

HUDSON INSTITUTE

BEYOND RADICAL ISLAM?

SESSION TWO POLITICAL ISLAM: IMAGE AND REALITY

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MR. ARTHUR MELZER: Good afternoon, and welcome to the second panel of our conference on radical Islam. My name is Arthur Melzer.

Our conference is focused not on the theology of Islam but on its politics, or on its political effects. Now, one way to address this issue—I would suggest the most direct way—is to look at those political movements that explicitly claim and assert to be inspired by Islam and to be doing its work; in a word, to look at what has been called “Political Islam.”

The first question to ask here is: is there really such a thing as political Islam, in the sense in which the term is often used, which is, a movement that is understood to be fairly monolithic and clearly defined across the Muslim world? If such a thing does exist, what is its agenda? Or if, on the contrary, there is no monolithic and transnational movement of political Islam, then why does it seem to so many of us that there is?

These are the questions that will be addressed by this afternoon's paper, which is entitled, “Political Islam: Image and Reality.” It is the work of Professor Mohammed Ayoob, who is University Distinguished Professor of International Relations at James Madison College here at Michigan State University.

There will be two respondents to Professor Ayoob's paper. The first is Husain Haqqani, who is a syndicated columnist for the *Indian Express* and for *The Nation* in Pakistan, and who is currently a visiting scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, DC.

The second respondent will be Hillel Fradkin, who is a senior fellow and director of Hudson Institute's Center for Islam, Democracy and the Future of the Muslim World, and one of the principal organizers of this conference.

Professor Ayoob?

PROFESSOR MOHAMMED AYOOB: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

What I am going to do is going to probably shock some of my students, or all of my students, and some of them are here this afternoon. They have seen me usually speak for 80 minutes without looking at a single sheet of paper.

What I will be doing today is actually read from a text, for the simple reason that the paper that I am presenting is very densely written and, therefore, I need to stick as far as possible to the text in order to prevent my going off on all sorts of tangents and going on for three hours or so.

Secondly, the paper is densely written because the way I analyze this phenomenon brings in multiple variables. So there are multiple variables at work, because I believe that there are no parsimonious explanations for such a complex phenomenon that is fashionably called “Political Islam.”

In any case, I'm always suspicious of explanations which, for the sake of parsimony, base themselves on one big idea, whether the clash of civilizations or, with due apologies to Francis Fukuyama, who is present here, the end of history.

Multiple variables highlight the importance of context. I always talk about context, or contexts in the plural because similar phenomena can be explained in one context by highlighting certain variables and in another by a different set of variables.

But enough of this pre-presentation explanation. I'll get to the meat of the paper now.

The paper, as Arthur pointed out, is titled, “Political Islam: Image and Reality.” One further caveat. I have mentioned several cases in the paper, particularly Turkey, Egypt, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, but also references to Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian territories.

The major country missing from this group is Iran, and I deliberately left Iran out because the Iranian case bears out several of my conclusions, and its experience (particularly post-revolution Iran) is so complex and unique as to deserve independent treatment. Including Iran in this discussion would have necessitated doubling the length of the paper, and we could have gone on until dinnertime. So, here is the paper.

Three often unstated assumptions have inspired much of the discussion in the West regarding political Islam over the last decade and a half, but especially since 9/11. And these three assumptions are: one, that political Islam, like Islam itself, is monolithic; two, that political Islam is inherently violent; and three, that the intermingling of religion and politics is unique to Islam.

None of these assertions capture the reality of the multi-faceted phenomenon called political Islam. Moreover, although an argument can be made that there are one or more varieties of transnational political Islam, such transnational manifestations form a very small part of the activity referred to as political Islam. There is, however, one widely shared ingredient in the mix referred to as political Islam that may be responsible for projecting a monolithic image to Western audiences. I will address this last issue at the end of the paper.

To begin with, one must provide an adequate definition of the term political Islam, or Islamism. And I use the two terms, as many analysts now do, almost interchangeably.

Islamism, or political Islam, is a political ideology rather than religion or theology, and we need to get at least an adequate definition in order to come to grips with this issue. At the most

general level, adherents of political Islam believe that Islam as a body of faith has something important to say about how politics and society should be ordered. However, while correct as a broad-stream generalization, this is too nebulous a formulation to act as an analytical guide capable of explaining political activity undertaken in the name of Islam.

