emerge, in part, from a basic ideological contradiction within some strands of Islamism between the ideals of pan-Islamic unity and the principle that Islamism’s primary

goal is to implement the sharia. Since the latter goal requires seeking guidance and a model from the schools of traditional jurisprudence, efforts to implement the sharia inevitably reflect an exclusivist or religiously partisan character.

Nevertheless, the ideal of Muslim unity persists in large part because of its political utility. The Islamic Republic of Iran especially has used it to make alliances with Sunni groups, including the Muslim Brotherhood, in order to promote its foreign agenda. As such, while the mistrust between Shiites and Sunnis is not easily resolved, modern Islamist ideology has created common ground for cooperation between these historically rival sects.

NOTES

1. The official website of the Muslim brotherhood:
<http://www.ikhwanweb.com/Article.asp?ID=3705&SectionID=0>.
2. For a brief account on the influence of the Pakistani group, as well as the Muslim Brotherhood, on Iranian Islamic fundamentalism see: Enayat, Hamid, *Modern Islamic Political Thought* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982) pp. 69-110.
3. For the theological stats of "Imam" in Twelver Shiism see: Amir-Moezzi, Mohammad Ali, *Le guide divin dans le Shi'ism original, Aux sources de l'ts of "Imam" in twelver Shiism* see: Amir-Moezzi, Mohammad Ali, *Le guide divin dans le Shi'ism original, Aux sources de l'ésotérisme en Islam*, (Paris: Verdier.1992).
4. Al-Khoi, Al-Sayyed Abul Qassem Al- Moussavi, *Al-Bayan fi Tafsir Al-Quran*, Dar-Al-Twohid lennashr wa al-towzi, Al-Kuwait, fourth edition, 1979. In 1962, Morteza Motahhari, an acclaimed disciple of Mohammad Hossein Tabatabai said, "Almost a month ago, one of our scholars traveled to Atabat (four Shiite holy cities in Iraq). He said, "I met with Ayatollah Khoi. I asked Ayatollah Khoi, 'why did you quit your tafsir (Qurani commentary) course?' Khoi replied: "There are some problems and difficulties in teaching tafsir.' I told him in Qom Allameh (Mohammad Hossein) Tabatabai had continued his tafsir course and spent most of his time on that. 'So why [you do not do the same]?' Khoi said 'Mr. Tabatabai has sacrificed. He has lost his social credibility:" see Motahhari, Morteza, *Maj-mooe-ye Asar*, Nashr-e Sadra, Tehran, 1387, Vol. 24, p. 534.
5. Hemaidah Al-Naifar has described Moujahedin's and Sayyed Qutb's Quranic commentaries as two examples of an ideological interpretation of the Quran: see: Al-Naifar, Hemaidah, *Al-Insan wa al-Quran wajhan le-wajh; Al-Tafasir al Quraniya Al-Moasara, Qeraaton fi Al-Manhaj*, Dar Al-Fikr, Syria, 2000.
6. For a discussion about jihad and martyrdom in Said Qutb's thought and a comparison between him, Khomeini and Mawdudi as three leaders of radical Islam see Cook, David, *Martyrdom in Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) pp.138-143.
7. Khosrowshahi, Sayyed Hadi, *Fadaian-e Eslam, Tarikh, Amalkard, Andisheh-ha*, (Qom: Kolbeh-ye Shorouq) p.147.
8. Khaterat va Mobarezat-e Shahid Mahallati, Markaz-e Asnad-e Enqelab-e Eslami, Tehran, 1376, p. 25, cited from Jafarian, Rasoul, p.197.

- his February 2009 trip to Teheran, Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal expressed his gratitude for the Islamic Republic's ongoing generous support of Hamas, asserting that "the people of Gaza...have always appreciated the political and spiritual support of the Iranian leaders and nation." According to state television, Mashaal said that "Iran has definitely played a big role in the victory of the people of Gaza and is a partner in that victory." Iran was highly vocal in supporting Hamas during the recent Gaza War at a time when the Egyptian government was not. Iran, in fact, led the charge in seeking to embarrass and delegitimize the Egyptian government for its failure to openly help Hamas.
20. With the end the war, in fact, the Muslim Brotherhood was among the first from the Arab Sunni world to openly seek to foster ties with Iran. At the request of Shaykh Ghazzali, Iran agreed to unilaterally release the Egyptian prisoners of war who were members of Iraq Army. The Brotherhood's relations with Iran have since been strengthened.
21. While many barriers remain to a formal link between Iran and Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, the Brotherhood operates a branch in Iran that has legal permission from the government to function and works within the framework of the Iranian constitution. The Iranian Muslim Brotherhood is headquartered in Tehran and has several branches throughout the country. The group has expressed its commitment to the Islamic Republic's Constitution and has promised to participate in the political process. Jamaat-e Davat va Eslah, a Sunni group in the Iranian province of Kurdistan, first claimed to be an independent organization for all Iranian Sunnis, especially in the northwestern and southeastern regions of Iran. (See, for example, <http://www.eslahe.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=677&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0> But recently, Mohammad Mehdi Akif, the Muslim Brotherhood's General Guide, stated that the Muslim Brotherhood in Iran has renewed its baya, or pledge of allegiance, with the Egyptian MB. He denied rumors of a split. (See for example, <http://www.ikhwanonline.com/Article.asp?ArtID=47536&SecID=210>) According to Jamaat-e Davat va Eslah's mission statement, one of its requirements is that its members must be Iranian nationals. Support for ethnic, religious and sectarian freedom and rights, and the ideal of pan-Islamic unity are among the group's goals. (The group's mission statement is available online: <http://www.islah-web.org/html/images/pdf/Asasnameh.pdf>) Clearly the group has close ties with Iranian reformists and supported their candidate in a previous 2005 presidential election. Apparently Jamaat-e Davat va Eslah is the largest and most prominent Sunni group in Iran, enjoying the government's permission to participate in political activity as well as in its own education program.
22. For example, according to the *New York Times*, the Saudi authorities allege that the leader of Al-Qaeda in the Persian Gulf, Abdullah Al-Qaraqi, lives and moves freely about in Iran, along with more than 100 Saudis who work for him. The U.S. Treasury Department announced that Saad bin Laden, son of Osama bin Laden, was arrested by Iranian authorities in early 2003, but that "as of September 2008 it was possible that Saad bin Laden was no longer in Iranian custody." According to the director of national intelligence, Michael McConnell, Saad bin Laden is now most likely in Pakistan.

Hamas's Ideological Crisis

By Matthew Levitt

DESPITE ITS SUCCESS AS THE FIRST MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD ORGANIZATION to control and govern territory, and in part because of that success, Hamas today is under significant stress. In the West Bank, Hamas faces a severe security crackdown that has driven the movement underground. And in Gaza, Hamas has been forced to choose between engaging in acts of violence or attempting to effectively govern the territory it took over by force of arms. The result is an acute ideological tension within Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, which has been forced to suspend the resistance for which it is named and by which it defines itself. For some, the cessation of violence, however temporary, is a sign of moderation within Hamas. For others, Hamas's actions, including continued radicalization and weapons smuggling into Gaza, better denote the movement's true intentions and trajectory. To be sure, Hamas is not a monolithic movement. But the one constant among its various currents is its self-identification as a resistance movement.

Hamas under Stress

IN THE WEST BANK THE ONGOING ISRAELI MILITARY PRESENCE TOGETHER WITH a renewed commitment by the Palestinian Authority under President Mahmoud Abbas has largely denied Hamas the ability to function effectively there. With new, U.S.-trained Palestinian battalions successfully bringing law and order to West Bank cities, places like Jenin—commonly referred to as the suicide bomber capitol of the West Bank just a few years ago—are now calm and enjoying significant improvement

in economic prosperity.¹ Within the Ministry of Interior, a department overseeing charitable organizations is systematically removing Hamas members from the boards of charity committees and social service organizations; it is also registering each charity office and its board—something that was not done under the administrations of either Yasser Arafat or the short-lived Hamas-Fatah unity government in 2006.² Still, Israeli and Palestinian security officials concur that Hamas remains present and capable in the West Bank, operating largely underground in small cells, and would quickly rebuild itself were it not for the day-to-day security and intelligence activities of both Israeli and PA forces.³

For Hamas, however, the true crisis is not in the West Bank but in Gaza. Whereas Hamas is suppressed in the West Bank, it is in the Gaza Strip—where it is the de facto governing regime—where Hamas is under significant ideological stress. Ironically, the crisis is of its own making, the result of the uneasy merger of Hamas, a social, political and military “resistance” movement, with an Islamist government. As a government, Hamas has failed to provide for the needs of its purported constituents and remains an international pariah under economic siege. At the same time, its credentials as a “resistance” movement lose currency by the day as Hamas continues to refrain from attacking Israel for fear of reprisal attacks in the wake of Israel’s Cast Lead operation in December 2008 and January 2009. Hamas failed to inflict significant Israeli casualties over the course of the Cast Lead battles, and instead of protecting its civilian population, the group hid its leaders and armaments within civilian structures such as mosques and hospitals.⁴ Disenchanted with Hamas, Gaza residents reportedly rue having voted for its candidates in 2006.⁵ Engaged in secular politics, failing to institute sharia law, and cracking down on fellow Palestinians who do attack Israel or threaten its rule, Hamas in Gaza has created a vacuum which salafi-jihadi groups—often populated by disgruntled Hamas operatives and sometimes inspired by al Qaeda—have been keen to fill.⁶

Between Word and Deed

IN THE EYES OF MANY JOURNALISTS AND ACADEMICS, HAMAS HAS MODERATED since taking the reins of governance in the Gaza Strip, despite the fact that it did so by force of arms.⁷ Indeed, in recent interviews, Hamas leader Khaled Mishal has offered to cooperate with U.S. efforts to promote a peaceful resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. He has indicated a willingness to implement an immediate and reciprocal ceasefire with Israel, and stated that the militant group would accept and respect a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.⁸ Yet at other times, Mishal and other Hamas

leaders expressly reject political compromise and insist that violence is the means by which the group will achieve its goals. Speaking in Damascus, for example, Mishal insisted, “We must say: Palestine from the sea to the river, from the west to the occupied east, and it must be liberated. As long as there is occupation, there will be resistance to the occupation.”⁹ Violence, Mishal stressed, “is our strategic option to liberate our land and recover our rights.”¹⁰

The inconsistency in Hamas’s messaging is, at least in part, a result of its internally conflicted nature. Hamas the government sees the need for at least appearing moderate for political expedience in an effort to achieve near term political goals such as opening the border crossings into Gaza to trade. In particular, Hamas is eager to gain access to building materials and financing to rebuild infrastructure destroyed during last winter’s fighting. Every day Gaza’s shattered infrastructure remains unrepaired is another day Gaza residents are reminded of the cost they bear as a result of Hamas’s rocket attacks on Israeli towns and the Hamas leadership’s incapacity to do anything about it.

The sometimes conciliatory tone of Mishal’s public messaging is belied by the group’s continued violent actions and radicalization on the ground, as well as the rise to prominence of violent extremist leaders within the group’s local *shura* (consultative) councils. Indeed, Hamas’s activities of late appear to be diametrically opposed to the compliance of the more moderate public statements issued by Mishal, who has personally been tied to acts of terrorism and is himself a U.S.-designated terrorist.¹¹ Despite talk of a ceasefire and pursuit of a peaceful resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, Hamas’s military wing, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, continues to engage in terrorist activities. Shooting attacks are still common along the border between Israel and the Gaza Strip, including the firing of rocket-propelled grenades and mortar shells. In late July, two Qassam Brigades operatives were killed in a “work accident” while placing explosives along the border fence near the al-Burajj refugee camp in central Gaza.¹² A few days later, Israeli defense officials revealed that Hamas has been digging tunnels—often used by the group to smuggle weapons and conduct kidnapping operations—next to UN facilities, including one near a UN school in Bait Hanun that had recently collapsed. The placement of the tunnels near UN facilities was purportedly intended as a preventive measure against an Israeli attempt to destroy the tunnels.¹³ In September 2009, a Hamas operative was killed, along with a militant from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), as he was planting a bomb along the Gaza border fence.¹⁴

Meanwhile, over the past several months, Palestinian security forces in the West Bank have seized at least \$8.5 million in cash from arrested Hamas members who plotted to kill Fatah-affiliated government officials. Palestinian officials reported that some of the accused had “recently purchased homes adjacent to government

and military installations, mainly in the city of Nablus” for the purpose of observing the movements of government and security officials. PA officers also seized uniforms of several Palestinian security forces from the accused Hamas members.¹⁵

In April 2009, Palestinian forces raided a weapons workshop in the basement of a mosque in Qalqilya as part of an increased PA counterterrorism campaign. The forces discovered the workshop following a series of explosions heard at the mosque earlier that month. Eighty kilograms of explosives were found, including pipe bombs and a seven-kilogram IED. The officials arrested seven people, believing them to be connected to the arms laboratory. Although Hamas has denied any connection to the weapons workshop, many residents of Qalqilya have condemned the group in response, since Hamas is known for caching weapons in mosques, such as in Judea and Samaria.¹⁶

Hamas control of the Gaza-Egyptian border, combined with the ineffectiveness of Egyptian border security forces, opened the frontier to extensive smuggling activity. As a result, Hamas accelerated its military buildup, enabling the terrorist organization to better equip its troops with weapons and ammunition. Beyond small arms, Israeli intelligence estimates that some 250 tons of explosives, 80 tons of fertilizer, 4000 rocket-propelled grenades, and 1800 rockets were transported from Egypt to Gaza from September 2005 to December 2008. According to Israeli figures, from June 2007 to December 2008, Hamas increased not only the quantity but also the quality of its arsenal in Gaza, improving the performance of its improvised explosive devices and expanding the distance and payload capabilities of its Qassam rocket warheads.¹⁷ In late August 2009, Egyptian police discovered two tons of explosives hidden on the Egyptian side of the border ready to be smuggled into Gaza. A few days earlier, Egyptian police thwarted an attempt to smuggle 1,100 pounds of explosives into Gaza.¹⁸

Most small-range rockets fired from Gaza prior to and during the recent conflict were locally produced. However, over the past year, Hamas has acquired a formidable collection of imported 122 mm rockets—longer-range rockets known as Grads—brought in piecemeal through tunnels and reassembled in Gaza. These Grads, an Iranian-produced version of the Chinese-designed rocket, increase the reach of Hamas into Israel, making them a sought-after commodity and well worth the effort and expense of smuggling them all the way from Iran.¹⁹ According to Israeli officials, Hamas has successfully smuggled into Gaza anti-tank missiles capable of penetrating the Israeli Merkava tank and man-portable, shoulder-fired missiles like the SA18 (Igla) and SA7 (Strella) varieties.²⁰

Israeli officials have described the Hamas policy as “industrial quiet,” which includes a pause in violence for the practical purpose of rearming, and for the strategic aim of consolidating its control in Gaza.²¹ According to an Israeli report, Hamas is engaged in its most significant arms buildup to date, including some 80 tons of

explosives, roadside bombs, and longer range rockets capable of targeting Israeli communities deeper in Israel.²² Hamas stockpiles most of its weapons in the Gaza Strip, but maintains weapons caches in the West Bank as well, such as the stockpile of 200 kilograms of fertilizer and gunpowder seized in Qalqilya in April 2008.²³ And while rebuilding its own arsenal, Hamas claims to be coordinating jihadist activity targeting Israel with “all the factions of the resistance.” In October 2009, the Minister of Interior of the *de facto* Hamas government in Gaza, Fathi Hamad, told a conference, “We routinely meet with the commanders of the [resistance] factions to remove obstacles between us. We have ended the security coordination with the occupation [i.e., the Palestinian Authority’s security coordination with Israel] and have replaced it with jihadist coordination.”²⁴

Radicalizing Palestinian Society

FOR HAMAS, MUTATING THE PREDOMINANTLY ETHNO-POLITICAL PALESTINIAN national struggle into a fundamentally religious conflict is critical to the group’s ideology and its continued ability to inspire Palestinians to reject compromise or peaceful solutions to the conflict. Recently, Hamas embarked on a large public relations campaign, using culture and the arts to glorify violence and demonize Israel. In a telling example, Hamas produced a feature-length film in 2009 that celebrated the life of Emad Akel, a leading Hamas terrorist who was killed by Israeli troops in 1993. Written by hardline Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar, Emad Akel was first screened in July 2009 at the Islamic University in Gaza City and described by Hamas interior minister in Gaza Fathi Hamad as the first production of “Hamaswood instead of Hollywood.”²⁵

Hamas’s Al Aqsa Television produced a children’s show featuring a Mickey Mouse look alike named Farfur who praised “martyrs” and preached Islamic domination. After being roundly condemned, including being described as “pure evil” by Walt Disney’s daughter,²⁶ Hamas ran one final skit in which Farfour refused to sell his land to an Israeli, who then murdered the Palestinian mouse. The young Palestinian girl presenting the skit commented, “Farfur was martyred while defending his land.” He was killed “by the killers of children.”²⁷ Farfour was quickly replaced with a new character, Nahoul the Bee: “I want to continue in the path of Farfour, the path of Islam, of heroism, of martyrdom and of the mujahedeen. ... We will take revenge of the enemies of Allah.”²⁸ Most recently, the program introduced Nassur, a stuffed bear who called for “slaughter” of Jews “so they will be expelled from our land.”²⁹

Despite Mishal’s moderate statements, Hamas’s continues its campaign of radicalization targeting Palestinian youth. During summer 2009, more than 120,000 Palestinian children attended Hamas-run summer camps that focused not only on Islamic

teachings, but also on “semi-military training with toy guns.” Hamas campers recently staged a play reenacting the Gilad Shalit abduction before an audience that included Hamas officials such as Usama Mazini and Sheikh Ahmad Bahar. For Hamas leaders like Bahar, this is business as usual. In July 2003, a Hamas camp run by Bahar, the al-Aqsa Intifada Martyrs Summer Camp, conducted classes in radical Islam that exposed campers to images of suicide bombers plastered on the camp’s walls. As explained by Bahar, teaching children the history of Islam while surrounding them with pictures of martyrs instills “seeds of hate against Israel.”

Exposing Palestinian children to such radical messages at a young age has been a tactic employed not only in recreational institutions but also in schools. In 2001, the Islamic Society (al-Jamiyah al-Islamiyah) in Gaza held a graduation ceremony for the 1,650 children who attended its forty-one kindergartens. Photographs of the ceremony show young, uniformly dressed children carrying mock rifles. In the photos, a five-year-old girl dips her hands in red paint to mimic the bloodied hands Palestinians proudly displayed after the lynching of two Israelis in Ramallah. Another child, dressed as Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, is surrounded by other children costumed as suicide bombers. Hamas does not keep its reason for these ceremonies a secret. After his capture, Hamas activist Ibrahim Abd al-Fatah Shubaka told Israeli authorities that the Islamic Charitable Association in Hebron maintains two orphanages and schools that “instill the pupils with Hamas values, and their graduates include operational Hamas activists.”

Divisions within Hamas

DESPITE ITS MYOPIC FOCUS ON PROMOTING VIOLENT CONFLICT OVER PEACEFUL negotiations with Israel, Hamas is by no means a monolithic movement. Divisions within the Hamas leadership were evident, for example, as the six month term of the recent cease-fire came to a close and varying Hamas leaders issued conflicting statements terminating the ceasefire or calling for its extension. To be sure, untangling the fissures within Hamas is of critical importance to anyone seeking to understand its decision making process.

Hamas is composed of three interrelated wings. The social welfare and political wings are the public faces of the group’s social, administrative, political, and propaganda activities. The military wing is principally engaged in covert activities such as executing suspected collaborators, surveilling potential targets, procuring weapons, and carrying out guerilla and terrorist attacks. Overseeing all Hamas activities is a *Majlis al-Shura*, or consultative council, which is the group’s overarching political and decision-making body in Damascus. It includes representatives from

Hamas elements in Gaza, the West Bank, Israeli prisons and the external leadership based in Damascus. Under this Shura are committees responsible for supervising a wide array of activities, from media relations to military operations. At the grassroots level in the West Bank and Gaza sit corresponding local Hamas Shura committees that answer to the high-level Shura council and its committees and carry out the decisions on the ground.

There are multiple fault lines within Hamas. The external leadership is divided into two main groups, one of Gazans led by second-in-command Mousa Abu Marzook, and one composed mostly of Hamas members from the West Bank who have studied or worked in Kuwait. The so-called *Kuwaitia*, or Kuwaiti group, is led by Hamas leader Khaled Mishal. The two factions work closely together, but there is some resentment of the Kuwaiti group by Marzook's faction, because Mishal's *Kuwaitia* tend to dominate key positions within the Hamas political bureau. Others include tensions between the group's internal leadership on the ground in the West Bank and Gaza and its external leadership in Damascus, between leaders in the West Bank and Gaza, and between religious Palestinian nationalists and radical Islamists.

These fissures were exacerbated by the assassinations of Sheikh Yassin and Abdelaziz al-Rantissi in 2004, which left a gaping hole in the Hamas leadership structure on the ground in the Gaza Strip. While Mahmoud Zahar and Ismail Haniyeh assumed leadership of the movement's overt political wing, several protégés of Rantissi's more militant school aligned themselves with Mohammad Deif, the head of the Qassam Brigades in Gaza. For example, Shaykh Nizar Riyan—who was killed in an Israeli airstrike in January, 2009—openly challenged the public statements of Haniyeh and others at the time, claiming Hamas would cease firing mortars at Israel from Gaza. The pledge came in response to complaints from local Palestinian businessmen frustrated by the damage Israeli reprisal attacks against Qassam manufacturing and launching sites did to their businesses and the local economy. In response, Riyan publicly paraded through the streets of the Jabalya refugee camp carrying weapons. A prominent Rantissi protégé, Riyan then held a press conference at his mosque where four masked Qassam Brigade militants dismissed Haniyeh's remarks, displayed a variety of weapons, handed out pamphlets documenting Hamas attacks, and announced that Qassam rockets capable of reaching the Israeli city of Ashkelon were under development.

The most significant fault line within Hamas is between those Palestinian Islamists for whom the Palestinian national cause comes first and those for whom Islamist ideology takes precedence. And while many supposed moderates still support terror attacks under certain conditions, there has been at times a current within the Hamas movement calling for a cessation of military activity and a focus on Islamist political and social activity along the lines of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood.

According to one Israeli expert, an internal memorandum proposing Hamas give up its “secret underground apparatus” was circulated around the Gaza Strip in October 2004 by a senior Hamas leader there. While many Hamas leaders in the West Bank reportedly supported the idea, it was shouted down by Gaza’s Hamas leaders and by the senior political leadership outside the Palestinian territories.

Rise of the Hardliners in Gaza

GIVEN THE FISSURES AND DIVISIONS WITHIN HAMAS, THE RISE OF HAMAS HARDLINERS in Gaza is particularly telling of the group’s overall trajectory. This year, Hamas’s local Shura councils held elections to determine who would move into leadership positions. Three local councils under the aegis of the Majlis al-Shura, the group’s overarching political and decision-making body in Damascus, represent Gaza, the West Bank, and Hamas members in Israeli prisons. This last council completed a five-month-long election process in July 2009 that resulted in the appointment of Yahya al-Sinwar as president of the Shura council. Sinwar is described as the founder of a Hamas security agency and he is serving a life sentence. Many other Hamas operatives involved in terrorist activities were placed as council members, including:

- Abbas al-Sayyed, the mastermind of the March 2002 Park Hotel suicide bombing that killed 29 people and left 155 seriously wounded. In Tulkarm, he was both an overt Hamas political leader and the covert leader of the Qassam Brigades terrorist cell.
- Salah al-Arouri, a founder of the Qassam Brigades in the West Bank, who served as both a recruiter and a commander for Hamas terrorist cells. Arouri received thousands of dollars for weapons procurement from Hamas operatives in the United States, such as key financier Mohammed Salah, and provided additional thousands to Hamas terrorists for weapons to conduct attacks.
- Abd-al-Khaliq al-Natsheh, Hamas’s spokesman in Hebron, where he reportedly was the interlocutor between Hamas members who wanted to carry out suicide attacks and the leaders of Hamas terror cells within the Qassam Brigades. He was also responsible for an extensive terrorist infrastructure in Hebron which planned and executed many attacks in Israel, including the April 2002 Adora attack and the June 2002 Karmey attack.

Other Hamas terrorist wing operatives elected to political positions reportedly include Sheikh Jamal Abu-al-Hayja, a commander in the Janin Camp battle; Jihad Yaghmur, a man responsible for Israeli soldier Nachshon Faxman's abduction in 1994; and Muhammad Jamal al-Natsheh, a deputy in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC).³⁰

This more radical element in Gaza reportedly followed instructions only from outside leaders like Mishal and Imad al-Alami until Zahar and other hardline leaders took on a more prominent role. With its electoral victory in January 2006, and even more so after it defeated Fatah forces and took over the Gaza Strip by force in June 2007, the Damascus leadership lost some control to Hamas leaders in Gaza. While the Damascus leadership remained dominant, in large part because it still controlled the organization's purse strings and oversaw relationships with groups like Hezbollah and countries like Iran, Hamas leaders on the ground in Gaza were making day to day decisions on Hamas rule there. Hardline leaders like Zahar and Said Siam lost their cabinet posts when Fatah and Hamas formed a short-lived national unity government in March 2007, but their influence only grew since they maintained control over the movement's Executive Force and Qassam Brigades and were unburdened by the responsibility of governance.

These elections are a clear continuation of Hamas's efforts to bring terrorist leaders to the foreground. In the August 2008 elections for Gaza's Shura council, for example, Hamas hardliners dominated as well.³¹ Relative moderate Hamas leaders like Ghazi Hamad and Ahmad Yusuf reportedly did not even bother to run, seeing that the slate was dominated by young Hamas members affiliated with the Qassam Brigades. The elections brought hard-line Hamas military officials into the movement's Gaza political bureau. This group rejects "national dialogue" negotiations with Fatah, which it sees as a means of removing Hamas from power and/or forcing it to compromise on its ideological commitment to confronting Israel through violence and rejecting a negotiated two-state solution. Within this political dynamic, solidified by the August Shura council vote, de facto Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh is not believed to hold significant sway.

Ironically, the splits within Hamas now appear to divide even the hardliners themselves. PA authorities in the West Bank reportedly seized internal Hamas correspondence in November 2008, in which the Damascus-based Hamas leadership takes the group's leaders in Gaza to task for undermining the Egyptian-mediated dialogue with Fatah. The letter suggests Hamas leaders abroad and in the West Bank were trying to rein in the movement's leaders in Gaza, who were seen as dictating inflexible positions and dominating the movement's agenda.³²

The Salafi-Jihadi Challenge

IN SOME WAYS, HAMAS'S WAR OF WORDS WITH AL QAEDA IS EVEN MORE TELLING than its periodic crackdown on Salafi-jihadi elements in the Gaza Strip. It is not surprising that Hamas will not tolerate challenges to its supremacy in Gaza, such as Jund Ansar Allah's declaration of an Islamic emirate there in August 2009. But the public spat between Hamas and al Qaeda that played out over the Internet following the Hamas takeover of Gaza in 2006 was unexpected. After all, while Hamas is not part of al Qaeda's global jihadist movement or even an affiliated regional franchise, it is a "glocal" Islamist group committed to fighting a global jihad in defense of the umma by engaging the enemy in its local corner of the world. In the wake of its 2006 military conquest of the Gaza Strip, Hamas won the admiration and respect of al-Qaeda operatives and global jihadis. Likewise, sharing a baseline ideological commitment to jihadism, former Hamas members, especially from its military branch, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, have joined several of the al-Qaeda-inspired organizations in the Gaza Strip.

The quarrel between Hamas and al-Qaeda revolves around the former's decision to participate in a secular political process and not to implement or enforce strict adherence to sharia law in Gaza when it took over the territory. As a Salafi group, al-Qaeda wholly rejects political engagement. Hamas's involvement in the Palestinian electoral process in the first instance, and then in a diplomatic process with Fatah and Egypt, conflict with al-Qaeda's Salafi-influenced and strictly militant course of action to restore the Islamic Caliphate.

Following major gains by Hamas in the Palestinian Legislative Council elections in 2006, Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Qaeda's second in command, called on his "brothers in Hamas to fight on and not to accept agreements between the Palestinian Authority and Israel."³³ Hamas, however, continued to couple its militant attacks with politics and intra-Palestinian negotiations, prompting al-Qaeda to launch a public dialogue decrying Hamas's actions.

On December 20, 2006, following calls for a national referendum unifying the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, Zawahiri publicly rebuked Hamas for participating in the January 2006 elections. He chided, "How come they did not demand an Islamic constitution for Palestine before entering any elections? Are they not an Islamic movement?"³⁴ After Hamas became a signatory to the Mecca Accord in early 2007, Zawahiri continued to criticize the movement, stating that Hamas had surrendered to "the U.S. Satan and his Saudi agent."³⁵ In April, al-Qaeda figure Abu Yahya al-Libi appealed to Hamas's military wing, stating that "They [Hamas] betrayed the dreams of their young fighters and they stabbed them in the back."³⁶ Al-Qaeda

has publicly suggested that Hamas should abandon its government role and “choose jihad and resistance,” rather than “abandoning Palestine.”³⁷ In the words of the Kuwaiti cleric Hamid al-Ali, who was designated as an al-Qaeda terrorist by the United Nations and the U.S. Treasury,³⁸ Hamas’s conflicting post-election needs to maintain its rule while “preserving the noble values of its martyrs” left the movement in an untenable position, much like a “sheep besieged by wild animals that want to suck her blood.”³⁹

Following Hamas’s violent takeover of the Gaza Strip in June 2006, however, al-Qaeda changed its tone, congratulating Hamas on its military victory over the secular Fatah. “Today we must support the mujahidin in Palestine, including the Hamas mujahidin,” Zawahiri stated, even as he challenged the Hamas leadership, to “redress your political path.”⁴⁰ That did not happen, and prompted al-Qaeda to take advantage of the opportunity to try to lure Hamas operatives away from the movement’s nationalist focus to the cause of global jihad. In February 2008, the elusive Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, head of al-Qaeda in Iraq, denounced Hamas’s leadership for betraying Islam and called on Hamas’s military wing to break off from the group and join the global jihadist movement.⁴¹

That has not happened, although several salafi-jihadi groups have sprung up in Gaza and all include within their ranks disaffected former Hamas members. Tensions came to a head in mid-August 2009, when Hamas security forces raided a mosque affiliated with a salafi-jihadi preacher who denounced Hamas and declared the establishment of an Islamic Emirate in Gaza. A gunfight ensued with the group Jund Ansar Allah, in which some 24 people were killed and 130 wounded. Among the dead was Fuad Banat, a Hamas operative sent from Syria by the group’s leadership in Damascus to improve training of Hamas operatives in Gaza. Banat soon split with Hamas over the group’s commitment to a ceasefire with Israel and served as Jund Ansar Allah’s military commander alongside Abdelatif Musa, who served as the group’s spiritual leader.⁴² Al-Qaeda in Iraq denounced the Hamas attack on its website, calling on Allah “to avenge the blood of the murdered men and to destroy the Hamas state.”⁴³ The episode highlights both the presence in Gaza of salafi-jihadi groups inspired by but not (yet) formally affiliated with al-Qaeda, and the tensions between these groups and Hamas, a violent Islamist but still Palestinian nationalist group now in power in Gaza.

The ironies are telling. Hamas opposes the salafi-jihadi groups in Gaza, sometimes violently. But its proactive campaign to radicalize Palestinian society and to transform the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from an ethno-nationalist conflict over land into a religious battle over theology fosters an environment conducive to salafi-jihadi ideology, promoting global jihad in defense of the Muslim nation (*umma*). As the responsible authority in government, Hamas has at times tried to rein in militant groups planning

to conduct attacks or fire rockets at Israel—despite its continued support for such actions—and has incurred the wrath of salafi-jihadi groups in return. For such groups, Hamas’s participation in local elections, and temporary ceasefires with Israel, are anathema and a violation of the requirement to wage violent jihad. Not surprisingly, some of the groups are in large part comprised of former Hamas members disillusioned by Hamas’s failure to vigorously enforce Islamic law (sharia) in the Gaza Strip, and to use the area as a launching pad for attacks on Israel

Recognizing the damage such challenges pose to Hamas’s own jihadist credentials, in September 2009 the movement’s terrorist wing posted on its website a paper on “The Concept of Jihad as the Islamic World Understand” [sic] in which it highlighted the work of Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, famous for his religious edicts (fatwa) justifying suicide bombings targeting civilians in Israel and supporting the insurgency in Iraq.⁴⁴ Qaradawi, the paper stresses, “is extremely careful to distinguish between extremist groups that declare war on the whole world, killing indiscriminately, tainting the image of Islam and providing its enemies with fatal weapons to use against it, on the one hand, and on the other groups resisting occupation.”⁴⁵

And yet, for some in the salafi-jihadi community, Hamas’s jihadist credentials still make the movement a legitimate partner of the global jihadist movement. In June 2009, Mustafa Abu al-Yazid, the al-Qaeda commander in Afghanistan also known as Sheikh Said, stated that both al-Qaeda and Hamas “share the same ideology and the same doctrine.”⁴⁶ But in a sign that Hamas remains a hotly debated issue among salafi-jihadi ideologues, Islamist theoretician Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi quickly disputed this claim, asserting that the salafi-jihadis and “Hamas share neither ideology nor doctrine.”⁴⁷

The Movement at a Crossroads

IN OCTOBER 2009, HAMAS LEADERS REJECTED THE LATEST EGYPTIAN-MEDIATED proposals for intra-Palestinian reconciliation. The reason, according to the statement issued by the Damascus-based leadership, was that “the wording submitted by Cairo to the factions makes no reference to the struggle (with Israel) and the aggression against our people.”⁴⁸ Such intransigent positions should not surprise, even coming on the heels of what some described as the moderating of a Hamas co-opted by the everyday needs of governance. Consider, for example, that in the days following its sweeping electoral victory in 2006 parliamentary elections, Hamas leaders did not soften their rhetoric. Instead of allowing participation in the political process to co-opt them into moderation, Hamas leaders underlined their intention to continue attacking Israel and to make Palestinian society more Islamic.

Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar insisted the group's Qassam Brigades "will remain, they will grow, they will be armed more and more until the complete liberation of all Palestine." Under Hamas, Zahar predicted, the new Palestinian government would promote "martyr tourism" to draw tourists interested in the history of armed Palestinian resistance, and the Ministry of Culture would produce literature about jihad. If elected, a Hamas candidate from Rafah promised, Hamas would enact legislation consistent with Islamic sharia (religious law). "We would present to the umma [Muslim Nation] and the Palestinian people the laws and legislation compatible with the Islamic sharia and would do our best to nullify the non-Islamic ones." This would come hand in hand, the candidate promised, with enhanced social services courtesy of the Hamas *dawa*.⁴⁹

These predictions are now coming to fruition, though Hamas has from time to time softened its public message in an effort to facilitate Egyptian-moderated talks with Fatah, and in the hope of easing the international isolation of their regime in Gaza. Hamas's tactical flexibility, however, should not be mistaken for strategic change. Even in recent interviews, Mishal has been clear that Hamas has not rejected terrorism, but has put it on hold due to current circumstances. "Not targeting civilians," Mishal explained, "is part of an evaluation of the movement to serve the people's interests. Firing these rockets is a method and not the goal."⁵⁰ In the context of discussing the sharp drop in Hamas rockets fired at Israeli civilian population centers, Mishal added, "The right to resist the occupation is a legitimate right, but practicing this right is decided by the leadership within the movement."⁵¹

Even as Hamas advances its public-relations blitz for tactical gains, the group continues to advance its strategic goals through ongoing terrorist activities, robust radicalization, weapons smuggling, and the election of militant hardliners to leadership positions. Against the backdrop of such activity, it is difficult to describe Hamas as moderating its positions based on public comments intended for Western consumption alone.

Discussion of moderates and radicals almost invariably invites well-meaning efforts to engage with the former to further splits with the latter. In the case of Hamas, this will only be counterproductive—on issues relevant to U.S. policy, there are no substantive divisions between the two groups, only tactical differences. And given the importance of strengthening the anti-Hamas Palestinian Authority, any effort to engage with even part of Hamas will be sure to erode confidence within the PA, further diminishing long-term prospects for real diplomatic progress. The policy readjustment must come not from the West but from Hamas, if it is indeed capable of such a readjustment.

Were Hamas to couple its moderate talk with a disavowal of violence in word and deed, that would be something. Though unlikely, such moderation would likely

fracture the group into factions divided between those who see “resistance” as the group’s primary calling no matter the cost, and those focused more on the building of an Islamist state in Gaza today for the purpose of resisting the enemy tomorrow. As a corollary, more Hamas hardliners would leave Hamas and join al Qaeda-inspired salafi-jihadi groups in Gaza that remain ideologically committed to violence in the name of religion. What is more likely is that Hamas will revert back to terrorism and political violence targeting Israel. With its ongoing radicalization and weapons smuggling programs, Hamas is well suited to do so at any time. In the meantime, promises of moderation that coincide with continued violence, weapons smuggling, and radicalization are, as they say in the region, *kalam fadhi* (empty words).

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The Young Brotherhood in Search of a New Path

By Khalil Al-Anani

HASSAN AL-BANNA WAS BARELY TWENTY TWO YEARS OLD WHEN HE established the Muslim Brotherhood movement in 1928. Having started out his professional life as an Arabic teacher in the city of Ismailiya, some fifty miles east of Cairo, the first General Guide of the Brotherhood was devoted to young people and to their education, and remained so throughout his life.¹ Indeed, in important ways, the Brotherhood organization that Banna founded was begun primarily as a youth movement whose principal focus was the cultivation of a new generation of Muslims devoted to Islamic revival and the establishment of a new Islamic social and political order.

Today, eighty one years since its creation, the Muslim Brotherhood is no longer a youth-focused organization simply, but a movement that spans across several generations. This has given rise to a number of new dilemmas for the Brotherhood's leadership and for the organization as a whole. Among other things, persistent gaps exist between the oldest generation of Brothers and the youth that stem from differences in ideology and strategy. These differences are exacerbated by a basic lack of internal channels for dialogue within the group, which has meant that youth with fresh ideas and new aspirations have virtually no opportunity to rise to leadership ranks or to influence the movement's future direction. This has worked to stifle meaningful organizational reform.

As a consequence of these and other factors, many young people are becoming disenchanted with the Brotherhood, and the movement as a whole appears to be losing its ability to inspire its youth and to claim their loyalties. This has generated a crisis within the Brotherhood, with a growing number of reform-minded young people seeking a new pathway forward.

The Demographic Context

EGYPT IS CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING A YOUTH BULGE, ACCORDING TO DATA FROM the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, with Egyptians aged 15-28 years accounting for some 28 percent of the total population. In other words, nearly one-third of Egypt's eighty million residents are under the age of thirty.²

Although Egyptian youth are often accused of passivity and apathy, the political ferment seen in the country since 2004 has undoubtedly touched young people, prompting many of them to join NGOs and to participate in the protest movements that have emerged in the last few years. Egyptian young people have a well developed political consciousness as well: no longer focusing simply on jobs or adequate education, they increasingly make more expressly political demands, calling for increased political participation, respect for human rights, and greater personal liberties. At the same time, the information revolution has given youth the opportunity to participate in politics directly and cheaply, and to join in the global discussion on freedom, human rights, and democratization.

What is remarkable is that Egyptian youth have not engaged in politics in conventional ways—for example, by joining political parties (which are at any rate aging, stagnant entities in Egypt), or by taking a more active role in trade unions. Instead, they are creating new political and social entities to voice their demands and to air ideas. That Egyptian youth constitute a political force cannot be denied: the youth movement played an instrumental role in spearheading the general strike on April 6, 2008, youth groups are well-organized and networked on Facebook, and more than 150,000 blogs addressing political and social themes are based in Egypt.³

Young members of the Muslim Brotherhood are no exception to these general trends among Egypt's youth. The Brotherhood remains the largest political opposition group in Egypt, and although the organization cuts across generations, young people are the single largest subgroup within the movement (a result of the Brotherhood's past success in mobilizing young people through religious and educational activities in cities and villages). Muslim Brotherhood youth are therefore a major part of the new dynamism among youth that has emerged in Egypt over the last three years. And if there is anything that sets them apart from other young activists, it is that they are better organized and have greater capacity to engage in informed, effective political action. Moreover, Brotherhood youth activists played a significant role in the 2005 national election that gave the Brotherhood 20 percent of parliamentary seats for the first time in history. The youth organized to challenge the dominance of the National Democratic (NDP) candidates in local elections, and they

successfully organized the candidates' campaigns and monitored the counting of votes.⁴

Since the 2005 election, Egyptian universities have been centers of broad-based Muslim Brotherhood youth activities. The Brotherhood, for instance, plays a vital role in student life at Egyptian universities, and youth members run—often successfully—for student union elections. These young people have attempted to connect with and open up to the broader society in order to expand the Brotherhood's base across social and class lines. This has prompted a crackdown from the Egyptian authorities: several young activists have been arrested, Brothers have been locked out of student elections, and some Brotherhood youth have even been expelled from universities for their political activities. Indeed, the Brotherhood youth were prominently represented in the demonstrations and strikes in Egyptian universities in 2007 and 2008, including the April 6 strike. This stands in contrast to the Brotherhood's leadership, who preferred to exercise caution on such occasions for fear of direct clashes with the regime.⁵

Generational Structure of the Brotherhood

HISTORICALLY, YOUNG MEMBERS OF THE BROTHERHOOD HAVE TENDED NOT TO HAVE much of an impact on top-level decision-making within the movement, playing instead the role of small cogs in the organization's machinery. This tendency has been reinforced by the fact that the Brotherhood is officially still banned in Egypt and must pursue political action in a semi-clandestine manner; most important decisions are made without oversight from within the organization and do not necessarily reflect all the ideological currents or generational concerns of the group's members. In effect, this has meant that any opinion at odds with the group's core leaders—most of whom are deeply conservative—has been silenced.

To better understand the role of the Brotherhood's young generation, it is necessary to consider the generational structure of the organization. Here we can divide members into roughly four main generations. The first generation is sometimes known as the "Old Guard" or the veteran generation because they lived through the Nasserist suppression of the Brotherhood during the 1950s and 60s. This period saw the first open clashes between the Brotherhood and the government, and the movement was officially banned, many of its leaders were imprisoned, and some were executed. Today, this veteran generation ranges in age from 60 to 80, and as a whole, they are the most conservative members of the movement—ideologically, politically, and religiously. Their primary objective is the movement's survival and the institutional preservation of the Brotherhood as a cohesive organization, and this makes

them intellectually rigid and closed. Partly as a consequence of their historical experiences, this generation tends to put more weight on underground missionary work and other forms of ideological outreach rather than on political action. For example, the Old Guard is generally resistant to the reformist ideas popular among younger members that favor transforming the organization into a political party. Veteran members also generally lack a well-developed understanding of politics and of democratic practices and principles such as equality. Perhaps the best examples of this generation are the current General Guide, Mahdi Akef (age 81); the Brotherhood's mufti and a member of the Guidance Bureau, Sheikh Abdullah al-Khatib (age 80); the deputy of the General Guide, Mohammed Habib (age 66); and the organization's Secretary-General, Mahmoud Ezzat (age 65).

The second generational group might be called the pragmatists. These are members who came of age during the Brotherhood's return to the political arena in the 1970s after President Anwar al-Sadat released many Brothers from prison and pursued a more conciliatory policy toward the movement. It was during the 1970s, too, that the Brotherhood rejected violence within Egypt and parted ways with the jihadist groups that began emerging in the 1970s and 80s. Members of this generation tend to be in their 50s; they are pragmatic realists who engage in politics with a high degree of professionalism and skill, and they seek to integrate the Brotherhood into the nation's political life. The best known representatives of this generation are Essam al-Erian, the head of the Brotherhood's political bureau; Abd al-Moneim Abu al-Futuh, a member of the Guidance Bureau; and Mohammed Saad al-Katatni, the head of the Brothers' parliamentary bloc.

The third generation is composed of the so-called neo-traditionalists. These members came of age during the Brotherhood's clash with the Mubarak regime in the 1990s and the military trials of Brotherhood leaders in 1995. For this generation, these experiences helped to reinforce the movement's secretive and closed culture and desire to remain underground. Generally in their 40s, this cohort has pledged their allegiances to the organization's older shaykhs, they tend to favor underground work and ideological outreach, and they do not put great stock in political action, which is seen as ineffective and undesirable. Like the oldest generation, they are ideologically and religiously conservative, and they dominate the organization's various administrative bureaus and mid-level leadership positions in the provinces.

The fourth generational group, the youth, are in their 20s and early 30s, and most of them—particularly members from urban areas like Cairo, Alexandria, and Mansoura—are much more intellectually curious and open than the elder Brothers. This is partly due to the fact that this younger generation has not undergone the rigorous ideological indoctrination and organizational grooming that former generations of Brothers underwent, and also because the Brotherhood has tended to

become more involved in political action than religious outreach over the last decade.