A more precise and analytically useful definition of Islamism describes it as, "a form of instrumentalization of Islam by individuals, groups and organizations that pursue political objectives. It provides political responses to today's societal challenges by," and this is the critical part of the definition, "by imagining a future, the foundations for which rest on re-appropriated, reinvented concepts borrowed from the Islamic tradition."

The re-appropriation of the past, the invention of tradition, as Eric Hobsbawm has called it, in terms of a romanticized notion of a largely mythical Golden Age, lies at the heart of this instrumentalization of Islam. It is the invention of tradition that provides the tools for de-historicizing Islam and separating it from the various contexts in terms of time and space in which it has flourished over the last 1,400 years. This de-contextualizing of Islam allows Islamists, in theory, to ignore the social, economic and political milieus in which Moslem societies operate.

However, context has a way of taking its own revenge on abstract theory when attempts are made to put such theory into practice. This is exactly what has happened to Islamism. In practice, no two Islamisms—and I use the word deliberately in the plural—no two Islamisms are alike because they are determined by the contexts within which they operate. What works in Egypt will not work in Indonesia. What works in Saudi Arabia will not work in Turkey.

Anyone familiar with the diversity of the Muslim world is bound to realize that the political manifestation of Islam, like the practice of Islam itself, is to a great extent context-specific, and is the result of the interpenetration of religious precepts and local culture, including political culture.

It is true that there is an Islamic vocabulary that transcends political boundaries. However, such vocabulary is normally employed to serve objectives specific to discrete settings. In the process, while the Islamic idiom may continue to appear the same to the uninitiated observer, its actual content undergoes substantial transformation. Furthermore, since specific claims and counterclaims in the name of Islam, and the contestation that accompanies them, is normally circumscribed by the borders of the sovereign territory of state, much of the politics that goes on in the name of Islam is also confined within those boundaries.

That the Islamist political imagination is determined in overwhelming measure by the existence of multiple territorial states becomes very clear when one looks at the political discourse, and even more, the political action of Islamist movements.

The Jamiat Islami is as Pakistan-specific as the Islamic Salvation Front is or was Algeria-specific. Even the strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood, which, although founded in Egypt has branches in various Arab countries, are equally determined by particular contextual

characteristics. Thus, the Brotherhoods in Egypt, Jordan, Syria and occupied Palestine have adopted radically different political strategies in response to specific challenges.

Even the Egyptian Brotherhood, the parent organization, has mutated over time, with its leadership in the 1980s unequivocally rejecting the more radical and militant ideas associated with Said Qutb, its chief ideologue of the 1960s. Islamist political formations, like their more secular counterparts, are governed by the same logics of time and space.

Political Islam is also a modern phenomenon. Its roots lie in the sociopolitical conditions of Muslim countries in the 19th and 20th centuries. It is the product neither of the very recent phenomenon, like the Avraham Jihad, the Petrapar (sp), or Avraham Jihad, of course, in Quds, nor can it trace its roots to the city-state of Medina over which the prophets ruled in the 7th century.

Political Islam is a product of the Muslim people's interaction, military, political, economic, cultural and intellectual, with the West during the past 200 years, when Western power has been ascendant and the Muslims have become the objects rather than the subjects of history. It is therefore both a reaction to Western domination and, at the same time, a product of that domination itself.

Modern Islamist political thinkers devised the very term “The Islamic State” in order to reconcile their romanticized vision of the Islamic polity with the existence of sovereign states that were products of the twin processes of colonization and decolonization, and were modeled after modern European states.

In practical terms, the Islamists’ preoccupation with the Islamic state has meant the attempt to Islamize existing Muslim states. Mostly, the search for the pristine Islamic state has led to the emergence of what Oliver Roy has called “Islamism-Nationalisms.” Many such Islamism-nationalist movements, from North Africa to Southeast Asia, were fashioned in the crucible of resistance to colonial domination. The difference between them and the more secular resistance movements was that the Islamist movements, like their Marxist counterparts, often departed from the exclusively political preoccupations of the more secular groups by attempting to conjoin the national and the social questions. This led them to explore and devise strategies for social as well as political transformation. But unlike the Marxist groups, the Islamist’s primary emphasis was not socioeconomic, but moral and cultural transformation.