Generally speaking, whereas the elder Brothers are resistant to change and seek organizational survival above all, the youth seek greater integration into Egypt's political life. As a result, young Brotherhood members have sharply criticized the political and religious discourse of the older shaykhs; some have even criticized the Brotherhood's organizational structure as undemocratic. For example, many of these youths believe that the movement should be transformed into a political party rather than remain a religious *dawa* organization. Some of them are convinced that becoming a political party is the only way to preserve the Muslim Brotherhood from extinction. Moreover, the young generation of Brothers has a very different position regarding to the idea of an "Islamic State." Unlike the first generation, young Brothers claim that the main task of the movement is to build a democratic and civil state within Egypt and not a religious one.⁶

Reform-oriented and politically engaged, this younger generation faces several problems as members of an organization that remains deeply conservative. Among other things, the youth lack access to the decision-making centers within the group. There are no youth representatives or advocates of reformist views in the 13-member Guidance Bureau, the organization's highest executive body, and there are no transparent, objective criteria in place to allow for the internal advancement of youth. Furthermore, some young reformists face pressure and even harassment from the mid-level leadership because of their ideas. The younger generation also suffers due to the atrophied channels for internal dialogue and the dominance of an institutional culture of obedience and conformity. This has led some young Brothers to seek new ways outside of the organization to express their opinions and viewpoints, and on blogs and in the popular press, these youth have increasingly expressed their views boldly and forcefully.

A Brotherhood of Bloggers

WITH FEW OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION TO EXCHANGE OPINIONS and advance their views, many young Brothers began in 2006 to turn to the Internet to express criticism of the movement's leadership. By using electronic forums like blogs and Facebook, young Brothers have been able to circumvent the Brotherhood's established organizational frameworks, and blogs have quickly emerged for youth as an alternative to mosques as venues from which to disseminate ideas and a new vision for change. For many young Brothers, blogging hasn't simply represented a personal pursuit or a form of entertainment; their primary goal has been to conduct

a transparent discussion of the many pressing issues within the Brotherhood and its internal political reform.⁷ As such, youth blogging represents an increasingly revolutionary internal challenge for a closed organization like the Muslim Brotherhood.

The bloggers' movement has evolved through several phases since first emerging in 2006. At first, bloggers focused on straight news blogging, documenting all news and commentary about the Muslim Brotherhood that appeared in various media outlets. The most prominent representative of this trend is the blog *Ana Ikhwan* (I'm a Brother), run by 28-year-old Abd al-Moneim Mahmoud, a reformist youth. Through his blog, Abd al-Moneim successfully created a broad network of relationships and contacts with most of Egypt's liberal, secular, and rights activist bloggers.⁸ Monem (as he is known among the Brothers) ran an electronic campaign advocating for the release of Abd Elkarimn Soliman, a secular blogger who has been sentenced to four years imprisonment for insulting Islam, inciting sedition, and defaming the President of Egypt.⁹

The second phase was what might be termed activist blogging. Brothers' blogs began focusing on the clash between the regime and the Brotherhood movement, recording news of detainees and exposing the government's repressive policies towards Brothers. This began in 2007 in response to the military tribunal that was convened for 40 first-tier leaders of the Brotherhood. Sons and relatives of the detained Brothers established blogs to bring their plight to the wider public's attention. The most popular of these blogs, *Ensaaf* (Forget It), closely followed the military trial and posted personal information about every detainee in both Arabic and English.¹⁰

In the third phase, young Brotherhood bloggers started engaging in auto-critique and openly began criticizing the movement's leadership, its organizational structures, and its rigid and out-dated political and religious discourse. *Amwaj Fi Bahr al-Taghyir* (Waves in the Sea of Change) is the most prominent of these blogs, and was established by the 29-year-old dentist and reformist Mustafa al-Naggar. During the 2005 elections, Naggar participated in the Brotherhood's electoral campaign in the hopes of mobilizing people in support of Islamist candidates. However, he has since expressed disappointment over the Brothers' poor showing in the elections, and his writing has begun to focus increasingly on how to transform the Brotherhood into a more open movement and a more effective political party. Naggar has been especially critical of the Brotherhood's political platform, released in August 2007, and he has also attacked the approach of the older generation in dealing with local and regional issues.¹¹ Naggar's blog additionally serves as a clearinghouse for links to other blog-based critiques of the Brotherhood.¹²

Today, young Brotherhood bloggers are no longer considered a group of diletantes, but as an effective political force that offers policy-based criticisms of the movement and its leadership. An example of this is the strong position taken by

young bloggers against the leadership's decision not to participate in the April 6 strike in 2008. As a result of this condemnation, and fearing the wrath of the youth, the organization subsequently took part in the May 4 strike.

It is also significant that the bloggers' movement is not dependent on particular personalities, but is constantly changing with the inclusion of new members. When the movement began in 2006, it was shaped mainly by writers who sought to focus on the Brotherhood's internal structure. These bloggers included Magdi Saad of Yalla Mesh Mohem (Oh Well, It Doesn't Matter) and Abd al-Moneim Mahmoud of Ana Ikhwan, along with several other bloggers like Mohamed Hamza,¹³ Mohammed Adel,¹⁴ Islam Lutfi,¹⁵ and Abd al-Rahman Rashwan.¹⁶ But this discourse quickly developed into a more substantive critique of the Brotherhood's political decisions and its ideology. Prominent representatives of this trend are Mustafa al-Naggar, Abd al-Rahman Ayyash of al-Gharib (The Stranger), and Ibrahim Abu Seif of Iskhar (Mock Away), as well as Abd al-Rahman Mansour, Abduh Ibn Khaldoun, and Amr Magdi. Interestingly, some bloggers have not stopped simply at verbal criticism, but have openly begun to break ranks with the movement. For example, people like Moneim Mahmoud have refused to attend organizational meetings and have even frozen their membership.

The new wave of blogging is not limited to young males; indeed, several Muslim Sisters have also started blogging—a new development not only for the Brotherhood but for Egyptian society in general, which remains intellectually conservative. Initially, blogs authored by Muslim Sisters focused on personal issues related to the arrest of their relatives and loved ones. But there are now about ten blogs authored by young women who belong to the Muslim Brotherhood. Perhaps the most prominent of these is Wahi Elmashar (Feelings Revealed) which is authored by 19-year-old Arwa al-Taweel and has received some 50,000 hits in a six month period. Taweel's blogging is diverse, addressing both intellectual and political issues alongside more social and general matters.¹⁷

The Young Conservatives

NOT ALL YOUNG BROTHERS ARE REFORMISTS, OF COURSE. HOWEVER, THE NEWEST generation of Brotherhood conservatives appears to be substantially different than the older generation of Islamists. They tend, for instance, to be conservative culturally rather than religiously or ideologically. As a whole, these young conservatives are more intellectually open than their elders, and this makes them, like other young reformists, more accepting of democratic principles such as freedom, equality, justice, and citizenship. In a field study of young Brotherhood members conducted in

fourteen Egyptian provinces, I found that many of them harbor a well-developed understanding of democratic values and are eager to practice them.¹⁸ In contrast to the first generation, for example, young Brothers believe that Christians and women have the right to run for and occupy the office of president in Egypt.¹⁹

This embrace of democratic principles appears to be the result of several factors, including the exchange of ideas over the Internet or in other intellectual forums. This exchange has brought the young Islamists into increasing interaction with other political and intellectual camps, such as liberals, leftists, and reformists, both at home and abroad. Some young Islamists have also completed training sessions in human rights and democratization and are members of NGOs that defend civil liberties and human rights. This has led them to defend freedom of expression, for instance, on principled grounds. This can be seen in the case of detained blogger Abd al-Karim Suleiman, who is serving three years in prison on charges of showing contempt for Islam and who, despite being anti-Islamist, received the support of some young Brothers.

Unlike the older generation, young Islamists appear to have come to grips with consensus-based politics. In other words, they realize the necessity of making alliances with non-Islamists in order to bring democratic change to Egypt. As a consequence, the ideological divides between young Islamists and other politically-inclined young people of a liberal persuasion appears to be diminishing, in stark contrast to the clear gaps between the first generation of Brotherhood leaders and their peers in opposition parties.

Young Brothers have additionally learned lessons from the experiences of Islamist political movements elsewhere in the Middle East, including most especially from Turkey's AKP and Morocco's Justice and Development Party. Young conservatives view Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan as a model that should be emulated by the Muslim Brotherhood's General Guide.²⁰ They believe the AKP has succeeded in mixing Islam, democracy, and nationalism, and that the Brotherhood should strive to do the same by creating a political party that is distinct from its religious mission. In this respect, they support in principle the separation between religious outreach and political action.²¹

Young Brothers also appear to have accepted the principle of the nation-state, and are less interested in the idea of the caliphate or in striving to establish a pan-Islamic political formation. Some have even sharply criticized Islamist groups that advocate the establishment of an Islamic state. For these young Brothers, citizenship should be the primary organizing principle of the state, which in turn must protect the rights of minorities and guarantee civic equality regardless of color, ethnicity, religion, or gender.²² Young Brothers have also adopted a more pragmatic view of relations with the West. Rather than seeing this relationship from an ideological or

hostile perspective, they approach it from the view of mutual interests and respect. Many Brotherhood youth welcomed President Barack Obama's speech at Cairo University on June 4, 2009 and believe that he can usher in a new era of relations between US and the Muslim world. Some of them, however, are quick to argue that change in Egypt must come from within, and not as a result of intervention from the outside.²³

Less Revolution, More Opening

WHAT DO THE YOUNGEST MEMBERS OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD WANT? TO simplify, young Brothers of the reformist orientation are seeking three things. For one, they want to change the political and religious discourse of the Muslim Brotherhood so that it is more flexible and accepting of democratic principles. Many of the young Brothers that I interviewed believe that the inflexibility of the Brotherhood's fundamentally utopian and revolutionary ideology presents a major stumbling block to the organization's normalization and integration into Egyptian political life.²⁴

Young Brothers also seek to make the Brotherhood's organizational structure more democratic and transparent. They advocate that power should be routinely rotated among group members, and they want the authoritarian values that have become entrenched in the Brotherhood's culture, such as obedience to and veneration for the movement's leadership, to be replaced by objective criteria for evaluating a leader's effectiveness and skill. Some also hope to see amendments to the Brotherhood's bylaws that would give young people a chance to contend for leadership positions within the organization. Mustafa al-Naggar has gone further and criticized the widespread practice of nominating and electing people to office within the organization based on their perceived adherence and loyalty to the group and its ideology, rather than on a rational assessment of their political platforms and ideas.²⁵

Young Brothers strongly believe the organization should change its political strategy and tactics, both with regard to the Egyptian regime and other political forces and opposition parties. They oppose the secrecy that governs the Brotherhood's operation and believe it harms the group's popularity and its ability to connect with the Egyptian public.

In seeking to implement these reforms within the organization, the youth have come up against several hurdles. First of all, because of the youth's relative powerlessness and lack of influence, it has been all too easy for the movement's leadership to brush off the youth's demands. Second, young Brothers have not yet been able to form a cohesive and effective bloc within the movement to advocate and lobby for

their demands (although recently some youth leaders have begun to address this problem). Nor does the younger generation enjoy strong relations with the second-generation of reformist Brothers, since many of the latter, such as Abd al-Moneim Abu al-Futouh, a member of the Guidance Bureau, and Essam al-Erian, fear that their support of the youth will affect the unity and cohesion of the organization as a whole, and will thus reflect poorly on the Brotherhood in the face of its opponents.

Nevertheless, young Brothers have made several gains over the last two years. First of all, blogging has broken down the psychological barriers many of them had kept in place to avoid criticizing the Brotherhood and eroding the principle of secrecy, upon which the Brotherhood was established eight decades ago. The famed saying of Hassan al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, “We must cooperate in matters wherein we agree and excuse one another in those wherein we disagree” has become “no cooperation without agreement and no agreement without the opinion of the youth.”

Also, blogging has put the Brotherhood in the very difficult position of confronting the organization with two equally unpleasant choices. On one hand, the group can and has attempted to ignore the voices of young bloggers, writing them off as so much chatter and electronic noise. But this route has costs—among other things, it hurts the Brotherhood’s reputation, exposing it as an authoritarian group that does not tolerate, much less actually engage, a diversity of opinions. This response will also give bloggers additional momentum in their struggle against the ideological and organizational inflexibility of the group, which is already happening to some degree. On the other hand, giving serious consideration to the criticisms of young Brothers could mark the beginning of concessions that might affect the internal structure of the organization itself. Faced with this choice, so far the Brotherhood has attempted to pursue a middle ground of constructive neglect as part of a strategy of containment. Unfortunately, it does not seem to be working.

Another gain made by the youth is that Brotherhood leaders, fearing the reactions of bloggers, have begun weighing strategic decisions with more caution. Indeed, this is perhaps one reason that the organization has delayed issuing the final draft of its party platform, whose initial form was sharply criticized by the bloggers. The position of the old generation toward women and Christians angered many reformists in the movement and widened the gap between youth and old leaders. The ideological gap between both parties affects internal harmony and makes it difficult for the older generation to take any further steps before testing the reaction of young people. As we’ve seen, the movement didn’t participate in April 6th strike in 2008, which pushed many young Brothers to criticize and condemn the leadership of Brotherhood. Thus, the movement decided to participate, partially, in the second strike on May 4th 2008.

Old Ways for New Challenges

SO FAR THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD HAS NOT DEVELOPED A CLEAR STRATEGY FOR dealing with the internal challenges posed by the youth and their demands for reform. Initially, the organization chose to simply ignore the youth altogether, brushing off their critiques published in blogs and elsewhere online as no more than the personal musings of a very small number of young Brothers in Cairo and Alexandria. This tactic betrayed the ignorance of the Brotherhood's leadership about the nature of blogs and their impact on the organization's public image, but it was the official tack taken by the group throughout first half of 2007. The Muslim Brotherhood's leadership didn't issue any statements regarding the bloggers' movement because they were totally disinterested in it.

A new approach became visible in the second half of 2007, after the blogs received coverage in the national media. At this point, bloggers were no longer seen simply as isolated cases of dissent but as a larger phenomenon that represented a serious challenge to the organization. As a result, some Brotherhood leaders began holding meetings with the youth bloggers, both on general occasions devoted to discussing issues of freedom of opinion and in private meetings, like the one organized between Dr. Mohammed Mursi, the head of the Brotherhood's political division, and a group of young Brotherhood bloggers, which was specifically devoted to an airing of the youths' opinions and criticisms.²⁶

The meetings between Brotherhood leaders and young bloggers seems to have been designed to feel out the potential difficulties and embarrassment that the latter might cause, particularly in light of the Brotherhood's present difficulties with the regime and its relationship with the Egyptian political elite, neither of which was pleased with the political party platform recently proposed by the Brotherhood.

In general, there are two mindsets within the Muslim Brotherhood about how to deal with blogging by members. One camp continues to believe that no serious attention should be given to the phenomenon, writing it off as Internet chatter that will not have an impact on the Brotherhood's broad base, which does not deviate from the organization's main line.

Others, however, believe that blogging is an expression of a new spirit among the Brotherhood's base—a spirit that should be absorbed and strengthened. At the same time, this camp believes that young bloggers are evidence of the organization's intellectual vitality and can be harnessed to improve the Brotherhood's image as an open organization involved in the give-and-take exchange of ideas and opinions. Nevertheless, even partisans of this approach believe in the need for flexible rules that can moderate the tenor of criticisms directed at the organization while also

absorbing bloggers organizationally and benefiting from them in political action.

In fact, the Brotherhood's approach to bloggers is not notably different from the way it has handled other internal dissenters and critics. The group has generally engaged in a strategy of neglect and containment, rarely paying much attention to such criticisms, both because of the group's involvement in more pressing matters, such as its relationship with the regime and other political forces, and because of fears that a constructive response to dissenting opinions will constitute a precedent and open the long-closed door of auto-critique. This, in turn, could have serious repercussions for the organization's cohesion and unity.

It is difficult to believe, however, that this strategy will successfully stop young Brothers from publicly expressing their political and intellectual critiques of the Muslim Brotherhood. Not only does such an outcome seem unlikely, it would also reinforce the image of the Brotherhood as a group that suppresses dissent.

A Coming Schism?

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THE BROTHERHOOD DOES NOT RESPOND TO THE DEMANDS of reformist youth? Will it lead to schisms within the organization or will the reformists retract their demands? Historically, the Muslim Brotherhood has experienced some schisms, due to both policy differences and generational conflicts. The last major split occurred in 1996 when Abu al-Ela Madi led a movement out of the Brotherhood that sought to embrace political life and transform the movement to a party. This faction formed the al-Wasat party, which to this day has yet to receive the permit to operate officially.

With the current crop of youth, however, an outright break with the organization seems unlikely for several reasons. First of all, the closed nature of political life in Egypt and the lack of political parties leave the youth with few alternatives for political action. Young Brothers, for example, generally view the al-Wasat experience as having been a failure, and this may encourage them to remain within the framework of the Brotherhood, even if they currently have few prospects to play a meaningful role. Moreover, many young Brothers believe that the al-Wasat party—or for that matter, any other party born of the Brotherhood—couldn't ever succeed politically in today's Egypt, as the government would never allow a real competitor to the ruling National Democratic Party to emerge.²⁷

Second, reformist youth are willing to bide their time, believing that the resolution to their ongoing struggle with the Brotherhood's first generation will come soon enough. The advanced age of the Brotherhood's current leadership makes it likely that they will soon vacate their positions, which the youth anticipate will lead

directly to real changes within the organization more favorable to the youths' ideas.

Third, many young Brothers fear that leaving the organization would only strengthen the position of their more reactionary rivals, who may attempt to demonize and purge internal voices of reform. Finally, there is no strong push for reformist demands among the Brotherhood's base. Bloggers are still the most influential segment of reformers and their numbers are limited and based largely in urban areas. One young Brother told me that he did not want to leave the Brotherhood since he wanted to spearhead the transformation of the movement from within.²⁸

Clearly, the young reformists pose a challenge to the Brotherhood's first generation leadership and to a movement that has grown increasingly inward-looking and rigid ideologically. At some point, the Brotherhood's leadership may feel the need to respond to their demands and aspirations, and to adjust the organization accordingly. Meanwhile, only time will reveal whether the reformers among the Brotherhood youth are genuinely committed to the modernizing and democratizing principles that they espouse, and whether they possess the leadership skills necessary for breathing new life into an aging organization and leading it in a new direction.

NOTES

1. Ibrahim Albyoumi Ghanem, *The Political Thought of Hassan Elbana* (Cairo: 1992), p. 32.
2. According to a report from the Cabinet's Information and Decision Support Center, there were 160,000 Egyptian blogs as of April 2008, which accounted for 30.7 percent of all Arab blogs. About 48.3 percent of these blogs were active and roughly 19 percent were political in nature. The majority of Egypt's 162,000 bloggers are aged 20 to 30. Dina Shehata, "Youth Activism in Egypt," Arab Reform Brief from the Arab Reform Initiative, October 2008, p. 2.
3. <<http://www.eip.gov.eg/Upload/Documents/417/SUM/blogs%20final-introd.pdf>>.
4. Khalil Al-anani, *Brotherhood in Egypt: Gerontocracy Fighting Against the Clock* (Cairo, Dar Al-shourouk Al-dawliya Publishing Company, 2008).
5. Khalil Al-anani, "Brotherhood Bloggers: Are They Influential?" *Daily News Egypt*, October 21, 2008, at <<http://www.thedailynewsegypt.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=17242>>.
6. An interview with Mustafa al-Nagar and Mohamed Hamza on March 2009.
7. Interviews have been conducted with many young bloggers of Brotherhood during March and April 2009.
8. <<http://ana-ikhwan.blogspot.com>>.
9. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6385849.stm
10. < <http://ensaa.blogspot.com/>>.
11. Mustafa al-Naggar, "Differentiating Between Daw'a and Politics," the blog: <http://2mwag.blogspot.com/2007/12/blog-post.html>.

12. <http://2mwag.blogspot.com>>.
13. <http://mohamza80.blogspot.com/>.
14. <http://43arb.info/meit/>.
15. <http://kawakby.blogspot.com/>.
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18. Khalil Al-anani, *ibid*, p. 56.
19. Jeffrey Fleishman, "Opposition Party in Egypt Faces Dissent from Within," *Los Angeles Times*, October 3, 2008, at <<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-brotherhood3-2008oct03,0,4757923.story>>.
20. Interview with Musa'b Abdallah, young Brotherhood blogger.
21. Interview with Mustafa al-Naggar, a prominent Brotherhood blogger. He is calling for a smart separation between the Brotherhood's religious outreach and political role. See his blog *Waves in the Sea of Change* at <<http://2mwag.blogspot.com/>>.
22. http://2mwag.blogspot.com/2009/04/blog-post_30.html.
23. AbdulRahman Mansor, Ten tips for Obama, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/Article.asp?ID=20261&SectionID=91>.
24. Khalil al-Anani, *Opcite*, p 168.
25. http://2mwag.blogspot.com/2007/10/blog-post_03.html#links.
26. Al-Dustour, October 27, 2007.
27. Interview with Brotherhood bloggers in May 2009.
28. Interview with Mohamed Hamza, a young reformist who blogs at *One of the Brothers*, <<http://mohamza80.blogspot.com/>>.

The Talibanization of Gaza

By Jonathan Schanzer

HAMAS, THE PALESTINIAN MILITANT GROUP THAT SPLINTERED OFF from the Muslim Brotherhood in early 1988, launched a surprise military offensive on June 7, 2007, to wrest control of the Gaza Strip from the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the Fatah faction that made up a majority of the PA's leadership. Within six days of fighting, Hamas fighters wearing black ski masks controlled the thoroughfares, media, and even key PA buildings. For the first time since the Sudanese coup of 1989 that brought Omar al-Bashir to power, a Muslim Brotherhood group ruled a significant geographic territory.

Ismael Haniyeh, the ascendant ruler of Gaza, officially denied accusations by the PLO and some Palestinian media outlets that Hamas intended to establish an Islamic emirate.¹ However, it soon became clear that Hamas maintained control of Gaza's predominantly Sunni population through a combination of violence, authoritarian rule, and Islamism. In fact, in the two years since the 2007 coup, the Gaza Strip has steadily exhibited the characteristics of "Talibanization"—a process mirroring the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan in the 1990s whereby the Islamist organization imposed strict rules on women; discouraged activities commonly associated with Western or Christian culture; oppressed non-Muslim minorities; imposed sharia law; and deployed religious police to enforce these laws. This has only served to underscore the dangers associated with the rise to power of Islamist groups in the Muslim world.

Hamas's tyrannical rule in Gaza has since presented something of a liability for its parent organization the Muslim Brotherhood, which has sought in recent times to whitewash its image internationally and to portray itself as a reform movement committed to peaceful and democratic change. While the Egyptian Brotherhood's deputy chairman, Mohamed Habib, downplayed the linkages between the two

groups in June 2008, stating that “there are no organizational links whatsoever between the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas,”² Abdul-Hameed al-Ghazali, a political consultant to the Brotherhood (and political science professor at Cairo University), stated two months earlier that there are “continuous communications between Egypt’s MBs and Hamas for advice and exchange of opinions.”³ Moreover, the Hamas charter (which has not been changed since it was first issued in 1988) states unequivocally that Hamas is “one of the wings of the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine.”⁴

The June Fighting

PRIOR TO LAUNCHING THE VIOLENT COUP THAT ENABLED THE ISLAMIST GROUP TO capture the Gaza Strip in June 2007, Hamas had no experience in governance. Indeed, since its inception in late 1987 or early 1988, the group was a non-state actor best known for its violent opposition to the 1990s peace process between the PLO and Israel. While its Islamist ideology has had varying influence on the Palestinian Arabs of the West Bank and Gaza, Hamas has enjoyed only nominal control in pockets of Palestinian areas where allied clans and tribes welcomed their influence.

The group’s abrupt transition from opposition group to *de facto* rulers of Gaza in June 2007 demonstrated a reckless disregard for the population it would govern. According to the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), Hamas’s actions during the coup were characterized by “extra-judicial and willful killing,” including incidents where Hamas fighters pushed PA loyalists and Fatah faction members from tall rooftops. Hamas abducted and executed political foes, killed some that were already injured,⁵ or shot them in the legs point-blank to ensure permanent disabilities.⁶

While Hamas attempted to explain the violence in the context of its paramilitary war with the rival Fatah faction, PCHR reported attacks against private domiciles, hospitals, and ambulances. So, while internecine rivalry accounted for some violence, it became clear to observers that Hamas was guilty of gross violations of human rights. All told, the June civil war claimed the lives of at least 161 Palestinians, including 11 women and 7 children. More than 700 Palestinians were wounded.⁷

After the war ended, Hamas announced on television the “end of secularism and heresy in the Gaza Strip.”⁸ Hamas then began openly to mistreat the minority Christian community, mostly Greek Orthodox, which had co-existed with Gaza’s predominantly Sunni population for centuries. On June 14, masked gunmen attacked the Rosary Sisters School and the Latin Church in Gaza City with rocket-propelled grenades. They destroyed the cross, Bibles, computers, and other property.⁹ Later that month, Hamas kidnapped Professor Sana al-Sayegh, a teacher at Palestine University in Gaza City, and reportedly forced her to convert to Islam.¹⁰

In October 2007, the proprietor of the Holy Bible Association, Rami Ayyad, was found dead in the Gaza City suburbs. Ayyad had been receiving death threats from Islamists.¹¹ His offices were also hit with a grenade during the 2005 protests over the Prophet Mohammed cartoons in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*.¹²

By one count, there were more than 50 attacks against Christian targets in the aftermath of the Hamas coup, including barbershops, music stores, and a U.N. school.¹³ Christians increasingly feared they would be forced to submit to Islamic law or leave the Gaza Strip.¹⁴

In February 2008, gunmen blew up the YMCA library in the Gaza Strip. They kidnapped guards, looted the offices, stole a vehicle, and destroyed some 8,000 books.¹⁵ That attack came days after a Hamas “modesty patrol” attacked a Christian youth’s car after he drove home a female classmate.¹⁶ In May, unidentified gunmen again bombed the Rosary Sister’s school.¹⁷ In both May and June, Islamists broke into the El-Manara School in Gaza, detained and beat two guards, and stole a bus.¹⁸ In July, three masked men broke into the home of Constantine Dabbagh, Executive Secretary of the Near East Council of Churches. The men beat him and his wife before stealing money and jewelry.¹⁹ The practice of Christianity, according to one reporter, was now largely “happening privately or in homes.”²⁰

Human Rights Violations

MORE THAN 1,000 PERSONS, MOSTLY MEMBERS OF FATAH OR THE PA, WERE ILLEGALLY arrested or detained in the first months of Hamas rule. They were detained in 23 different locations, according to Amnesty International.²¹ Maan News Agency reported that the leader of Hamas’s Executive Force, Jamal Jarrah, admitted to torture, but that Hamas was trying “to minimize violations and avoid them through the training of our members.”²² In September 2007, five Fatah members, after being abducted by Hamas, were hospitalized and diagnosed as having been tortured.²³ Concurrently, PCHR documented Hamas torture, citing cases where Fatah members were “handcuffed and blindfolded,” “sustained fractures to the feet” from beatings with sticks, and had pieces of cloth stuffed in their mouths to stifle their screams.²⁴

In May, Hamas illegally detained the governor of Khan Younis in southern Gaza, along with three Fatah activists.²⁵ In July, Hamas arrested the director of Gaza’s electric company, and held him without formal charges for six months.²⁶ Hamas abducted political rivals, only to return them without their mustaches or the hair on their heads.²⁷

Hamas claimed it was dismantling networks of Israeli “collaborators,” allegedly hired by Israel to gather intelligence or to carry out anti-Hamas activities.²⁸ This was

also Hamas's justification to round up hundreds of Fatah activists during Israel's Operation Cast Lead in December 2008 and January 2009. Fatah members were allegedly kidnapped and held in schools and hospitals, which became makeshift interrogation centers. Three detainees reportedly had their eyes put out by their interrogators for allegedly providing Israel with targeting information against Hamas.²⁹

Human Rights Watch documented numerous Hamas abuses against Gaza civilians during Operation Cast Lead, including the execution of 32 political rivals, shooting of 49 persons in the legs, and breaking the limbs of a 73 others.³⁰ Fatah confirmed much of this by releasing a list of 181 persons "killed, shot or maimed by the *de facto* government."³¹

As of late July 2009, the Hamas interior ministry issued a warning that it will hunt down all "collaborators and traitors in an effort to achieve 'total security.'"³²

Sharia & Military Courts

FOR PALESTINIANS WHOSE RIGHTS WERE VIOLATED, THERE WAS LITTLE REDRESS. As the PA judicial system in Gaza collapsed,³³ sharia courts became the primary arbiters of disputes. The courts, presided over by Hamas-appointed judges, wielded Islamic jurisprudence to make judgments. However, as Amnesty International noted, the judges lacked "adequate independence, impartiality, training, oversight, and public accountability."³⁴

Hamas also created "Palestine Islamic Scholars Association" branches across Gaza. These entities, which also lacked sufficient legal training, employed up to eight religious scholars per branch.³⁵ In many cases, their judgments were Hamas's political edicts. For example, the association ruled that a health workers' strike, in protest of Hamas rule, violated Islamic law.³⁶

In December 2008, the Hamas parliament reportedly voted in favor of establishing criminal sentences according to sharia law.³⁷ Hamas denied these reports, but unquestionably engaged in ongoing discussions on the implementation of sharia.³⁸

Hamas also meted out justice through the Gaza High Military Court. Following Operation Cast Lead, it sentenced several Palestinians to death for collaborating with Israel. Observers noted a "lack of adequate evidence."³⁹ Months later, the court continued to issue death sentences. In March 2009, for example, the court sentenced three Palestinians to death for allegedly murdering a Gaza merchant.⁴⁰

In another sign of the potential implementation of sharia law, Gaza's top judge in July 2009 ordered all female lawyers to wear headscarves when they appear in court. The Palestinian Center for Human Rights called the move a "dangerous violation of personal freedoms and women's rights."⁴¹

Islamic “Enforcement”

THE ISLAMIZATION OF JUSTICE IN GAZA HAS BEEN COMPOUNDED BY THE EMERGING strength of the “Authority for the Propagation of Morality and Prohibition of Vice,” aimed to “fight those who are being corrupted by Satan, and do not observe sharia law.”⁴² The vice squads were not new; they had operated in Hamas-controlled neighborhoods in Gaza and the West Bank for years. Under Hamas rule, however, they began to operate in wider territory and with impunity.

In June 2007, vice squads bombed a pool hall, as well as a tiny shop selling popular Arabic music.⁴³ In October, the squads made headlines when members beat a singer after a performance in Khan Younis.⁴⁴ Other targets included internet cafes and pharmacies. As attacks increased, so did the number of men who grew beards and women who wore veils. Many reportedly chose these expressions of Islamic piety out of fear rather than conviction.⁴⁵

Hamas forces policed the streets for couples walking together, and took it upon themselves to verify their marital status. Mixed bathing at Gaza beaches was frowned upon. Hamas forces also reportedly seized alcohol throughout the Gaza Strip.⁴⁶

No Free Press

HAMAS UNDERSTOOD THAT ITS ACTIONS WOULD BE HEAVILY CRITICIZED, AND worked hard to cover its tracks. A month after the coup, Hamas briefly prevented the distribution of Fatah-aligned newspapers, including *al-Ayyam* and *al-Hayat al-Jadida*.⁴⁷ Hamas also jailed some of the papers’ circulation officials, and pulled the plug on pro-Fatah television and radio stations.⁴⁸

International media also suffered. Hamas gunmen attacked two cameramen from the Abu Dhabi satellite television channel and stormed the Gaza bureau of the al-Arabiya satellite channel in August.⁴⁹ Hamas gunmen also detained a German television crew after it shot footage portraying Hamas in a negative light.⁵⁰

In an effort to gain control, Hamas announced a ban on stories that could “cause harm to national unity.”⁵¹ When Hamas did not like a particular reporter or outlet, they did not issue government credentials, required for all journalists in Gaza. The Palestinian Journalists Syndicate protested this tactic, as well as the ban on phrases such as “Hamas militias” and “ousted government.”⁵² The Union of Palestinian Journalists reported that Hamas regularly threatened and blackmailed reporters.⁵³ The Foreign Press Association corroborated these reports, claiming Hamas engaged in “harassment of Palestinian journalists.”⁵⁴ Rights groups documented more than

nine assaults on journalists and 21 illegal arrests.⁵⁵ According to Reporters Without Borders, Hamas “failed to investigate” these incidents.⁵⁶

In May 2008, press reports indicated that Hamas would block websites deemed “unfit according to Islamic rules.”⁵⁷ Two months later, Hamas officially banned three Palestinian newspapers run out of the West Bank—*al-Quds*, *al-Ayyam* and *al-Hayat*. Hamas also stormed the offices of a Palestinian news agency, WAFA, and arrested a German cameraman.⁵⁸ The cameraman was reportedly tortured while he was detained.⁵⁹

After Operation Cast Lead, Reporters Without Borders noted that Hamas was, “responsible for serious press freedom violations. Contrary to what its leaders say, journalists are not free to criticize the Islamist movement, to communicate the stance of other factions, or simply to set forth divergent opinions. Most journalists... share this point of view, but none of them can express themselves publicly, so great is the risk of reprisals.”⁶⁰ Thus, the extent of Hamas’s misrule in Gaza remains undocumented.

An Ikhwani State?

ACCORDING TO A HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH REPORT IN APRIL 2009, HAMAS VIOLATIONS had “not stopped since major hostilities ceased on January 18.” The report documented “14 more killings between January 18 and March 31, 2009.”⁶¹ In mid-April, Maan News Agency reported that Hamas gunmen had shot three Fatah members in the legs.⁶² In June, Hamas police opened fire on a peaceful demonstration in Gaza City, wounding three civilians.⁶³ In July, Hamas police opened fire on a wedding party in Beit Lahia after participants raised a portrait of a Fatah activist who was killed in the June 2007 fighting.⁶⁴

The Hamas regime does not justify these actions with Islamist rhetoric. Rather, it deflects criticism by pointing out a multitude of similar Fatah violations (illegal arrests and torture) in the West Bank against Hamas loyalists. The Islamist group has admitted on occasion that the ongoing civil war is regrettable, but is quick to allege Fatah collaboration with the reviled Israelis and Americans.⁶⁵

The Muslim Brotherhood, for its part, has largely remained silent regarding Hamas’s continued violation of human rights in Gaza and its reflection on the wider Muslim Brotherhood movement. According to a high-ranking member of one of the Egyptian opposition parties, the Brotherhood has instead elected to pay lip service on the need for Palestinian unity, stress the importance of Egyptian government efforts to bring Hamas and Fatah together, and focus on Israeli policies that have had a deleterious impact on Gaza’s civilian population.⁶⁶ Indeed, while the Brotherhood remained silent during two years of misrule in Gaza, the organization’s leader, Mohammed Mahdi Akef, called upon his supporters to launch a jihad for the

Palestinians in Gaza during Operation Cast Lead.⁶⁷ Similarly, the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR), which has been identified by the FBI as front organization for the Muslim Brotherhood in America,⁶⁸ launched a 2008 campaign to “send 20,000 letters to Congress advocating an end to Israel’s blockade of the Gaza Strip,” but has remained silent on the issue of Hamas’s misrule in the beleaguered territory.⁶⁹ Thus, if any Muslim Brotherhood leaders or associated organizations have confronted Hamas over the group’s governance in Gaza, they appear to have done so beneath the radar.

While the Brotherhood’s silence prevails, there have been fleeting attempts to apologize for Hamas’s misconduct. In one article that appeared on the Brotherhood’s website, for example, Hamas is described as an “exceptional case” because it “doesn’t govern an actual state.” Moreover, the website claims that it “should not be treated as representative of political Islam, since it remains a violent group that hasn’t yet renounced terrorism.”⁷⁰ Hamas has reinforced the dangers associated with Muslim Brotherhood governance, namely the admixture of Islamism, political violence, and authoritarian rule. Whether this impacts deleteriously the Brotherhood’s Western outreach or long-standing popularity on the Arab street is yet to be seen.

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Dawa and the Islamist Revival in the West

By Nina Wiedl

DAWA MEANS “INVITATION” OR “CALL TO ISLAM.” IT IS OFTEN TRANSLATED to mean “Islamic Mission,” although, both in theory and in practice, dawa is different in its aims and methods from, for example, the contemporary Christian comprehension of a religious mission. Many Islamic thinkers strongly emphasize this difference.¹ Especially for those thinkers that adhere to the broad-based salafist ideology typical of the Muslim Brotherhood and related revivalist groups, dawa isn’t simply a method for spreading a spiritual teaching or performing charitable works; it is also an inherently political activity, whose principal aim is Islamic reform and revival leading to the eventual establishment of an Islamic state.

Dawa is prescribed in the Quran as an obligation of all Muslims. Some Quranic verses describe dawa as a form of religious proselytization. For instance, *Surat an-Nahl*, verse 125 enjoins Muslims to, “Invite (all) to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them [non-Muslims] in ways that are best...”² Other verses concerning dawa, frequently cited by religious scholars, emphasize dawa’s role in preserving and strengthening the socio-moral character of the Muslim community and its general adherence to sharia law. *Surat al-Imran*, verses 104 and 110, speak of the Muslim communal duty (*fard kifaya*) to call the whole of mankind to Islam, and to enjoin right and forbid wrong.³

In addition to these verses, many Islamic thinkers also derive the obligation to engage in dawa from *Surat al-Baqara*, verse 143: “Thus, have We made of you an umma justly balanced, that ye might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves.” According to a common interpretation, this Sura indicates that

witnessing for and propagating Islam is the primary reason why the original Muslim umma was created. Insofar as this positive duty to spread and implement Islam through dawa has also been understood by Muslims as an obligation to enlarge the umma—or what modern revivalists call the “Muslim Nation”—dawa is also an inherently political activity for Salafis. This is because the latter define Islam as a comprehensive system, regulating not only the private sphere and the relations between a believer and God, but also the public sphere and politics. For instance, Hassan al-Banna (1906-1949), the famous *da'i* (performer of dawa) and founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, stated very clearly that the Brotherhood’s dawa is more than a religious activity—in the Christian comprehension of the term—and inherently political:

We summon you to Islam, the teachings of Islam, the laws of Islam and the guidance of Islam, and if this smacks of ‘politics’ in your eyes, than this is our ‘policy’! And if the one summoning upon you to these principles is a ‘politician,’ than we are the most respectable of men, Allah be praised in ‘politics.’⁴

Since its emergence in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, the worldwide salafist movement has laid particular stress on dawa’s political dimensions. For example, the dawa concepts and theories that were pioneered by Hasan al-Banna and of Abul ala al-Mawdudi (1903-1979), the creator of the Indo-Pakistani revivalist movement Jamaat-e-Islami, both emphasized the importance of reforming the socio-moral character of Muslim communities. The principal aim of this outreach was to bring about the reversal of what they saw as Islam’s decline in the modern era, and to prepare the way, through the systematic propagation of Islamist ideology to an ever-wider audience, for the ultimate establishment of an Islamic state.

Needless to say, the dawa activities of these modern revivalist movements often met with stiff resistance when they contravened the political authorities in their homelands. This was especially the case for activists of the Muslim Brotherhood, who were severely suppressed by secularist Arab rulers. From the mid 1950s and through the 1960s, many senior members of the Brotherhood were forced to leave their homelands because of government crackdowns on their movement.⁵ Numerous activists found refuge in Muslim states sympathetic to their cause, while still others fled for Europe and, later, to North America.

Settling down in exile in the West, these Brotherhood leaders and other activists soon established an array of institutions that became headquarters for their multifaceted dawa activities throughout the Muslim world.⁶ Early on, these institutions primarily focused on Islamist struggles in their respective homelands; the notion of conducting dawa in Europe itself—a land that, despite providing safe haven for these

Muslims, was still considered by many (though not all) classical Islamic thinkers from the classical Islamic perspective as an un-Islamic land of war (*dar al-harb*)—was farthest from their agendas.⁷ Yet for a number of reasons, within less than a generation’s time, *dawa* in Europe soon became one of their central occupations.

The large majority of Muslim migrants to Europe did not originally go there for the purpose of conducting *dawa*. Rather, they arrived mainly as migrant laborers or *Gastarbeiter* (“guest workers”) seeking new opportunities. Some even fled their former homelands, as Gerholm and Lithman note, “because they themselves fear[ed] the consequences of the Islamic resurgence” that was, among other things, being spearheaded by salafi revivalist movements.⁸ But as it became increasingly apparent that Europe’s growing Muslim populations were there to stay, Islamist thinkers began to worry that these populations would drift away from Islam and be assimilated to European culture. “We are desperately looking for an answer,” said Khurram Murad, the Europe-based Jamaat activist, in 1986, “to ensure that our children grow up and remain Muslims.”⁹ Early on, this made the preservation of Islam among Europe’s Muslim populations a primary focus of revivalist *dawa*.

Subsequently, Islamist thinkers began to invest Islam’s growing presence in the West with divine significance. Among other things, some began to interpret the Muslim migration to Europe (and to a lesser, but still significant extent, to North America) as a modern *hijra*, or migration, that was ordained by Allah in order “to plant Islam in this part of the world.”¹⁰ What’s more, many of the scholar-activists involved with these institutions realized that Europe’s free and open democracies provided a more fertile environment for *dawa* than their former homelands. European law guarantees a greater degree of freedom of conscience, expression and religion for Islamists than many Muslim states, and these freedoms quickly became understood as preconditions for successful *dawa* work.¹¹

Yet just as the Muslim settlement in Europe opened up new opportunities for *dawa*, it also presented a range of new challenges for salafist revivalism and for Islamic thought as a whole. Historically, Muslim religious scholars argued that Muslims should not live under non-Muslim rule.¹² In classical literature, even temporary residency outside of *dar al-Islam*, or the abode of Islam, was described as impermissible according to Islamic law. This is based on, among other texts, a *hadith* which says: “It is a duty for him [the Muslim] not to go to the land of the *kufir* [*dar al-kufir*; abode of unbelief], because of the words [of the prophet], peace will be upon him: Islam is superior to everything and if a Muslim will go to land of the *kufir* his word will be inferior.”¹³ Other scholars traditionally permitted temporary residence outside of *dar al-Islam* only temporarily—i.e., for traders, for those who were still able to live according to their religious laws,¹⁴ or for those who did not possess the means to emigrate back to Muslim-ruled lands.¹⁵ Also some contemporary Muslim jurists,

working from within the traditional framework of Islamic law, argue that settlement in the West is justified only insofar as it serves the larger purpose of *dawa*. As but one contemporary example, Muzammil Siddiqi of the Fiqh Council of North America argues that Muslim presence in non-Muslim countries is only justified in qualified cases, such as for the purposes of tourism, diplomatic missions, trade and study purposes—and for the purposes of *dawa*.¹⁶ Ismail R. Faruqi further argues that the only religiously permissible reason for a Muslim to assume permanent residence in Europe, or outside *dar al-Islam*, is if that person becomes a *dai*, or a one who performs *dawa*.¹⁷

In addition to these intellectual and juristic challenges, *dawa* in the West was also beset with problems of a more practical nature. Among other things, simply transferring older *dawa* strategies—including those developed, for example, by Hassan al-Banna for use in Egypt and elsewhere in Arabia, or by Mawdudi for India and later, for Pakistan—to this new, Western environment had little prospect of success. That's because the laws and institutions governing Europe's liberal societies were too different from those in the Muslim world, as were the values and norms of the native people and the options for spreading the "call to Islam." The enormous diversity of Europe's Muslim populations also posed practical challenges. Considering their countries of origin, ethnicity, languages, traditions, and religious and political affiliations, as well as different levels of secularization and westernization, Europe's Muslim populations can hardly be described as a homogeneous group or "community." Today, the Muslim population in Europe is estimated to be at least 15 million, and a growing number of them are native born.¹⁸

As a consequence of these and other realities and challenges, salafist scholars and activists were forced to dramatically reassess their previous ways of thinking about conducting *dawa*. They began to develop a range of new strategies, a new language, and new methods for reaching out to both Europe's Muslim as well as its non-Muslim audiences. These thinkers effectively extended the ideology and methods of salafism, which was originally developed for the purpose of transforming Islam within Muslim societies, and applied it to the novel tasks and challenges of introducing Islam into a non-Muslim environment. The result was a culturally unique form of "European *dawa*."¹⁹

This article examines how *dawa* has come to be understood in modern European Islamic thought by looking at the theories of European *dawa* in the works of three scholars of the reformist-salafist ideological stream. The first of these scholars, Khurram Murad (1932-1996), had been a leading member of the *Jamaat-e-Islami* and a former president of the Islamic Foundation in Leicester, UK. The second scholar, Yusuf al-Qaradawi (born 1926), one of the best-known Muslim scholars in the world, is regarded to be "the most influential *da'i* in the history of the Muslim Brothers,"²⁰ and

the founder and spiritual guide of several Islamic institutions in Europe, including the European Council of Fatwa and Research. The third scholar is Tariq Ramadan (born 1962), a native European, a professor of Islamic Studies and grandson of the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan al-Banna. Ramadan may be regarded as the primary developer of a uniquely European concept of Islamic dawa.

Settling the Western Frontier

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT EARLY SHAPERS OF THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF DAWA in the West was the Indo-Pakistani thinker Khurram Murad. A disciple of Mawdudi, Murad emigrated from India to Pakistan in 1948, and was then appointed leader of the Jamaat's youth organization, Jamaat Tula, which was immensely active in the field of dawa. In 1978, Murad was appointed head of the Islamic Foundation in Leicester, Great Britain,²¹ and it was during his time in Leicester that he published his most important publications on European dawa. These include the booklets *Islamic Movement: Reflection on Some Issues* (1981), *Dawah Among Non-Muslims in the West* (1986), and *Muslim Youth in the West: Towards a New Education Strategy* (1986).²²

Unlike traditional religious scholars who argued that Islamic law in general disapproves Muslim settlement under non-Muslim rule, Murad believed that the Muslim presence in the West was there to stay. More positively, he unconditionally accepted the existence of Muslim communities in Europe and developed methods by which they could flourish and expand. He argued that dawa in the West should be conducted for two primary reasons. First, he believed that spreading Islam within non-Muslim lands was a religious obligation for all Muslims and the "primary duty [of the umma] to our [non-Muslim] neighbours."²³ Second, he argued that dawa in the West was vitally necessary as it was the only way to ensure that the Muslims who had settled in the West would retain their Islamic identity and not be absorbed into the West's non-Islamic, secular culture.