Also, in most cases during the colonial period and immediately thereafter, defining oneself as Muslim was not considered antithetical to the nationalist project, since vast majorities were Muslim and did not consider their Muslim identity to clash with their national identity. Paradoxically, this applied even to the secular Republic of Turkey—and I'd like Tim Ulrey’s reaction to this—despite the attempt on the part of the Kemalist elite to denigrate Islam. The historical record of the Turkish War of Independence, during which Islam was used as the primary vehicle for popular mobilization and as the principal defining element of the territorial contours of the Turkish Republic, makes clear that, had Turkey not been Muslim, it would not have been Turkey.

Now, moving on to political Islam in post-colonial settings. The acceptance of Islam as part of the identity formation process in most Muslim countries may have been inevitable, but it opened the gates to Islamist intrusion into the post-colonial political process. The attraction of political Islam increased as the largely secular post-colonial state elites failed to deliver either wealth or power or dignity to their expectant populations emerging from colonial bondage. It is in this phase that political Islam, as we know it today, came of age. Abu-Ala Maududi in Pakistan and Said Qutb in Egypt became its foremost intellectual standard bearers.

As their legitimacy declined, many post-colonial regimes in the Muslim world increasingly turned towards authoritarian and repressive methods to maintain control. Consequently, they destroyed, or at least severely weakened, much of the secular opposition. In the process, they created further political space into which Islamist formations could entrench themselves.

Regime strategies in dealing with Islamist elements fell into three categories: co-optation, competition and suppression, each of which had major down sides. Trying to co-opt Islamist elements provided the latter with great political and media opportunities. Attempting to compete with Islamists on their own terms by projecting existing regimes as equally committed to Islam, surrendered the rhetorical ground to Islamist elements who could now criticize these regimes for failing to live up to their own words.

Suppressing Islamist elements by coercion forced factions within them to go underground and to take recourse to violence. It also turned Islamist groups into the most high-profile victims of human rights violation in the Muslim world.

Suppression of Islamist tendencies could never be fully effective, however. Unlike secular groups that could be neutralized by preventing them access to public platforms, Islamist political activity could never be completely curbed because of the idiom it used and the institutions it could exploit.

Islamist religious vocabulary, like the vocabulary of most other religions, has the potential of lending itself to political uses. At the same time, it could be made to appear politically innocuous and, therefore, immune to governmental retribution. Mosques and affiliated institutions, and particularly religious sermons, could be used to send out political messages dressed up in religious garb.

While Saudi petrodollars may have gone into the construction of some of these mosques around the Muslim world, the politically relevant content of religious sermons has usually reflected local concerns, rather than an international or Saudi-Islamic agenda. This is true even in a country such as Pakistan—and I hope Husain Haqqani will bear this out—that has been accused of being the breeding ground of Jihadi elements produced by Saudi-financed madrasas.

It is true that the Saudis did finance many madrasas in Pakistan. However, it was the local context, the lack of educational and economic opportunities, the absence of social services, and the consequent creation of a demand for madrasa education and Islamist charitable networks which, when combined with the impact of the Afghan War when the Jihadis were the

Mujaheddin and were fighting the good fight against the Russians, created the Jihadis now so reviled in the Western media.

New Wahabi teachings would not have had much impact in Pakistan, had it not been for local circumstances that made them attractive to certain important constituencies who could use them against the beneficiaries of the patrimonial and clientist Pakistani state and its great power patrons.

I use the word “New Wahabism,” and I’d like to give you an explanation of that, and also then connect it to what was happening in Saudi Arabia in the last three decades or so.

The New Wahabism of the Pakistani madrasas went far beyond the original thrust of Wahabi teachings. To be fair to the Saudi rulers, they had envisaged a form of Islam in the guise of Wahabism that would be socially conservative and simultaneously politically quietist, working on the supposedly Islamic dictum that one day of anarchy is worse than 60 years of tyranny. They envisioned an Islam that would help the House of Saud to retain power, but would allow it to have a flourishing economic and security relationship with the Western powers, especially the United States.