Murad recommended a two-tracked approach for preserving and expanding Islam's presence within Western societies. This approach entailed, first of all, concerted efforts at dawa and religious education (*tarbiya*) within existing Muslim communities that aimed at the creation of culturally autonomous "Muslim islands," or enclaves, in which Muslims should gain control over their neighbourhood and community institutions while remaining at the same time open to non-Muslims.²⁴ Evidently, in many cases, this activity included attempts to re-Islamize European Muslims, according to a specific understanding of "real" Islam. Secondly, unlike earlier generations of Islamists who directed their religious outreach mainly toward historically Muslim populations, Murad believed that Muslims should also openly

and proactively engage in “extra-ummaic” *dawa*, seeking to witness for Islam among non-Muslims within Europe.²⁵

Two core beliefs helped shape Murad’s pioneering thinking on *dawa* in the West. The first was his adamant belief that Islam represents the natural religion (*din al-fitra*) of all mankind, revealed to Moses and Jesus, but distorted later by Jews and Christians.²⁶ In essence, Murad believed the Islam wasn’t alien to Europe, but was a universal religion whose spread within the West was required by God. A second and connected belief underlying Murad’s *dawa* theory was the view that Muslims needed to purge their religion of the non-essential, local cultural accretions that it had acquired over time within Muslim lands in order to more effectively propagate Islam within Europe.

In proposing these beliefs, Murad was effectively extending the principles and ideas of reformist salafism, which were originally developed for the modernization of Islam within Muslim societies; he applied them to novel tasks and assorted challenges of propagating Islam in the West. In short, Murad proposed that Islam be transformed from a culturally exotic and alien religion into a religion that could become part of—and eventually spread and transform from within—European society.

One innovative aspect of Murad’s efforts to create a “European Islam,” for the purpose of spreading it through *dawa*, was his call for the rejection of violence within the West. Importantly, in rejecting violence in the West, Murad didn’t propose a radical new legal framework for relations between the Islamic world and the West. He avoided taking any clear stance on the classical division of the world into *dar al-harb* and *dar al-Islam*. Nor did he have anything to say about the view held by the Shafii and Hanafi traditions of jurisprudence that Europe, rather than be considered *dar al-harb*, might be considered *dar al-ahd* or *dar al-sulh* because of its peace contract (*sulh*) and agreements (*ahd*) with Muslim lands.

While he didn’t dramatically revise these classical legal conceptions, Murad clearly sought to distinguish his teachings on *dawa* from those who argued that military jihad was a legitimate way of spreading Islam into new areas of the world.²⁷ This represented an innovation from within the salafi-revivalist ideological stream. For instance, both Banna and Mawdudi, while primarily concerned with spreading Islam within their Muslim homelands, never rejected the concept of armed struggle for the propagation of Islam within the West.²⁸ Murad, however, believed that *dawa* was the only suitable means for the spread of Islam in non-Muslim lands,²⁹ and that rejecting violent jihad within the West was a precondition for successful long-range *dawa* in Europe.³⁰ This rejection was crucial and religiously warranted, because it allowed the Islamic movement to concentrate its attentions fully on fulfilling the duty of *dawa*, rather than postponing the duty of *dawa* to the masses until after a successful military conquest (as was often traditionally the case). Moreover, this rejection

of violence in the West may be considered truer to Islamic faith and principles, as it didn't needlessly reduce the obligation to spread Islam to the traditional principle of *al-dawa qabla al-qital* (invitation to Islam before the fight)—the short appeal to an enemy to embrace Islam, to become a dhimmi and pay the *jizya*, or face a battle.³¹

Taken together, Murad's efforts to transform Islam came to be reflected practically in the pragmatic and flexible approach toward *dawa* that he proposed. He called, for example, for the establishment of so-called "home-movements," recognizing that "problems [for conducting *dawa*] vary from situation to situation and from country to country," and that each of these unique contexts "may pose a very different challenge; each may require a different approach."³² Murad himself did not develop country-specific approaches for *dawa*, as he believed this task was best left to locals. He also stressed the role of converts in these movements, convinced that they could be effective messengers of Allah to their own people in their own language, an opinion he supports by quoting *Surat Ibrahim*, verse 4: "And we never sent a messenger except with the language of his folk, that he might make [the message] clear for them."

Another important aspect of Murad's practical *dawa* was the recognition that Europe is a primarily secular society, and that Muslims should not argue with Europeans on a purely religious basis, trying to prove the advantages of Islam over Christianity.³³ He similarly states that since Europe is a primarily secular society, *dawa* should seek to call non-Muslims to Islam not by focusing exclusively on religious matters, but by offering Islamic perspectives on social and political topics like unemployment, nuclear weapons, imperialism and the environment.³⁴

Murad was also one of the first *dawa* theorists to articulate the idea that successfully converting others to Islam requires, on the part of Muslims, a change of attitude towards people of other religions. This marked a shift away from the practice of other Islamist revivalists such as Mawdudi, who frequently characterized non-Muslims as *kufir*, or infidels.³⁵ Of course, some Western-based Muslims continue to call non-Muslims by this term today, and this rhetoric is often combined with demands for isolation and a hostile attitude towards Westerners. Murad, on the other hand, argued that using the term *kufir*, as well as other polemics and hostilities, was counterproductive for *dawa*. In this same vein, he also sought to develop psychological methods to reduce overt hostilities between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Murad's view of non-Muslims represents a clear departure from the black-and-white division into Muslims and infidel enemies. As he wrote, there "is no justification for ... looking at the world as if it were divided into two hostile camps, kafir (unbeliever) and Muslim, where every kafir is an enemy of Muslims." Murad supports this statement by quoting *Surat al-Mumtahina*, verse 74. This *sura*, Murad declares, "differentiates between those hostile to Islam and those who simply do not believe."

He claims, apologetically, that he does not try to alter the concept of *kufr* (unbelief) itself, but that a person can only be addressed as *kafir*, if he was informed about Islam, rejected it, and proved to be an open enemy of Muslims; “Kafirs are today not really Kafirs, who have heard the truth and who have rejected it after having known it, who have deliberately embarked upon a policy of hostility toward Islam.” As these three conditions are only fulfilled in specific cases, Murad recommends not addressing Europeans as *kuffar* in general: “We should ponder how Allah’s messengers handled their world ... they never addressed them as “Kafirs” unless the *Kufr* was demonstrated to be entrenched and deliberate.”³⁶

Here Murad uses a method of argumentation which is typical of reformists in the salafist tradition. He tries to support changes in the common comprehension of the term *kuffar* by referring to the beginnings of Islam, claiming his interpretation to be closer to that of the “real” Islam of the early generations of Muslims than is the contemporary one. Although Mawdudi used to designate non-Muslims in his texts in general as *kuffar* (plural of *kafir*), Murad’s reasoning is based on Mawdudi. Mawdudi also wrote in one of his texts that the Arabic word *kufr* is rooted in the verb *ka-fara*, which means to cover or to conceal, and a *kafir* (concealer) is a man who decides to deny Allah. We see here also the element of a deliberate denial against better judgement as a precondition for becoming a *kafir*.³⁷

Murad also advised Muslims engaged in *dawa* in the West to avoid terminology that might evoke negative associations with Islam. He recommends instead that Muslims use a new language, developed especially for *dawa* to non-Muslims in Europe, and that they strive to create a cordial environment within Europe between Muslims and non-Muslims, one that would be most amenable to Islam’s propagation. For example, as he writes, the very “language of “Islamic state” may not be a suitable language for a Western society; instead a Just World Order based on surrender to the one God and obedience to His Messengers, is likely to evoke a more favourable response. [Campaigning against] drinking may not strike a sympathetic chord, [campaigning against] drugs may.”

It is clear that many of the techniques that Murad proposes to facilitate Islam’s propagation in the West—for example, changes in the use of language—are not accompanied by any genuine modification of classical or revivalist Islamic concepts. Hence, in Murad’s thought, the recommendation to create a new language for the purposes of *dawa* in the West may be regarded a means for deliberately obscuring that *dawa*’s true intentions. Indeed, throughout his work, Murad never challenged the classic revivalist concept of an Islamic state, nor did he argue for any substantial revisions of the classical understandings of Islamic law. As such, Murad may be regarded as one of the first European Muslim thinkers who openly encouraged doublespeak as a way of facilitating Islam’s spread in the West.

A New Interpretation of Sharia for Europe's Muslims

IN THE 1990S, SHAYKH YUSUF AL-QARADAWI, THE PROMINENT SPIRITUAL LEADER of the Muslim Brotherhood, dramatically re-envisioned the strategy of the worldwide Islamist revivalist movement, and in the process, offered a bold new vision for Islamic dawa in Western countries. Until recently, Qaradawi has been very active implementing that vision and establishing a basis for the international Muslim Brotherhood and associated movements in Europe (he has been banned from entering the U.S. since 1999).

In 1997, Qaradawi founded the European Center for Fatwa and Research (ECFR) in Dublin,³⁸ a council of mainly non-European Sunni scholars, presided over by Qaradawi, which seeks to develop a European interpretation of Islamic law from within the classical framework of Islamic jurisprudence. This may also be critically understood as an attempt by Islamists to introduce their understanding of the sharia as the dominant law in inter-Muslim relations and personal affairs for European Muslim populations and to unite them under the authority of the ulama of a specific Islamic movement. European Muslims can read ECFR fatwas and articles on European Islam in Arabic and English on its website www.e-cfr.org.³⁹ Qaradawi is also one of the founders of the transnational Islamic website IslamOnline.⁴⁰ This site contains a special section for European Muslims, and since 1997 has regularly published fatwas for Muslims in Europe, as well as articles in Arabic and English that deal with the subject of European Islam.

Qaradawi has been critical of the classical Muslim division of the world into *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-harb* and the connected view that Muslim settlement outside of *dar al-Islam* is undesirable or impermissible.⁴¹ Instead, he divides the world into three categories: *dar al-harb*, *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-ahd*, or a land of truce. Most European countries (except Serbia) are defined by Qaradawi today as *dar al-ahd*, due to their diplomatic and other connections with Muslim countries. This means, among other things, that Muslims have to respect European laws as long as they do not conflict with the fundamental principles of Islamic law.⁴²

For Qaradawi, Muslim settlement in the West isn't simply religiously permissible. It is, he argues, a religious necessity and an obligation for the worldwide Islamic revival movement. The Muslim presence in the West is necessary because it enables the conduct of dawa, which in Qaradawi's view serves multiple purposes—from proselytization to Europeans, to creating Islamic enclaves and an Islamic environment for Muslim immigrants and European converts, to influencing the social and political climate

towards Islam and the Muslim Nation (umma) within Western societies.⁴³ Moreover, he claims that “persuading the West of the necessity of the emergence of Islam as a guiding and leading force” will eventually mean that Western governments will bring pressure to bear on Muslim rulers to adopt more lenient policies toward the Islamic Movement in their own countries. In Qaradawi’s eyes, this will “certainly be a great benefit” for the global Islamic movement.⁴⁴

Qaradawi ultimately believes that Islam will be established as the dominant religious and political force in Europe through *dawa*. As he has written, “Islam will return to Europe as a conqueror and victor after being expelled from it twice ... the conquest this time will not be by the sword but by preaching and ideology.”⁴⁵ Like Murad, he rejects offensive jihad as a legitimate method for the establishment of Islam in Europe. He also criticizes the claims of more radical Islamists like Said Qutb and Mawdudi that the “verse of the sword” has abrogated more than a hundred more pacific Quranic verses, that Muslims are ordered to fight the unbelievers if they are able to do so, and that this fight serves to spread Islam.⁴⁶ A critic of the concept of *naskh* (abrogation), Qaradawi claims that previous verses were not cancelled but rather further clarified by later ones and each verse has to be understood in its specific context.⁴⁷

In contrast to Murad, Qaradawi’s rejection of jihad in Europe is neither permanent nor unconditional. In fact, he limits his rejection of jihad to present circumstances. As he argues, because Muslims who reside in the West presently have the freedom to conduct *dawa* and are able to spread Islam peacefully, because they still “depend on others [non-Muslims] for military power,”⁴⁸ and also because what he describes as the “compulsory defensive jihad” in lands like Palestine is not fulfilled yet, then offensive jihad to spread Islam is currently not an option. Further to this, in his workplan for the Islamic movement, written in 1992, he claims that a discussion of this question of offensive jihad by religious scholars is not necessary at the present time, because offensive jihad is neither practicable nor necessary.⁴⁹ (In his recently published book *Fiqh al-Jihad*, Qaradawi’s pronouncements become more concrete, and he claims that there is no obligation for Muslims to attack non-Muslim lands in order to spread Islam. He further claims that jihad does not necessarily mean fighting and that it can be performed also by peaceful means, such as charitable work or *dawa*).⁵⁰

Qaradawi describes his particular teaching on Islamic revival and reform as *wasatiyya*, or as the “middle way.” This ideological stream originally emerged among Egypt’s so-called “New Islamists” in the 1990s. It is deeply rooted in the reformist salafism of Hassan al-Banna, and it requires that the sharia must be applied in all spheres of human life, from one’s personal behavior to politics. Since the full application of sharia is difficult, if not impossible, under contemporary circumstances

both in Muslim societies and in the West, this ideological stream holds that it is necessary for Muslims to discover religiously legitimate and pragmatic means of adapting to contemporary realities for the purpose of gradually reforming them according to salafist understandings of Islamic law.

At the core of Qaradawi's flexible and pragmatic approach is the concept of *ijtihad*, or independent legal reasoning. He frequently advocates renewal and an "opening of the doors of *ijtihad*." He claims that *ijtihad* is always subject to development and changes according to altered conditions and factors; hence fatwas must accommodate time and place, customs and conditions. He also states that Muslims in Europe need less restrictive rulings. If different rulings respond to the same questions, he goes on to say, Muslims are permitted to choose the less restrictive.⁵¹

In Qaradawi's work, the principal instrument for exercising *ijtihad* and discovering religiously legitimate means for living within Western societies is a new method of interpreting Islamic law called "*fiqh al-aqalliyat*," or jurisprudence for Muslim minorities.⁵² This theory of jurisprudence encourages the use of *ijtihad* according to classical principles such as *maslaha* (common interest) and *darura* (necessity or hardship). This, in turn, makes possible legal reasoning that supports greater leniency in interpreting the sharia for Muslims in non-Muslim lands compared with what is required of their co-religionists in Muslim lands.⁵³ Among other things, *fiqh al-aqalliyat* tries to resolve conflicts that inevitably arise between, on the one hand, Islamic law and the culture, and on the other, the laws and cultures of Muslims' western host countries. It furthermore applies to conflicts between the needs of the Islamic movement and its dawa work, and the classical interpretation of Islamic law.

The *fiqh al-aqalliyat* is based on two conceptual premises. The first is the territorial principle that "Islam is a global religion" (*alammīyyat al-Islam*), which holds that Islam rightfully belongs in Europe, and which is subsequently used by jurists to justify the permanent settlement of Muslims in non-Muslim lands. The second principle is that of "the objectives of Islamic law" (*maqasid al-sharia*), which allows the interpretation of sharia to serve the well-being and prosperity of Muslim communities within Europe and the interests of Islam and the Muslim Nation in general.⁵⁴

The legal methodology of the *fiqh al-aqalliyat* remains within the broader framework of classical jurisprudence, which relies on the Quran, Sunna, *qiyas* (analogy) and *ijma* (consensus). Yet the ECFR additionally encourages the use of juristic devices that allow legal leniencies, so that Muslim communities in non-Muslim lands are able to develop and influence the societies in which they live and engage in dawa to non-Muslims. These devices are *maslaha* (public interest) and *maslaha mursala* (public interest not based on divine text), *darura*, *taysir* (making *fiqh* easy) and *urf* (custom). *Fiqh al-aqalliyat* represents a reassessment and elevation of these devices of traditional Islamic jurisprudence for the purposes of propagating a new understanding of Islam that

addresses the novel, and expressly modern circumstances of Muslims residing in non-Islamic lands.

In this and other respects, *fiqh al-aqalliyat* is clearly an outgrowth of the reformist-salafist teachings of Muhammad Abduh (d. 1905), Rashid Rida (d. 1935) and the Egyptian jurist Abd al-Wahhab Khallaf (d. 1956)—all thinkers who sought the tools of traditional jurisprudence to discover Islamic ways to meet the various challenges of modern life.⁵⁵ For contemporary Islamic thinkers, the crucial question is not about the legitimacy of these devices; most, in fact, accept them as legitimate, and they have been used throughout Islamic history to various degrees.⁵⁶ The crucial question for the present day is the extent to which these devices may be used in *ijtihād*, as well as how far each of these devices can prevail over the four traditional judicial sources, or whether they might be used to overrule legal decisions that are commonly regarded as binding for all Muslims.

Qaradawi employs these tools insofar as they serve the purpose of facilitating Islam's settlement and spread in the West. One example of the application of the *fiqh al-aqalliyat* for the purposes of European *dawa* is the decision by the ECFR that a female convert to Islam does not automatically have to divorce her non-Muslim husband, as classical Islamic law demands.⁵⁷ This ruling seeks to serve the larger interest "not to frighten women who wish to embrace Islam."⁵⁸ This represents a case of *maslaha* (the public interest), because the goal of winning more female converts prevails over traditional law that prohibits a marriage between a Muslim woman and a non-Muslim man.⁵⁹ Ahmad al-Rawi, former president of the Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe (FIOE), also calls this decision an example of European custom (*urf*), and not universally applicable, because "the fatwa is possible only in the West, where the woman is respected, and this is crucial." Alexandre Caeiro, scholar of European Islam, adds that the ruling is also faithful to the principle of *taysir*, or making law easy for Muslims in the West.⁶⁰

This juristic reasoning clears the way for new methods of *dawa* and dialogue and for influencing the society from within. Using all forms of media for *dawa* purposes had already been encouraged by Banna,⁶¹ but Qaradawi additionally encourages Muslims to study and strive for important positions in media, the arts, and the human sciences and social sciences in order to influence European society from "above." He calls this process an "Islamization" of these arts.⁶² In addition to Qaradawi's call to Islamize the arts and sciences, he also attempts to Islamize the understandings of Western political concepts such as feminism, democracy and civil and human rights. For instance, in a fatwa on the status of women in Islam, he declares that Muslim women are not inferior to Muslim men, but he adds that this is based on the Islamic comprehension of equality before Allah, but not on the Western comprehension of gender equality.⁶³

Over the long-range, Qaradawi believes these diverse intellectual and media-based activities will ultimately create a pro-Islamic environment within Europe that will counter what he describes (citing a widespread stereotype) the monopolization of these areas by Jews.⁶⁴ Creating a pro-Islamic atmosphere in Europe is one of Qaradawi's top priorities: "We should seek ... to improve our image in the eyes of the West ... an image of violence, fanaticism, bloody collision with others and neglect of freedoms and human rights, particularly the rights of minorities and women."⁶⁵ In this, Qaradawi's ideas-based strategy aimed at creating a pro-Islamic environment within Europe that is supported by institutions resembles the strategy of the late Mawdudi, who also came to believe that the intra-personal approach of transforming a society through *dawa* and education will not bring the acquired results if not accompanied by a change "from above."⁶⁶

In many of his writings Qaradawi promotes what he calls the "fiqh of balances" (*fiqh al-muwazanat*) and the "fiqh of priorities" (*fiqh awlawiyyat*); both are aspects of and shape the *fiqh al-aqalliyat*. The *fiqh* of balances explains the necessity in every act of jurisprudence to balance public interest (*maslaha*) against evils (*mafsada*); the *fiqh* of priorities is, according to Qaradawi, based on the former and explains, in a nutshell, that Muslims should concentrate on the most important duties first.

The application of the *fiqh* of balances allows Qaradawi to issue fatwas that permit Muslims to participate in European society to a greater degree than classical Islamic law permits—but only under the condition that this serves the interests of the Islamic Movement. Qaradawi explains that, for example, working in a non-Islamic bank is not forbidden if the work and the knowledge gained from it substantially benefit the movement.⁶⁷ Under the same conditions he also declares that it is permissible for Muslims to publish in non-Islamic journals, to become involved in non-Islamic governmental and civic institutions, to engage in media of all kinds, and to form alliances with non-Islamic movements, parties and other groups. Taken as a whole, he calls this participation "the divine duty of the call (*dawa*)," because it makes "our word [of Islam] reach them [non-Muslims]."⁶⁸

Qaradawi's desire to improve the image of Islam, especially with regard to violence, women's rights or democracy, remains considerably proscribed by his adherence to traditional frameworks, as well as to salafist revivalist ideology. For example, in a fatwa entitled "Freedom of expression from an Islamic perspective,"⁶⁹ Qaradawi guarantees this freedom only on condition "that religion should not be toyed with;" freedom "to such extent that it commands Muslims to struggle and fight in (the) cause (of Islam)." In other words, freedom of expression is valid only within the framework of the *sharia*, and reinterpreted in the context of a duty to struggle for Islam. Here, Qaradawi follows the opinion of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, which issued the "Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam" in 1990. Article

22 subordinates freedom of expression to sharia law, and the duty of “enjoining right and forbidding wrong.” It states, “Everyone shall have the right to advocate what is right, and propagate what is good, and warn against what is wrong and evil according to the norms of Islamic Shariah.”⁷⁰ Needless to say, Qaradawi’s conception of Islamic freedom remains deeply antithetical to liberal conceptions of freedom—a fact that suggests that his dawa will likely continue to be a source of cultural and political friction within the West.

The Invention of “Euro-Islam”

THE CONCEPT OF EUROPEAN DAWA HAS BEEN FURTHER REFINED BY TARIQ Ramadan, the well-known Swiss intellectual and activist. Born in Geneva, Switzerland in 1962, Ramadan is the maternal grandson of Hassan al-Banna. He has described himself as an adherent of reformist salafist ideology, and professes to follow the pan-Islamist ideology of Said al-Din al-Afghani (d. 1897) and Muhammad Abduh (d. 1905), the founders of Islamic modernism.⁷¹ Ramadan remains faithful to the classical methodology of interpreting Islamic scripture, and throughout his work, he attempts to find ways of reconciling Islam and modernity. He claims to reject literalist interpretations of the Quran, and calls for taking into consideration the historical circumstances of a specific revelation. At the same time, he also rejects the rational and critical hermeneutic approach to the Quran that is utilized by today’s liberal reformers; Ramadan argues that this approach plays too loosely with the core principles of Islam.⁷² In 2003 in a radio interview, Ramadan made clear his adherence to the salafist teachings: “There is a rationalist Reformism and the Salafist school, in the sense that the Salafist tries to remain faithful to the basic principles. I belong to the latter; that is to say, there is a certain number of principles that are for me, fundamental, and that, as a Muslim, I refuse to betray.”⁷³

The central focus of Ramadan’s work is the development of what he describes as a culturally unique “Euro-Islam.”⁷⁴ To successfully conduct dawa in Europe, Ramadan promotes the “Europeanization of Islam,” which he defines (somewhat self-referentially) as “a new culture that fits in my new environment while respecting my religious values.”⁷⁵ In some respects, Ramadan’s proposal represents a reversal of Qaradawi’s call to work for Europe’s “Islamization.” What is clear is that Ramadan is a native-born European, and his work as a whole contains a more positive image of European values and society than Qaradawi and the writings of Murad, who defined European society as “alien, secular and tyrannical.”⁷⁶

Rather than seeing Europe as a land of war or of truce, Ramadan embraces the idea of Europe as *dar al-dawa* or—as he prefers to call it—*dar al-shahada*. The theoretical

foundation for his concept of Europe as a space for the relatively unfettered propagation of Islam was developed in the 1980s by the Lebanese Muslim Brotherhood activist Faisal Mawlawi in a book entitled *al-Usus al-Sharia lil-Aalaqat Bayna al-Muslimin wa Ghayr al-Muslimin* (*The Sharia Foundations for the Relations Between Muslims and Non-Muslims*).⁷⁷ Based on the revivalist view that Islam is a universal religion, Mawlawi has declared that the whole of the world, with the exception of countries at war with Muslims, constitutes *dar al-dawa*, and is open to Islamic proselytization.⁷⁸

In some respects, Mawlawi's division resembles the tripartite world of *dar al-Islam*, *dar al-harb* and *dar al-ahd*, but he seeks to emphasize the missionary obligations of Muslims toward people that reside in *dar al-ahd*. Under present circumstances, Mawlawi has stated, Muslims are obliged to abide by the laws of Western states because they are considered to have entered non-Muslim lands on the basis of a contract (*aman*) between Muslim rulers and these lands.⁷⁹ This classical principle of Islamic law, which is agreed upon by all four orthodox schools of Sunni jurisprudence, permits Muslims and non-Muslims to travel to and visit each other's lands and enjoins them to respect local laws as long as the host states do not violate the contract.⁸⁰ For these reasons, this principle is often used by Muslim jurists to justify peaceful residence in the Western societies. However, this traditional concept does not take into account the fact that many Muslims in the contemporary era are no longer simply visitors to non-Islamic lands, but native-born Europeans and holders of European citizenship, possessing the same rights and duties as any other citizen.

Mawlawi describes *dawa* as one part or aspect of *jihad*, which he defines in a comprehensive way as the overall struggle to expand Islam. From this comprehensive perspective, he argues that *jihad* may not be reduced to armed struggle simply (although he does claim this is permitted in certain contexts), and further argues that armed fighting should not be pursued if circumstances allow for the peaceful spread of Islam by *dawa*. Like Qaradawi, Mawlawi also refutes the opinion of more jihadists in the Qutbist tradition that the "verse of the sword" abrogated more peaceful verses in the Quran. He argues that one has to consider that the verses of the Quran concerning fighting versus *dawa* for spreading Islam were revealed in different periods. Today, he claims, the circumstances in most Western countries resemble those of the Meccan period—a time in which Islam was propagated solely through *dawa*—and therefore *jihad* is not necessary.

In this respect, Mawlawi's concept of *dar al-dawa* provides the framework for a clearer juristic position on the question of military *jihad* than the explanation given by Qaradawi in his workplan for the Islamic Movement (*Priorities of the Islamic Movement in the Coming Phase*). However, Mawlawi's theory also remains somewhat ambiguous regarding the question of violence, because he also states that the laws of the Meccan period were revealed when Muslims were in a position of weakness; as

soon as they gained strength they were permitted and even commanded to engage in warfare in the way of Islam. He emphasizes on the one hand that periods of peace are more conducive to the spread of Islam than fighting, and that it is preferable to spread Islam by peaceful *dawa*, on the other hand he declares that fighting is permitted when the order for *jihad* is given, and even may become a duty if the message of Islam can not be spread other than by fighting against un-Islamic rulers.⁸¹

Following Mawlawi, Ramadan also argues that Muslims have to abide by European law as long as the state does not restrict *dawa* and does not force them to violate Islamic law.⁸² He further argues that when obedience to European law forces Muslims to act in a way that conflicts with Islamic law—as, for example, the French ban on the Islamic headscarf and other religious symbols in state schools—then Muslims should refrain from violent protests and choose other ways of resistance, such as democratic dialogue.⁸³

Furthermore, Ramadan has embraced Mawlawi's notions that Islam is a universal religion, and that Europe is properly understood as a land for Islamic *dawa*. At the same time, Ramadan is also wary of this language, as he worries that the very word *dawa* may “stress the missionary character of Islam” and thus, be off-putting to religious and post-religious Western audiences.⁸⁴ In fact, he is anxious that aggressive or overt proselytization in Europe might trigger fear or a backlash against Muslims, and therefore present a major obstacle for successful *dawa*.⁸⁵ For these reasons, Ramadan, like Murad before him, has sought to formulate a new language for *dawa* that is gentler and generally more amenable to European sensibilities. He describes *dawa*, above all, as “bearing witness” (*shahada*)⁸⁶ and he strives to portray Europe as *dar al-shahada*. For instance, he teaches that *duat*, or people who perform *dawa*, should concentrate on passively bearing witness and avoid undue pressure on non-Muslims if they do not initially respond to call to Islam.⁸⁷

For the time being, however, Ramadan's primary focus is on *dawa*. In keeping with the perspective of salafist reformism, Ramadan claims that Islamic tradition should be distinguished from the unchangeable essence and principles of Islam. He follows the thought of Jamal-al-din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh, and distinguishes between *ibadat* (worship, religious matters) which is clearly prescribed in Islam, and *mualamat* (social matters), which can be adapted to new social realities. According to the juristic principle of *al-ibaha al-asliyya*, or original permissiveness, he claims that Islam can adopt from foreign cultures all elements that do not contradict its essential religious principles.

On this basis, Ramadan argues that a new, culturally and politically distinct “Euro-Islam” can be consciously shaped by European Muslims in much the same way that Islam has previously adapted itself to a variety of different cultures in the past.⁸⁸ Euro-Islam includes, for Ramadan, integration with European society and the self-

consciousness of being European. European society is no longer described as “alien and tyrannical,”⁸⁹ as Murad understood it, or for that matter, the “Crusader” and “enemy,” as Qaradawi portrays it in his writings.⁹⁰ Ramadan does not see Muslim identity and European identity as mutually exclusive. He claims that today Muslims are already Europeans and calls indigenous people “just older immigrants,” thus providing a way of introducing Islam to non-Muslims as something familiar, and not a foreign, alien element. He declares it possible and desirable to be “at the same time ... totally Muslims and totally European.”⁹¹

Ramadan calls Muslims and non-Muslims “brothers in humanity”—a phrase that suggests a universal expansion of the Islamic motif of brotherhood to include non-Muslims. This recognition of the “brotherhood” of non-Muslims requires, for Ramadan, that Muslims adopt an attitude of friendliness and patience when performing *dawa* to non-Muslims. It also makes it virtually impossible to declare somebody *kafir*. For Ramadan, as for Murad, to be a *kafir* means to be informed about Islam and then to deny it. To support his call for patience in *dawa* among non-Muslims, Ramadan points out that Muhammad preached Islam to a Jew, who only said the *shahada* (and thus converted to Islam) when he was about to die.⁹²

In his apologetic writings for a non-Muslim audience, Ramadan attempts to demonstrate this reconciliation between Islamic and European values by developing a Europeanized version of Islamic concepts. This appears to be a modern interpretation of *Surat al-Imran*, verse 64, extending the meaning of “common between us and you” from the religious sphere to the realm of general values. He frequently cites, for example, the principle of “social justice” as one of these shared values between Europeans and Muslims, and argues for greater cooperation among them in pursuit of these goals.⁹³ This constitutes an important element of his theory of *dawa*, which aims to mitigate western fears of Islam, attract new converts to the faith, and improve the image of Islam in Europe. Another example is his disapproval of the idea of an Islamic state. The problematic term “Islamic state” is not meant to be paraphrased. Instead, Ramadan declares publicly that “there is no Islamic state. To imitate what was done in Medina in the 7th Century is not only a dream, it’s a lie. You can not do it now.”⁹⁴

This declaration and others like it are celebrated by some of Ramadan’s Muslim and non-Muslim followers as a radical reform, similar to the division between church and state that emerged during the European enlightenment. But Ramadan’s rejection of an Islamic state does not mean that he supports a division between state and religion, or for that matter, the liberal conception of freedom of religion. He opposes the liberal-reformist stream of Islam, which calls for a strict separation between religion and state, as primarily a product of Western colonialist thinking.⁹⁵ These statements may be understood as opposing a theocracy with all decision-making power in the hands of a religious elite, in favor of the *shura* concept of an “Islamic

democracy.” This system grants the whole population a role in the decision-making process, restricted by the framework of sharia. This model also is favored by today’s Muslim Brotherhood. But many critics claim that with the sharia as a basis, there is no place for popular sovereignty and therefore the model does not properly deserve the title of “democracy.”

By contrast, Ramadan’s definition of the sharia seems more innovative. He sees sharia as “system of values, not a political system” or as a body of law. He further adds the sharia is “not a penal code that Muslims want to implement” but rather “a global concept of creation.”⁹⁶ His call for a moratorium on literal, Quranically-prescribed *hudud* penalties (such as stoning of married adulterers and apostates) provoked heavy protests in 2005 among more conservative Muslims scholars, and his opinion was fiercely criticized in several articles on Qaradawi’s website IslamOnline.⁹⁷ While the latter scholars had previously argued, utilizing the *fiqh al-aqalliyat*, for a temporal postponement of *hudud* penalties for Muslims in the West as a way of easing them into life into the West,⁹⁸ Ramadan uses the principle of *darura* (necessity) to claim that these penalties are applied throughout the world in a way that contradicts basic Islamic principles, including justice and equality, so that their implementation also has to be rethought for Islamic countries.⁹⁹ Ramadan does not question the Quranic principle behind the penalties, as do progressive or liberal Muslim thinkers. Yet in contrast to the *fiqh al-aqalliyat*, which focuses exclusively on the circumstances of Muslim minorities, Ramadan seems to suggest (although he never explicitly claims that this is his intention) that his comparatively more liberal interpretation of Islam, developed in a European context, may have applications in the wider Islamic world.¹⁰⁰ In this way we may understand Ramadan’s vision of Euro-Islam not just as a temporal solution for Muslim minorities in the West, but as a new, universal understanding of Islam that strives to be relevant for Muslims as well as non-Muslims worldwide.

Ramadan aims at improving the image of Islam by reaching out to new target groups such as activists in feminism, civil rights, freedom of religion, and democracy. Ramadan attempts to propagate an Islamized version of Western values through his writings on women’s rights and equality, frequent topics in his texts. Islamic feminism means, for him, equality in the eyes of Allah, not gender equality, and does not contradict the values of a patriarchal society. He declares the repression of women to be un-Islamic,¹⁰¹ launches an initiative against forced marriage in Europe,¹⁰² and advocates for the education and the participation of women in the Islamic movement, declaring, “You can not establish an Islamic society only with half of the population.” Yet, in Ramadan’s view, the primary role of a woman remains that of a wife and mother, the *hijab* (headscarf) a religious obligation—though not enforceable—and female work limited to what he defines as a woman’s natural capacities of solidarity, education and culture.

Ramadan believes that *dawa* requires female participation to be successful and also to effectively neutralize the misogynistic image of Islam. He sees women as the primary defenders of the “new” Muslim woman, who defines sharia rules as female liberation. He offers the promise, that when a woman says: “Listen to me, the headscarf I wear, it’s not forced on me by my father, it’s not forced on me by my husband, it’s a requirement of my faith, and an act of my heart. I ask all of you who look at me to consider me as a human being and not simply as a body; to see that I am made for God and not for your eyes...’ Well, when a woman speaks that way, I promise you they will have an effect on great many women, for there are great many women in the West and elsewhere that suffer from having become objects.”¹⁰³ This method of promoting Islam was seen in practice in a recent German *dawa* campaign which took up the 1970s-era abortion rights slogan “My body belongs to me” and transformed it into a call for the right to wear a hijab under the slogan “My head belongs to me!” This campaign effectively sought to re-frame the headscarf controversy not as a struggle of Islam against Western secularism, but as a struggle of a female minority against the norms of an oppressive majority.

Ramadan has been among the first Islamic thinkers to intentionally reach out to leftists and self-described anti-imperialists, anti-globalists and Third-Worldist groups. He presents Islam as a spiritual complement to these leftist ideologies and emphasizes similarities between them, claiming that his concept of “Islamic Socialism” combines “religious principles with anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist politics that go back to the time of the Russian Revolution.”¹⁰⁴ So far, these ideologies have been mostly regarded as incompatible; a main component of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1918 was the division of state and Church, which was accompanied by the abolishment of religious education in schools. Yet, as in his writings about an Islamic state and sharia, Ramadan avoids discussing contradictions between the classical and the Islamic comprehensions of socialism. For example, the concept of Islamic socialism (*al-ishtirakiyya al-islamiyya*), which was exemplified in the programs of the Syrian Brotherhood during the late 1940s and 1950s, rejects non-Islamic socialism as a concept that places man over Allah.

While Ramadan tries to find common values between Islam and European political movements, at the same time he attempts to reinterpret the term *jihad*. In an apologetic attempt to improve the image of Islam against accusations that it is a religion of violence, he seeks to argue understanding of *jihad* as a liberation struggle against oppression. Yet even classical Islam defines military *jihad* as a struggle for liberation from non-Islamic rulers; a necessary means of ending oppression and preserving freedom of religion, albeit under Islamic rule.¹⁰⁵ This idea is similarly expressed in the writings of militant proponents of *jihad* like Said Qutb, who claims that fighting is necessary for the liberation of mankind from rulers who hinder

them from embracing Islam. Qutb declares that real justice and freedom of all religions can only exist in the social, economic and political system of an Islamic state under sharia law.¹⁰⁶ But while militant salafists reduce jihad to warfare with the goal of establishing Islamist rule, Ramadan claims to adhere to a more genuine and comprehensive understanding of jihad, which holds that Islam's expansion can also be achieved under certain circumstances through non-violent means such as dawa. Furthermore, Ramadan never explicitly claims that liberation from oppression has to ultimately end with creation of an Islamist order. The language he chooses deliberately allows for two readings, both Islamist and humanistic/universal. As he writes, "This jihad is a jihad for life in order to preserve for every human being the rights granted for him/her by the Creator," which, according to classical understandings of Islam, includes only the Islamic version of human rights. He quotes *Surat al-Hajj*, verse 40, as proof that jihad struggles to defend the rights of every religion. He fails to mention, however, that this *Sura* is interpreted from a classical Islamic perspective to mean that the preservation of human rights, and the principle of coexistence, can only be achieved through properly Islamic rule.¹⁰⁷

Conclusion

IN THE COURSE OF THE LAST THIRTY YEARS, MUSLIM THINKERS IN THE REFORMIST tradition of salafism have developed sophisticated theories for dawa within Europe and the West as a whole that differ considerably from traditional revivalist concepts. The earliest motivation for this development was the concern that Muslims who settled in Europe would be assimilated into European culture. Soon, however, this concern with preserving the Islamic identity of Muslims in the West gave way to even larger ambitions.

In the 1980s, pioneering dawa theorists such as Khuram Murad and others adapted the language and topics of dawa to a non-Muslim society. Terms like "Islamic state" were de-emphasized and new topics, such as the Islamic perspective on social and environmental justice, were introduced as a way of attracting a largely secular audience. Dawa were advised to appeal to values like equality and justice rather than to promote forms of Islam, to avoid hostilities and the pejorative term *kaffar*, and to invite individuals to visit Muslim families and witness the benefits of an Islamic lifestyle.

Murad's theory may be regarded as the first step towards a genuine and unique form of European dawa, because it was developed out of the interests of European Muslims, and is based on a careful and detailed analysis of the circumstances of Muslims and non-Muslims in Europe. Many of his ideas were integrated and refined in later theories. Yet Murad fails to support his theories with a new interpretation of

Islamic law, and his *dawa* reveals inconsistencies between words and intentions. Murad rejected *jihad*, yet never explained how in Europe, where constitutions oblige every state to defend the democratic fundamental order, an Islamic state based on *sharia* law could be established without violence. He advocated Muslim settlement in Europe but failed to provide a clear definition of Europe's status in terms of Islamic law.

In the 1990s Qaradawi introduced the *fiqh al-aqalliyat*, a new and more lenient method of method for interpreting Islamic law designed specifically for facilitating Muslim settlement, *dawa*, and the establishment of Islam within the West. This *fiqh* still adheres to classical methodology, but facilitates *dawa* work by giving legal support to methods of *dawa* that traditional Islamic law rejects—under the condition that such methods contribute to the spread of Islam in Europe. Qaradawi does not provide a genuinely European perspective. His more lenient interpretation of Islamic law is promoted only as an exceptional temporal jurisprudence for Muslim minorities outside *dar al-Islam*. What he considers acceptable for Muslims in Europe is acceptable neither for Muslims in Islamic lands, nor for future Muslim communities in Europe, nor even for a potential Islamic state in Europe once the leniencies are no longer required. Most people who praise Qaradawi's liberalism do not recognize that he defines Muslims in Europe not as European Muslims but as “expatriates” who live under special conditions of weakness and hardship.¹⁰⁸ The rules he developed for Europe should not, therefore, be understood as a liberalization of Islam in general, nor as an attempt to develop an independent European Islamic law with permanent validity.

While Qaradawi calls for an “Islamization of Europe,” Tariq Ramadan—aware of the negative impression of this wording—calls instead for an “Europeanization of Islam.” His definition of Europe as *dar al-shahada* stresses the importance of *dawa*, but defines *dawa* as gentler, more passive form of witnessing. He is anxious not to evoke the impression that Muslims came to Europe in order to convert natives to a foreign culture and religion, and his *dawa* theory does not call on Muslims to persuade people to convert to Islam. His understanding of *dawa* is more comprehensive than Murad's or Qaradawi's: it amounts to the propagation of a new form of “Euro-Islam,” which is defined by Ramadan as already being part of Europe, rather than being alien to it. His attempts to reconcile Islamic and European values in some cases essentially lead to an Islamization of European values, for instance when he tries to define the *hijab* as an expression of female liberation. In other cases he introduces new ideas, such as defining the *sharia* as a set of values rather than a code of law. In this respect, Ramadan offers one of the first attempts to develop an independent form of European Islam.

As we have seen, Islamic theories of *dawa* in the West have undergone a process of adaptation to the European environment, such that “Islam in Europe” is

developing towards a more genuine form of “Euro-Islam.” Of course, this has not been true of all streams of Islam and their respective forms of practical dawa, but it indicates a general tendency. What is clear is that “European dawa”—and by extension, “European Islam” as a whole—is still very much a work in progress.

NOTES

1. Most Islamic thinkers stress that while Christian mission - in their opinion - actively aims to convert nonbelievers, a *da'i* (Islamic ‘missionary’ or propagandist of Islam) is only obliged to fulfill the religious duty of delivering the message, while the conversion itself is regarded to lie only ‘in the hands of Allah’ (based, among others on Surat al-Baqara (82), verse 272 and Surat Yunus (19), verse 99-100). See for example: Samir Mourad, *Einladung von Nichtmuslimen zum Islam* (Karlsruhe: Muslimischer Studentenverein Karlsruhe e.V., 2000). See also: Abdul Adhim Kamouss (a German preacher and *da'i*) in: “Werkstattgespräch “Da’wa in Deutschland,” audio-recording of a discussion between scholars and *du'at* (plural of *da'i*) at the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Berlin, October, 30, 2007. http://www.zmo.de/muslime_in_europa/pressekit/dawa_audio.html.
2. In modern times, this Quranic verse and the ones that follow it have become the most commonly cited Quranic exhortations for dawa, as Sura 16:125 and the verses that follow put the gentlest face on the whole idea. See: Paul E. Walker, “Dawah. Quranic Concepts,” in *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Modern Islamic World*, edited by John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 345. All translations of the Quran, unless otherwise noted, according to Yusuf Ali in: “Translations of the Quran,” <http://www.usc.edu/schools/college/crcc/engagement/resources/texts/muslim/quran/>, University of Southern California.
3. The second part of the verse relates to the Islamic principle of *al-amr bi'l m'aruf wa'l nahy 'an al-munkar* (enjoining right and forbidding wrong). It describes the religious duty of the umma, or the state, to call Muslims, and in a wider sense all mankind, to a life according to the rules of sharia and the values of Islam. This can happen, according to Islamic scholars, either by force or in a more gentle way by words and dawa. Modern scholars describe both principles, dawa and ‘enjoining right,’ as closely related or equal (Ali Ezzati, *The Spread of Islam. The Contributing Factors* (London: Islamic College for Advanced Studies Press, 2002), p. 72. Paul E. Walker, “Dawah. Quranic Concepts,” p. 344. Egdunas Raciun, “The Multiple Nature of the Islamic *Dawa*” (PhD diss., University of Helsinki, 2004), p. 38). Khurram Murad distinguishes between dawa, “enjoining right” and jihad as three different methods of witnessing Islam (Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi, *Witnesses unto Mankind*, edited and translated by Khurram Murad (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1986), p. 61 (note no. 6 by Murad)).
4. Hasan al-Banna , *Five Tracts of Hasan al-Bann (1906-1949)*, translated by C. Wendell (Berkeley and Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1978), p. 75. It should be noted that not all salafist movements propagate a political dawa, some concentrate on aspects of personal piety and the implementation of ‘correct’ Islamic practices in the private life of Muslims. Yet, I claim that also Islamic groups which do not engage in openly political activities can be described as political in a wider sense, because transforming the personal life experience and replacing the prevalent belief system with an Islamic system eventually leads to the demand of a transformation of the

- society and state according to an Islamic definition of “just” and “unjust” (See: Cihal Tugan, “Transforming everyday life: Islamism and social movement theory,” *Theory and Society* 38 (5), 2009, pp. 423-458). In this opinion, I follow scholars like Saba Mahmood who claims that all social-political activities and social relations are political or have political consequences, which means that also apparently apolitical Wahhabi and literal-Salafi movements can be described and analyzed as political actors. See: Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety. The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), esp. pp. 4, 34-35, 119,152. For a discussion on the relation between the cultural and the political aspect of social movements in general, see: Steven M. Buechler, *Social Movements in Advanced Capitalism. The Political Economy and Cultural Construction of Social Activism* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), esp. pp. 185 ff.
5. Tariq Ramadan, “Islam and Muslims in Europe. A Silent Revolution toward Rediscovery,” p. 160, in: *Muslims in the West—from Sojourners to Citizens*, edited by Yvonne Yazbeck-Haddad (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 158-169.
 6. These institutions included, among others, the Islamic Center of Geneva, which was founded in 1965 by Said Ramadan, a member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and former secretary to Hasan al-Banna, after he had been banned from Egypt and spent a few years in Pakistan. Said Ramadan was also involved in the establishment of the Islamic Center Munich (IZM) in 1958. Later, the Islamic Center of Aachen (IZA)—Bilal Moschee—was founded by the Syrian Muslim Brother al-Attar, who was expelled from Syria after the *Baath*- putsch in 1963 and continued to lead the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood from exile until 1970. (See, for example: U.F Abd-Allah, *The Islamic Struggle of Syria* (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1983), p. 101).
In Great Britain the UK Islamic Mission in Leicester was founded in the early 1960s as an offshoot of the Jamaat-e-Islami. In 1973, Kurshid Ahmad, a senior figure in the Jamaat-e-Islami, established the affiliated “Islamic Foundation” in the UK as a center for the education and propagation of Sunni revivalist political Islam in the style of Mawdudi, Khurram Murad, Sayyid Qutb and Qaradawi.
 7. While the Ottoman Empire used the concept of *dar al-sulh* (territory of truce) or *dar al-ahd* (territory of treaty) in his foreign policy towards European countries, the Muslim Brotherhood applied the concept of *dar al-ahd* only fifty years ago on Europe in order to meet the new realities of Islam in Europe. Source: Dr. M. al-Atawneh, Dept. of Middle East Studies, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, in a personal communication, 1.5.2007. For the concept of Dar al-Sulh, see: Rudolph Peters, “Dar al-Sulh,” p. 339, in: *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Modern Islamic World*, edited by John L. Esposito (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 339.
 8. Tomas Gerholm and Yngve Georg Lithman, *The New Islamic Presence in Western Europe* (London and New York: Mansell Publishing, 1988), p. 6.
 9. Khurram Murad, *Muslim Youth in the West: Towards a New Education Strategy* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1986), p. 3.
 10. Ismail R. Faruqi, *The Path of Dawah in the West* (London: UK Islamic Mission, 1986), pp. 19-20.
 11. As a young activist in a *Milli Görüs* mosque stated in the early 1990s: “In Western countries there is more freedom than in Muslim countries, [the Dutch constitution says] that belief is free.” Cited in Thijl Sunier, *Islam in beweging: Turkse jongeren en islamitische organisaties*, (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1996), p. 195; cited in Martin v. Bruinessen, “Making and unmaking Muslim religious authority in Western Europe” (paper presented at the Fourth Mediterranean Social and Political Research Meeting, Florence, March 1-23, 2003), http://www.let.uu.nl/~martin.vanbruinessen/personal/publications/making_authority.htm. Abdoldjawaf Falaturi, an Iranian-German scholar and head of the Islamic Scientific Academy of Cologne, also confirmed the importance of this freedom for dawa and

- Muslim religious life: “The basic or relative freedom of belief [in Western Europe] provides Muslims [...] with the facility to freely portray themselves and the relative freedom to exercise their beliefs.” Abdoldjavad Falaturi, *Muslim Thoughts for Teachers and Textbook Authors* (Köln: Islamische Wissenschaftliche Akademie, 1988), p. 75.
12. For a discussion on the views of different *madhabs* on this question see e.g.: Khaled Abou el-Fadl, “Islamic Law and Muslim Minorities: The Juristic Discourse on Muslim Minorities from the Second/Eight to the Eleventh/ Seventeenth Century,” *Islamic Law and Society* 22/1 (1994), pp. 141-187.
 13. Ibn al-Hajj (d. 1336), *madkhal al-sharia al-sharifaala al-madhahib al-arbaa*, vol. 4 (Cairo, 1929), pp. 53-54.; cited in: Nehemia Levtzion et al., *Islam. Introduction to the History of Religion*, vol. 1 (Tel Aviv: The Open University, 1998), p. 260 [in Hebrew].
 14. The Shafi'i jurist al-Mawardi (d. 1058) is reported to have said already in the 11th century that in case Muslims are able to manifest their religion in one of the unbeliever's countries, this country becomes part of dar al-Islam and in this case Muslim residents should stay and convert others to Islam. See: Khaled Abou El Fadl, “Islamic Law and Muslim Minorities,” p. 150.
 15. For further details see: Khaled Abou El Fadl, “Striking a Balance. Islamic Legal Discourses on Muslim Minorities,” in: *Muslims on the Americanization Path?*, edited by Yvonne Yazbeck-Haddad and John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 47-64. See also: Khaled Abou El Fadl, “Islamic Law and Muslim Minorities.”
 16. Muzzamil H. Siddiqi, “Muslims in a non-Muslim Society,” *Islamic Horizons*, May-June 1986, 22. Siddiqi (b. 1943) is a member of the Fiqh Council of North America.
 17. Ismail R. Faruqi, *The Path of Da'wah in the West*, pp. 19-20.
 18. Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (eds), “Muslime in Europa,” http://www.integration-in-deutschland.de/cIn_110/nn_281574/sid_DD2830E6AB6BF3D336B8CC4380A60679/SubSites/Integrati on/DE/03__Akteure/ThemenUndPerspektiven/Islam/Europa/europa-inhalt.html?__nnn=true. This number is only an estimate; many European countries do not provide official statistics about the religious affiliation of their inhabitants due to data privacy and barriers in constitutional law.
 19. This does not mean that all forms of dawa in Europe today follow these concepts. In fact, many dawa pamphlets and websites contain translations into European languages of texts originally written for a non-European audience, or invitations to apply forms of Islam from Islamic lands which can only be followed by living in almost complete isolation from society. The website of the Saudi Arabian governmental dawa institution, “Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Dawah and Guidance” (www.al-islam.com), is a fine example of this “non-Europeanized” form of dawa. This institution translates information about Islam and lectures of Saudi Arabian clerics into six languages, including German and English, without adapting the material to the daily needs of Muslims in non-Muslim lands. It contains, for instance, information on Islamic law concerning marriage, divorce and criminal law. Needless to say, many of these Sharia-based prescriptions conflict with European laws or norms, but the websites avoid any serious discussion about the practical consequences for European Muslims when trying to follow this allegedly binding Islamic law.
 20. Husam Tamman, “Yusef al-Qaradawi and the Muslim Brothers. The Nature of a Special Relationship,” p. 59, in: *Global Mufti. The Phenomenon of Yusuf al-Qaradawi*, edited by Jacob Skovgaard-Petersen and Bettina Gräf (London: Hurst, 2009), pp. 55-83.
 21. <http://www.islamic-foundation.org.uk>.
 22. All books published by the Islamic Foundation, Leicester.
 23. Khurram Murad, *Dawah among non-Muslims*, p. 5.

24. Khurram Murad, *Muslim Youth in the West*.
25. Khurram Murad, *Muslim Youth in the West*, p. 9-10 and p. 16. In proposing these practices, Murad adopted elements of the bottom-up approach to Islamic revival advocated by the early Mawdudi, who had stressed the importance of the creation of Islamic societies from below in preparation for a subsequent Islamization of society at large. Murad, however, also adapted this dawa practice for the European context by concentrating on the creation of Muslim “islands” as a first step. For Murad, dawa consists of not only discussions and words, but of witnessing for Islam by personal example—dawa by deeds—as the “most powerful resource needed on the path to Dawa.”
26. This belief in Islam as the natural religion to all mankind came to be reflected in the various dawa methods and apologetics that Murad developed for use in the West. This included calling on native Europeans to “revert” (rather than “convert”) to Islam as their original religion, and stressing similarities between Islam and the religions of foreign nations (cf. *Surat al-Imran*, verse 64). Such dawa practices were already employed by his teacher Mawdudi (See for example: Abu-l-A’la Mawdudi, *Weltanschauung und Leben im Islam* (München: Islamisches Zentrum München, 1994)). They were justified, according to one apologetic, by the fact that they were first applied by Muhammad and his companions, and therefore should be emulated by Muslims today. See e.g.: Ibn Hisham Abd al-Malik, *The Life of Muhammad*, (Lahore and Karachi and Dacca: Pakistan Branch Oxford University Press, 1970), 270f; Khurram Murad, *Dawah among non-Muslims*, p. 19.
27. Khurram Murad, *Muslim Youth in the West*, p. 6. See also: Larry Poston, *Islamic Da’wah in the West. Muslim Missionary Activity and the Dynamics of Conversion to Islam* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 83.
28. Hasan al-Banna, *The Message of the Teachings* (London: Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd., 1993), http://www.young-muslims.ca/online_library/books/tmott/; See also: Hasan al-Banna, *Five Tracts of Hassan al-Banna (1906-1949)*, pp. 49-50, 82, 85, 150; Abul Ala Maududi, *jihad fi sabilillah*, transl. K. Ahmad, ed. H. Khattab (London. UK Islamic Mission, 1995), p. 14.
29. Khurram Murad, *Muslim Youth in the West*, p. 6. Murad claims here that the dream to “bring the society that we live in the peace (Islam) and justice (qist) which we believe lie only in surrendering (Islam) to the One God and in following his prophets [...] does not mean embarking [...] on the war path.” See also: Larry Poston, *Islamic Da’wah in the West*, p. 83.
30. In this context we have to remember that even Islamic thinkers advocating offensive jihad for the spread of Islam, such as Sayyid Qutb or Muhammad Abdel Salam al-Faraj, describe warfare only as a method to “remove obstacles which hinder the propagation and spread of Islam”—an expression that usually refers to non-Islamic rulers. See e.g.: Sayyid Qutb, “Jihad in the Cause of God,” in *Islam in Transition*, edited by John J. Donohue and John L. Esposito (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 409-10. See also: Muhammad Abdel Salam al-Faraj, “The Forgotten Duty,” in *Ibid*, esp. p. 418. These authors claim further that today, fighting is a duty because more peaceful verses in the Quran were permanently abrogated by later ones, especially by *Ayat al-Sayf* in *Surat al-Tawba*, verse 5, the “verse of the sword.” Yet one may argue that even from that point of view, jihad may become superfluous if no obstacles to dawa exist. Murad’s writings contain little if any discussion on the rejection of fighting in terms of Islamic law. Amin Ahsan Islahi (d. 1997), like Murad, a former member of the Jamaat-e-Islami, declared in 1987 that the stage of jihad is no longer essential in modern democracies. He states that a stage of military jihad usually has to follow dawa, but today in democratic countries, the first stage of peaceful dawa by words already may be “crowned with success.” Amin A. Islahi, *Call to Islam and How the Holy Prophets Preached* (Safat: Islamic Book Publishers, 1987), p. 191.

31. For further details see: Albrecht Noth, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition. A Source-Critical Study*. Translated by Michael Bonner (Princeton and New Jersey: Darwin Press, 1994), pp. 146-167.
32. Khurram Murad, *Da'wah among non-Muslims*, p.11.
33. The recognition that this method of argumentation is not suitable for Europe was not Murad's innovation, but was formulated three years earlier (in 1983) by the German convert and dawa activist Ibrahim Rüschoff. Rüschoff declared that many Europeans are only *Taufscheinchristen* (formal Christians), and therefore the religious approach is of secondary importance. He advocates instead the so-called "ethical approach," which recommends Islam as a solution for the problems of Western society rather than as an alternative to Christianity. S. Ibrahim Rüschoff, *Da'wa unter Nichtmuslimen* (IZM No. 11.München: Islamisches Zentrum München, 1983), p. 1.
34. Khurram Murad, *Muslim Youth in the West*, p. 3. Khurram Murad, *Dawah among non-Muslims*, p. 23.
35. Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, *Witness unto Mankind—the Purpose and the Duty of the Muslim Ummah*, translated by Khurram Murad (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1986), p. 34.
36. All quotations: Khurram Murad, *Da'wah among non-Muslims*, p. 21; see also: Larry Poston, *Islamic Dawah*, pp. 86-87.
37. Abu-l A'la Mawdudi, *Weltanschauung und Leben im Islam*. (München: Schriftenreihe des Islamischen Zentrums München Nr. 24, 1994), p. 19.
38. <http://www.e-cfr.org>.
39. The English version of the website was taken offline at some point between 2007 and May 2008, but has been published again (date of last access: December 1, 2009) in a re-launched version with less content than before. Today islamonline.net seems to be the main instrument of Qaradawi and his followers for reaching out to European Muslims.
40. <http://www.islamonline.net>. See also: Bettina Gräf, "Yusuf al-Qaradawi und die Bildung einer globalen islamischen Autorität," *Qantara.de*, April 21, 2005, http://de.qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php/_c-468/_nr-323/i.html
41. Al-Qaradawi, "al-aqalliyat al-muslima wa mashkalatuha al-fiqhiya," in: *majallat al-buhuth*, Dublin, February, 20, 2005; cited in: Ralph Ghadban, *Tariq Ramadan und die Islamisierung Europas* (Berlin: Verlag Hans Schiler, 2006), pp.143-144.
42. Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, "al-sharia wal-h aiyya," *Al-Jazeera TV*, February 6, 2001. See also: Yusuf al-Qaradawi, "Fiqh al-jaliyyat al-Islamiyya fi al-gharb—al-juz, al-thani," January 21, 2001, http://www.qaradawi.net/site/topics/article.asp?cu_no=2&item_no=41&version=1&template_id=105&parent_id=16#راد%20عده%20م%20راد%20حبر. Qaradawi mentions in this article that *dar al-ahd* is called by other scholars *dar al-dawa* and both terms have the same meaning, but he does not use this term *dar al-dawa* himself. Serbia and Yugoslavia are defined as *dar al-harb* because the Balkan-conflict is seen as a religious war against Muslims.
43. Dr. Yousef al-Qaradawi, *Priorities of the Islamic Movement in the Coming Phase* (Cairo: Dar al-Nashr for Egyptian Universities, 1992) p.198.
44. Dr. Yousef al-Qaradawi, *Priorities of the Islamic Movement in the Coming Phase*, p. 249.
45. MEMRI (eds.), "Leading Sunni Sheikh Yousef Al-Qaradhawi and Other Sheikhs Herald the Coming Conquest of Rome," MEMRI Special Dispatch Series No. 447, December 6, 2002 <http://www.memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Area=sd&ID=SP44702>. The article quotes a *fatwa* of Qaradawi, published on *IslamOnline* (<http://www.islamonline.net/fatwa/arabic/FatwaDisplay.asp?hFatwaID=2042>), and a statement he made on November 11, 2000 on *Al-Jazeera TV*, <http://www.al-jazeera.net/programs/shareea/articles/2000/11/11-30-3.htm>.
46. Dr. Yousef al-Qaradawi, *Priorities of the Islamic Movement in the Coming Phase*, pp. 126-128. See also:

- Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen, Yousef al-Qaradawi and Al-Azhar,” p. 38, in: *Global Mufti. The Phenomenon of Yusuf al-Qaradawi*, edited by Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen and Bettina Gräf (London: Hurst, 2009), pp. 27-53. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Ibn al-qarya wa'l kutt b. S ra wa-mas ra*, vol. 1-3 (Cairo: D-r al-Shur- q, 2006), pp. 56-59. For an explanation of the meaning of the ‘verse of the sword’ (Surat al-Tawba, verse 5) by Sayyid Qutb, see: Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (New Delhi: Islamic Book Service, 2001), pp. 53-76.
47. Dr. Yousef al-Qaradawi, *Fiqh al-Jihad* (Cairo: Maktaba Wahba, 2009).
48. Dr. Yousef al-Qaradawi, *Priorities of the Islamic Movement in the Coming Phase*, p. 128.
49. Dr. Yousef al-Qaradawi, *Priorities of the Islamic Movement in the Coming Phase*, p. 127.
50. Dr. Yousef al-Qaradawi, *Fiqh al-Jihad*.
51. ECFR (eds.), “Qaradawi in the Inaugural Session: Islam,” September 22, 2005, <http://www.e-cfr.org>.
52. Qaradawi, *fi fiqh al-aqalliyat*. It was introduced in the 1990s by Taha Jabir al-Alwani to America, and by Yusuf al-Qaradawi and the ECFR to Europe and is described by the latter in detail in his book “*fi fiqh al-aqalliyat al-muslima. haiyyat al-muslimin wasta al-mujtamaat al-ukhra*” (On the Jurisprudence of Muslim Minorities: Muslim Life Amongst Other Societies). It asserts that Muslim minorities under non-Muslim rule deserve a special legal discipline to address their unique religious needs, which differ from those of Muslims residing in Muslim countries. The term *fiqh al-aqalliyat* was used for the first time in 1994, when the Fiqh Council of North America, under the presidency of Alwani, issued a fatwa that permitted Muslims to vote in the American elections. See additionally: Muhammad Khalid Masud, “Islamic Law and Muslim Minorities,” *ISIM*, 11/2002, 17, https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/1887/11967/1/news1_11.pdf.
53. See e.g.: Eric Brown, “After the Ramadan Affair: New Trends of Islamism in the West,” *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* vol. 2 (2005), pp. 7-30, http://www.hudson.org/files/publications/After_The_Ramadan_Affair-New_Trends_in_Islamism_in_the_West.pdf. See also: Khaled Ahmed, “Are we the ‘middle nation’?,” *Daily Times*, October 18, 2005, http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2005%5C10%5C18%5Cstory_18-10-2005_pg3_3.
54. Cf. Shammai. Fishman., “*Fiqh al-Aqalliyat: A Legal Theory for Muslim Minorities*.” *Hudson Monographs*, Series No.1, Paper No.2 (2006), http://www.futureofmuslimworld.com/docLib/20061018_Monograph-Fishman2.pdf, p. 2.
55. Rida and Khallaf stressed, for example, that the rulings of traditional jurisprudence, so long as they are not rooted in the Quran, are not binding on later generations if it can be proven that these they referred only to a specific incidences and were not meant to become a general rule for all situations. Hallaq understand from this, that Khallaf believes non-quranic sunnaic matters are only binding on later generations if they serve the public interest (*maslaha*). See: Wael Bahjat Hallaq, *A History of Islamic Legal Theories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 223. Rida further believes that *maslaha* could replace *qiyas*. See: Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 234.)
56. The principle of *maslaha* was developed by Malik Ibn Anas (ca. 715-796) as a tertiary source of Islamic law. (See: Farhad Nomani, Ali Rahnama, *Islamic Economic Systems* (New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd., 1994), pp. 13-15). A fatwa from the Asharite jurist Ibn al-Jawayni (d.1085) rules out sharia prohibitions on the basis of needs and necessities, and declares that if Muslims cannot buy houses without engaging in prohibited financial dealings (usury) and this would lead to their weakening or destruction then they may engage in prohibited financial transactions, not only to satisfy necessities (*darura*), but also to satisfy needs (*hajiyyat*). (See Abu al-Maali Abd al-Malik al-Juwayini (Imam al-Haramayn), *Ghiyath al-Umam*, edited by Abd al-Azim al-Dib (Cairo: Al-Maktabati al-Kubra), pp. 475-522, esp. pp. 476, 486 and 488. Cited in: Khaled Abou El-Fadl, “Islamic Law and Muslim Minorities,” p. 180). Al-Ghazzali (d.

- 1111) defined *maslaha* as the basic purpose of the sharia, which is to protect religion, lives, mind, offspring and property. He considered everything serving these goals as *maslaha*. (Al-Ghazali, *al-mustasfa min ilm al-Usul*, chapter. *adillat al-ahkam* (1109) cited in: Ralph Ghadban, "Dialogkritik—Beobachtungen und Analysen," paper presented at the conference 'Christlich-Islamischer Dialog in der Kritik,' October 8-10. 2004 in Stuttgart-Hohenheim. http://www.kcid.de/kcid/download/041008_referat_ghadban.pdf. See also: Shammai Fishman, "Fiqh al-Aqalliyat," p. 9.) The medieval scholar Ibn Taymiyya (d.1328) wrote that every act of *al-amr bi al maruf* (enjoining right and forbidding wrong) has to weigh carefully the benefits (*maslaha*) and the adverse effects (*mafsada*) for the *umma*, which means that it may be advisable not to hinder a person from violating *sharia* law if this harms public interest. (Ibn Taymiyya (n.d.), *Enjoining Right and Forbidding Wrong*, transl. Salim Abdallah ibn Morgan, p. 6, <http://www.islambasics.com/view.php?bkID=44>. The original Arabic version of the text is available as: Ibn Taymiyya (1984), *al-Amr bil-maruf wal-nahyan al-munkar*, edited by S. al-Munajjid, Beirut. For a discussion on this text see: Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 151, note 48). This principle enabled Taymiyya to adapt his *fatwas* to the political needs of a specific time and situation. The intensified use of *maslaha* in *ijtihad* was also one of the tools of Islamic Modernism of the late 19th and early 20th century in order to overcome the stagnation and backwardness of the Islamic world.
57. Qaradawi claimed that in cases the *ulama* disagree in their decisions towards one topic, Muslims are free to choose the less restrictive *fatwa* (ECFR (eds.), "Qaradawi in the Inaugural Session: Islam"). Regarding the question of continuing a marriage with a non-Muslim husband after conversion, one *alim* states that, if the woman is e.g. tied to her children and would lose them after a divorce or if the husband's disbelief does not pose a threat to her own belief, she is permitted to stay with him (ECFR (eds.), "Readings from First Research Magazine," February 22, 2005, <http://e-cfr.org/eng/article.php?op=print&sid=3> [page no longer available]).
58. Shammai Fishman, "*Fiqh al-Aqalliyat: A Legal Theory for Muslim Minorities*," p. 12.
59. Iyad Zahalka, qadi in the Sharia court of Haifa and PhD-student studying the fiqh al-aqalliyat, claims on the other hand that this decision represents an example of *darura* (necessity, hardship), the necessity to keep the women in Islam. (Iyad Zahalka in a personal conversation with the author, October 20, 2009, Jerusalem).
60. Alexandre Caeiro, "The European Council for Fatwa and Research," paper presented at the Fourth Mediterranean Social and Political research Meeting, Florence, May 13-19, 2003, 28; cited in Shammai Fishman, "*Fiqh al-Aqalliyat: A Legal Theory for Muslim Minorities*," p. 12.
61. Hasan al-Banna, *Five Tracts of Hasan al-Bann (1906-1949)*, p. 46.
62. Dr. Yousef al-Qaradawi, *Priorities of the Islamic Movement in the Coming Phase*, p. 264.
63. IOL Sharia Researchers (eds.), "The Status of Women in Islam," *fatwa* from March 7, 2007, http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?pagename=IslamOnline-English-Ask_Scholar/FatwaE/FatwaE&cid=1119503544308.
64. Dr. Yousef al-Qaradawi, *Priorities of the Islamic Movement in the Coming Phase*, pp. 261 and 265. See also: Osama bin Laden, "Letter to America," [guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk), November 24, 2002, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2002/nov/24/theobserver>.
65. Dr. Yousef al-Qaradawi, *Priorities of the Islamic Movement in the Coming Phase*, p. 248.
66. For a detailed discussion on the internal-personal versus external-institutional approach of *dawa* see: Larry Poston, *Islamic Dawah in the West*, pp. 49-63; Nina Wiedl, *Dawa—Der Ruf zum Islam in Europa* (Berlin: Verlag Hans Schiler, 2008), pp.48-55; Abu-l A'la Mawdudi, *Tadhkira Dua al-Islam* (Cairo: Dar al-Ansar, 1977), p.16.

67. Dr. Yousef al-Qaradawi, *Priorities of the Islamic Movement in the Coming Phase*, p. 42
68. Dr. Yousef al-Qaradawi, *Priorities of the Islamic Movement in the Coming Phase*, pp. 43-44; 41-42; 264f; 37-38; 44.
69. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, "Freedom of Expression from an Islamic Perspective," *fatwa* from June 10, 2002, http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?cid=1119503543962&pagename=IslamOnline-English-Ask_Scholar%2FFatwaE%2FFatwaEAskTheScholar.
70. "Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam (CDHRI)," adopted and proclaimed by Organization of Islamic Conference resolution 217 A (III) of adopted on 5 August 1990 (Cairo), http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Cairo_Declaration_on_Human_Rights_in_Islam.
71. Tariq Ramadan, "Interview," February 2, 2005, <http://www.tariqramadan.com/spip.php?article205>. Ian Buruma, "Tariq Ramadan has an Identity Issue," *New York Times Magazine*, February 2, 2007.
72. See e.g.: Ralph Ghadban, *Tariq Ramadan und die Islamisierung Europas*, p. 129. See also: Tariq Ramadan, "Reading the Koran," *New York Times*, January 7, 2008.
73. Tariq Ramadan in Interview with Radio Beur FM in November 2003, cited by Martine Nouasile, "Tariq Ramadan, personnalité influente et controversée," *AFP*, November 215, 2003; cited in: Caroline Fourest, *Brother Tariq—the Doublespeak of Tariq Ramadan* (New York and London: Encounter Books, 2008), p. 119.
74. The term "Euro-Islam" was originally introduced into the discourse on migration by Bassam Tibi in 1992, but takes a different meaning in the texts of Ramadan. Tibi defined it as a form of Islam which accepts Laicism, individual Human Rights and tolerance in a Western comprehension (Interview with B. Tibi, *tachles*, January 9, 2004; cited in: Ralph Ghadban, *Tariq Ramadan und die Islamisierung Europas*, pp. 7-8).
75. Tariq Ramadan, "Europeanization of Islam or Islamization of Europe?," in: *Islam: Europe's Second Religion: The New Social, Cultural and Political Landscape*, edited by Shireen T. Hunter (Westport and Connecticut and London: Praeger Publishers, 2002), p.213.
76. Khurram Murad, *Muslim Youth*, p. 12.
77. Faysal Mawlawi, *al-usus al-shariyya lil-alaquat bayna al-muslimin wa ghayr al-muslimin* (Paris: UOIF, 1987).
78. Mawlawi declares in *al-usus al-shariyya lil-alaquat bayna al-muslimin wa ghayr al-muslimin* that a country in war with Muslims (dar al-harb) transforms into dar al-ahd in the moment it closes a peace contract with Muslim lands. He further claims that according to the classical threefold division of the world into dar al-harb, dar al-ahd and dar al-Islam, Europe would be termed dar al-ahd. However, according to Mawlawi this classical view is no longer applicable to the present situation and the term dar al-dawa is more suitable for Europe, because Muslims in Europe live today in an area where dawa is performed and which resembles in this aspect pre-hijra Mecca, which he designates as dar al-dawa. Regarding the question according to which criteria a land is defined as dar al-Islam, Mawlawi claims that the question has to be re-considered carefully. According to the criteria that dar al-Islam requires the implementation of Islamic law, Turkey and other Muslim countries would not be considered a dar al-Islam. According to the criteria of freedom of worship for Muslims, however, the situation of Muslims in many Muslim countries is equal to the situation of Muslim minorities in the West, although latter can not be termed dar al-Islam.
79. Mawlawi does not refer here to specific contracts between each individual Muslim ruler and a non-Muslim land, but defines contracts that exist in the framework of the United Nations as contracts between Muslim rulers and non-Muslim lands in general.
80. Khaled Abou El-Fadl, "Islamic Law and Muslim Minorities," p. 175 f.
81. Feisal Maulawi, *Die Schariagrundlagen auf denen die Beziehungen zwischen Muslimen und Nichtmuslimen*

- gegründet sind*, translated by Samir Mourad (Karlsruhe: Deutscher Informationsdienst über den Islam e.V., s.d.).
82. Ian Buruma, "Tariq Ramadan has an Identity Issue."
 83. Nathan Gardels, "Western Muslims must denounce Iraqi terrorists's attempts to split world into 'us' and 'them':." Conversation with Tariq Ramadan, *Global Viewpoint*, August, 30, 2004. See also: BBC News (eds), "Viewpoints: Europe and the headscarf," <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/3459963.stm>, February 10, 2004.
 84. Ralph Ghadban, *Tariq Ramadan und die Islamisierung Europas*, p. 145.
 85. Tariq Ramadan, "Europeanization of Islam or Islamization of Europe?," p. 213.
 86. Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 208, cited in: Ralph Ghadban, *Tariq Ramadan und die Islamisierung Europas*, p.145.
 87. Tariq Ramadan, "Dawa in the West," September 27, 2004, <http://www.tariqramadan.com/spip.php?article6>.
 88. Tariq Ramadan, "Europeanization of Islam or Islamization of Europe?," p. 210.
 89. Khurram Murad, *Muslim Youth in the West*, pp. 6 and 12-13.
 90. Dr. Yousef al-Qaradawi, *Priorities of the Islamic Movement in the Coming Phase* pp. 42 and 125.
 91. Tariq Ramadan, "Interview."
 92. Tariq Ramadan, "Dawa in the West."
 93. See for example: Tariq Ramadan, "Building a 'new we' in Europe," An interview to Pavlos Hatzopoulos for *Republic* (s.d.), <http://www.re-public.gr/en/?p=37>. See also: Tariq Ramadan, "Manifesto for a 'new WE'. An Appeal to the Western Muslims and their Fellow Citizens," July 7, 2006, <http://www.tariqramadan.com/spip.php?article743>.
 94. Tariq Ramadan, "Interview."
 95. Ralph Ghadban, *Tariq Ramadan und die Islamisierung Europas*, pp. 161 and 116. The Liberal-Reformers he refers to base their opinion on the Egyptian Shaykh Ali Abd al-Raziq (1888-1966) from Al-Azhar, who published in 1925, one year after Atatürk had disestablished the caliphate, his book "*al-islam wa usul al-h ukm*" (*Islam and the principles of reign*), which justifies the division between religion and state with sources from *Quran* and *Sunna*.
 96. Tariq Ramadan, "Interview" and Tariq Ramadan, "Europeanization of Islam or Islamization of Europe?," p. 212.
 97. Wessam Fuaad, "Evaluating Tariq Ramadan's Call for Moratorium on Hudud: Reading, Approach and Discourse," December 29, 2005, http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?c=Article_C&cid=1162385853517&pagename=Zone-English-Euro_Muslims%2FEMELayout. See also: IOL Staff, eds., "Tariq Ramadan's Calls for Hudud Freeze," March 30, 2005, <http://www.islamonline.net/English/News/2005-03/30/article07.shtml>.
 98. Even if they could be applied, the absence of an Islamic government—which is according to an IOL scholar is required to sanction these punishments - makes it impossible to execute this punishments in non-Muslim lands today. See: IOL Scholars, "Islamic Fixed Penalties: Striking Balance between Causes & Results," *fatwa* from January 17, 2002. http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?cid=1119503544834&pagename=IslamOnline-English_Ask_Scholar%2FFatwaE%2FFatwaEAskTheScholar.
 99. Eric Brown, "After the Ramadan Affair," p.15.
 100. Ursi Schweizer, *Muslims in Europa* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2008), p. 89.
 101. Anne Simpson, "The New Revolutionary," *The Herald*, October, 27, 2005.
 102. Marianne Forthoren, "Joining hands against forced marriages," February 29, 2008, <http://www.tariqramadan.com/spip.php?article1380>.

103. Tariq Ramadan, *La femme musulmane. Réalités et espoir*, audio-cassette (Paris: Tawhid, 1988), cited in: Caroline Fourest, *Brother Tariq*, pp. 148-149, 140 and 143-144.
104. Ian Buruma, "Tariq Ramadan has an Identity Issue."
105. Cf. *Surat an-Nisa*, verse 74-76, which talks about fighting to free people from oppression and *Surat al-Hajj*, verse 40, which speaks of fighting for the protection of churches, monasteries and mosques.
106. See e.g. Sayyid Qutb, "Jihad in the Cause of God," esp. pp. 410-11, 416.
107. Critics like Ghadban or Fourest define these ambiguities, which pervade all of Ramadan's texts, as doublespeak—the intentional deception of a non-Muslim audience; they claim that he conveys radical Islamist messages to fundamentalist Muslims while sounding liberal and moderate to non-Muslims.
108. Dr. Yousef al-Qaradawi, *Priorities of the Islamic Movement in the Coming Phase*, p.197. Shammai Fishman, "Fiqh al-Aqalliyat: A Legal Theory for Muslim Minorities," p. 11.

Said Qutb on the Arts in America

Translation by Daniel Burns¹

Translator's note: The Egyptian Said Qutb was one of the leading intellectual lights of 20th Century Islamic radicalism when he was executed in 1966 for his involvement with the illegal Muslim Brotherhood. He is perhaps best known for his lengthy Quranic commentary *In the Shade of the Qur'an* and his book *Milestones*, in which he makes the case that allegedly Muslim regimes like that of Egypt should be understood as *jahiliy* (pagan) and therefore the proper target of military *jihād*.

Years before writing these radical works, Qutb spent two years studying in America (1948-1950). Upon his return to Egypt, he published the three-part article “The America That I Have Seen: In the Scale of Human Values” in the Egyptian journal *Al-Risala* (Vol. 19 [1951]; no. 957, 959, 961; pp. 1245-7, 1301-6, 1357-1360). A translation of this article appears in the anthology *America in an Arab Mirror* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), but that translation is missing a considerable block of text for no reason that I can see. Here I have translated the section of the article's third part that contains that missing block. All but the first three and the last three paragraphs below are therefore appearing in English for the first time.

The article as a whole contains Qutb's observations on American life and chiefly on how American citizens rank in the “scale of human values.” He judges Americans on a range of social and moral characteristics—including their sexual mores, their political history, and their attitudes towards religion, sports, art, and death—and generally finds them wanting. Most striking about the article is Qutb's adherence to a standard of “human values” rather than specifically “Islamic values.” Qutb never elaborates this standard explicitly, but in general his theme seems to be that human beings should strive to attain high-minded, civilized, and spiritual values rather than bestial, primitive, and sensual ones. American society, in Qutb's view, tends toward the latter.

Wherever possible, I have translated a single Arabic word with a single English word. Words in [square brackets] are my additions or clarifications. I have used Qutb's punctuation as a guideline but have not been able to reproduce it fully in English; in particular, I have used parentheses, long dashes, sentence breaks, and other means to translate the versatile Arabic particle *wa*. I have however retained the author's strange use of quotation marks and ellipses.

THE AMERICAN IS PRIMITIVE IN HIS ARTISTIC TASTE, BOTH IN WHAT HE enjoys as art and in his own artistic works. "Jazz" music is his music of choice. this is that music that the negroes invented to satisfy their primitive inclinations, as well as their desire to be noisy on the one hand and to excite bestial tendencies on the other. The American's intoxication in "jazz" music does not reach its full completion until the music is accompanied by singing that is just as coarse and obnoxious as the music itself. Meanwhile, the noise of the instruments and the voices mounts, and it rings in the ears to an unbearable degree... The agitation of the multitude² increases, and the voices of approval mount, and their palms ring out in vehement, continuous applause that all but deafens the ears.

But despite this, the American multitude attends the opera, listens to symphonies, crowds together for the "ballet," and watches "classic" plays—so much so that you will hardly find an empty seat. It will happen sometimes that you do not find a place unless you reserve your seat days beforehand, and that at the high price of the fares for these performances.

This phenomenon misled me at first; I even rejoiced at it, down to the depths of my soul. For I had been feeling constantly "begrudging" at the fact that this people, which produces marvels in the world of industry and of science and of research, should have no store of the other human values. I had also been terribly afraid on behalf of humanity that its leadership will pass into the hands of this people that is altogether poor in those values.

Therefore I rejoiced when I saw this phenomenon. For the public that takes an interest in refined art is not to be despaired of no matter what its faults may be, and when this window on its feelings has been opened, there is great hope that many other rays may diffuse from it.

The importance of this phenomenon pushed me to investigate everything about it, in different surroundings and in numerous cities. But when I tracked the expressions on faces, and conversed with a great many of the men and women³ who visit these

places (those I knew and those I did not know), all this revealed to me—with regret—how wide a chasm still separates the spirit of such humane art from the spirit of the Americans. Indeed, their feelings about it⁴ are even concealed in all but rare cases; they only look at the matter from a purely social angle. For the cultured American must of necessity see these sorts [of shows] and go to these places in case there should be a conversation about them in any group of people taking part in conversation together. For it is a matter of the greatest shame in America that anyone should fail to take part in the conversation—especially in the case of young women, since what is demanded of them is that they should always find subjects for conversation. So if young women visit these places, they add new subjects to the perpetual American subjects [of conversation], i.e., ball games, names of films and of actors and actresses, cases of divorce and marriage, markings and prices of cars...

This is the very spirit in which the crowds visit the art museums, passing rapidly through the halls and the exhibits in a way that does not suggest any enjoyment or love of these works [of art]. In just the same way they go (individually and in groups) to get a rapid view of natural spectacles. Passing by places and spectacles at the cars' top speed, they collect conversational material and also comply with the natural American inclination toward collection and enumeration.

At the beginning of my stay in America, I would hear that one of them had visited X cities and countries and sights and spectacles and had gone X miles in his tourist journeys and knew X friends, so that I was astonished at this capacity for producing such things and wished that I were capable of any of it! Then I discovered afterward how all these marvels took place... One of them drives his car on a journey, alone or with his family or friends. He races it at top speed, taking it through cities and over distances, passing by sights and spectacles, while recording in his notebook the names and the mileage... Then he returns, and see! he has seen all of it, and he has the right to converse about it! As for friends, it is enough that one be invited to get-acquainted parties. There he encounters their faces for the first time, and the host acquaints him with the attendees one by one (men as well as women),⁵ and he asks whoever of them wish to do so to write down their names and addresses, and so they in turn do with him. After some time, his notebook is full of names and addresses. And see! he has a great number of friends (men and women),⁶ and perhaps he is even victorious in the competition undertaken in pursuit of this goal. How great, how strange are the competitions here!

Thus your knowledge and your culture⁷ are often measured by how much you have read and watched and heard. It is the same as the way that your material riches are calculated by the quantity and amount of the cash and real property that you own: without any distinctions!

And this is not the mentality of the multitudes only, but it is also very much the

mentality of the thinkers and the researchers. For it had occurred to the thinkers in America that it was not right that their country should be the richest country in the world, and their people the greatest people on earth in terms of industrial civilization and scientific civilization, while they should have no artistic wealth like that of poorer peoples such as the Italians and the Germans.

They have money—and money works wonders—so it was only a matter of years before they had museums of drawing and sculpture more magnificent and larger than those other peoples.’ These museums have accumulated for themselves works of art from everywhere and have filled up with the rare and the costly among these works, which they⁸ have not been stingy about buying with money. These are all foreign works save a few, since American works are primitive and plain to the point of being laughable next to those splendid worldly treasures.

Likewise, [it was only a matter of years before] they had some performing orchestras and some dance troupes of the “ballet,” most of which [demonstrate] expertise and proficiency. And most of the conductors of these orchestras and the directors of these troupes [demonstrate] genius and originality...and all of them⁹ save a few are foreigners.

Thus there emerged¹⁰ precise enumerations that indicate what America possesses in the way of great artistic riches, purchased by money. But there remained one little matter: Does the American soul have any share in these riches? Does she even have mere artistic enjoyment of this costly human inheritance!

It occurred to me to examine these points in the art museums just as I examined them at the opera houses and such.

I went for the tenth time to the museum of art in San Francisco and made one of the picture halls of French art the subject of my examination. I distributed my attention over all the pictures inside it, but I concentrated on one outstanding picture named “Fox in the Chicken House.”¹¹ There are no words that could relate to the reader the beauty of this ingenious picture, in which the artist depicted several profound, complex feelings in a painting where there is no human face to make it easy for the artist to depict those feelings... A fox is in the chicken house, the sky is suffocatingly dark, and the fox has just attacked a chicken, a nesting mother, who appears in distress and exhausted in the claws of the wild beast baring his teeth; her little ones are terrified and the eggs remaining beneath her are scattered; her fellow hens meanwhile are scattered throughout the space of the painting, and the rooster—the man of the house—stands helpless, at a loss to find any salvation for his spouse in distress, although he is her guardian! As for the other hens, one is anxious and taken by surprise, another is despairing and disgusted that there should be all this atrocity in life, while a third is at a loss, asking: “How did this happen?” And the entire sky and the colors in this ingenious painting depict that which words cannot grasp.

I took a rest on one of the seats that the halls do provide with singular¹² courtesy for those visitors who are tired of looking and of walking around to rest on, and I rested, inspecting the features and expressions [of faces] and listening to the remarks and comments.

Four full hours passed over me in my seat, during which 109 persons passed by me, singles and couples and groups, of whom the majority were among the [many] young women and young men¹³ who make appointments to spend some time in the museum's garden and then in the museum itself, since it is proper for the social young woman to share in conversation and to find subjects for conversation.

On [the faces of] how many of these 109 did it appear that they were feeling anything of what they were seeing? Only one lingered for about two minutes in front of the picture I had selected, and he lingered in the whole hall for about five minutes...then he flew off.

I repeated the experiment in the other halls of the museum, and then repeated it in other museums in several cities. Again I arrived at the point where [I could say that], out of the great mass of visitors comprised in my enumerations, only a rare minority comprehended anything of these tremendous artistic riches that the dollar has gathered from all the places on earth; all that remained for the dollar to do was to create artistic sensation, but apparently that does not respond to the dollar's charms!

THE ONLY ART IN WHICH THE AMERICANS ARE PROFICIENT—ALTHOUGH THERE are other [peoples] who still surpass them in it as far as artistry goes—is the art of the cinema. This is natural and logical given the phenomenon that makes the American unique: the height of industrial proficiency combined with primitiveness of artistic feelings. In the cinema this phenomenon is very much manifest.

By its nature, the cinematic art does not rise to the loftiest regions of the arts—music, drawing, sculpture, and poetry—nor for that matter to the [level of the] art of the theater, although in the cinema the possibilities for artistic craft¹⁴ and the possibilities of production are much greater. And in terms of originality, the art of production in the cinema has gotten only as far as the farthest point reached by the art of photography. Moreover, some distance remains between it and (for example) the art of the theater, just as some distance remains too between depiction by photography and depiction by a [painter's] brush. In the latter is expressed genius of feelings; in the former, expertise of craft.

The cinema is the popular art of the multitudes, so it is the art in which one finds expertise, proficiency, magnification, and approximation. By its nature it relies more on expertise than on the artistic spirit... in it the American genius¹⁵ can exercise

creativity... yet despite this, English, French, Russian, and German film all remain superior to American film, although they are inferior to it in craft and expertise.

In the great majority of American films, one sees manifestly primitive subjects and primitive excitement; this is true of police/crime films and cowboy films. As for high, skillful films, such as “Gone with the Wind,” “Wuthering Heights,” “The Song of Bernadette,” and such, they are few in comparison with what America produces. Such American film as does reach Egypt or the Arab countries does not resemble this family, since the majority of it comes from among the superior, rare American films.¹⁶ And those people who visit the regions of the land in America are those who reach that tiny family of valuable films.

There is another art in which the Americans are skillful, because in it there is more of expertise in craft and production than there is of high, genuine art... It is the art of depicting natural spectacles in color as if [the depictions] were photographic, true and exact.¹⁷ This can be seen in the museums of land and water animals, since these animals or their embalmed bodies are displayed [there] in the likeness of their natural habitats, just as if they were real. The artist’s brush is skillful in depicting these habitats in cooperation with the spectacle’s artistic design; it reaches the point of creativity.

NOTES

1. I am grateful to the Ernest Fortin Memorial Foundation for a summer grant that allowed me to work on this translation, to Michael Montalbano for his relentless editing, and to Prof. Martha Bayles, Prof. Nasser Behnegar, Dr. Hillel Fradkin, Prof. Dennis Hale, Prof. James Nolan, and Zander Baron for reading drafts.
2. The word consistently translated “multitude” (*jamhour*) appears a few times in this passage and has political connotations: it is the root of the Arabic word for “republic.” It means something like *hoi polloi*.
3. Here and elsewhere Qutb uses two forms, a masculine and a feminine, where Arabic grammar only requires one (since the masculine is taken to include both sexes). Literally this passage says “a great many [m.] and a great many [f.] of those who visit these places.” Qutb seems to want to emphasize that both sexes are included, perhaps because he finds this immodest or perhaps because his audience would not otherwise know whether the social events being described were single-sex.
4. The nearest possible antecedent is “spirit,” but the earlier “this phenomenon” seems likelier. The gender of the pronoun makes it impossible that it could be “art.”
5. Literally “one by one and one (f.) by one (f.)” See note 3.
6. Literally “male-friends and female-friends,” or “friends and female friends.” See note 3.
7. In the sense of “the state of being cultured,” not “cultural identity.”

8. The gender of the pronoun means that it most likely refers to, not “museums,” but the antecedent from earlier in the paragraph: “Americans,” or possibly “the thinkers in America.”
9. Since the entire paragraph is one sentence in Arabic, it is not clear whether this word refers only to the conductors and directors or to the performing groups’ members as a whole.
10. This is a bit obscure, but Qutb seems to mean that these enumerations became easily available in the course of his own investigations.
11. Jean-Baptiste Huet’s *Fox in the Chicken Yard* (1766) meets most of Qutb’s description. I can only see two “other hens,” though.
12. The ambiguity is present in Arabic as in English: this may be a backhanded compliment.
13. Literally “female-youths and male-youths,” or “female-youths and youths.” See note 3.
14. The word is a recurrent theme in the entire article and has been translated “industry” or (as an adjective) “industrial.” From here on it will be translated “craft.”
15. This phrase does not refer to particular American people that we would call “geniuses,” but to something more abstract, like the previous “artistic spirit.”
16. The antecedents are hard to follow in this sentence, but the sense seems to me to require: “Such American film as does reach us in Egypt or the Arab countries does not resemble the (generally low-quality) family of American films as a whole, since the majority of what does reach us consists in those high-quality films that make up only a tiny minority of the whole family.”
17. Qutb seems to mean this as something of a compliment, but on the other hand, that meaning would seem to be at odds with his disparagement of photography three paragraphs earlier.

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