In pursuit of these objectives, the Saudi rulers were willing to give up control of culture and education to the Wahabi religious establishment in return for the latter’s non-interference in the political, security and economic spheres and the endorsement of Saudi policies in these arenas.

The social contract between the House of Saud and the descendants of Sheik Mohammed ibn Abd Al-Wahab worked well until the latter half of the 1970s, when it began to fray for multiple reasons. These included the demographic and educational explosion of the kingdom and the inflow of massive amounts of petrodollars.

Equally important was the Saudi policy adopted in the 1960s, and determined by Riyadh’s rivalry with Cairo of giving refuge to radical members of the Muslim Brotherhood then being hounded out of Nasserist Egypt. Many of them, disciples of Said Qutb, took their cue from his radical political ideas based on the denunciation of Islam regimes because they were not truly Islamic but lived in a state of ignorance, etc., etc.

They married this extremist philosophy to the socially and culturally conservative ethos of Saudi Arabia, thus concocting a heady brew that appealed to three critical constituencies in the kingdom, the most socially conservative, the most disillusioned and disempowered, and the most idealist, and joined them in a union potentially very destabilizing for the Saudi regime.

Wahabism constructed from above was a pillar of the status quo. Wahabism mobilized from below became the mortal enemy of the same status quo. And this explains why Saudi Arabia is sort of caught in the middle of these two tendencies, both of which can be traced back in one way or another to Wahabism.

I have engaged in this extended discussion about Saudi Arabia in order to point out the context specificity of the radical strain of New Wahabism that, in fact, is only part Wahabi. The greater

influence on it, in political terms, is that of Said Qutb and his even more extreme interpreters, such as Sheikh Ali Mustafa (sp).

It was the meeting of the twain, Wahhabi cultural and social conservatism and Qutbist political radicalism, that produced the militant variety of political Islam that eventually came to be represented by Al-Qaeda. If Bin Laden represented the Wahabi strain in the organization, the leader of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Ayman al-Zawahiri, represented the radical Qutbist heritage. It seems that it was al-Zawahiri who was the chief ideologue, the leading strategist, and the intellectual powerhouse within Al-Qaeda. Bin Laden was the financier and the figurehead.

What is remarkable is that this Qutbist-Wahabi alliance reached its culmination in Afghanistan. This was in large measure the result of the anarchical situation in that country during the 1990s, for which the United States was also responsible in considerable measure because of its policies followed in the 1980s. We don't have the time to go into that.

State evaporation in Afghanistan provided the Wahabi-Qutbist radicals and their organization an ideal base of operation because they could act like a state within a collapsing state. Al-Qaeda's messianic mission may have been couched in universal terms, but divorced from its Afghan context, it would have withered on the vine. Context mattered hugely in this case.

Since Al-Qaeda sort of epitomizes this connection between political Islam and violence, one needs to address that issue directly. One should not over-emphasize the importance of the violent Jihadi groups, such as Al-Qaeda, the Islamic Jihad, and Gama'at al-Islamiyya in Egypt, the Lashkar Jihad and Jamaa Islamia in Southeast Asia, and the Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad in Pakistan in the overall picture. They form a very small minority amongst Islamist groups in political formations. 9/11 may have brought them center-stage in very dramatic fashion, but they certainly did not, and do not, represent the overwhelming majority of the largely peaceful political activity carried on in the name of Islam. Whether one agrees with that type of political activity or not, or that type of political platform or not, it was still, one has to concede, largely peaceful.

The major Islamist political formations, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the Gama'at Islamiyya and the Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Islam in Pakistan, the (inaudible) in Indonesia, the Party Islam in Malaysia, and the Islamist parties in Turkey in their various incarnations, have all played the game, by and large, according to the rules established by regimes normally unsympathetic to the Islamist cause.

Several of them have performed credibly in elections despite the fact that, usually, the dice has been loaded against them. Others have learned to function within the parameters set by authoritarian regimes. They lie low when suppressed, bounce back organizationally and politically when autocracies liberalize under domestic or international pressure but, in all cases, try to keep their constituencies and organizations intact as far as possible.

The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt is a good case in point. It has worked within the system as well as around it. It has fielded candidates for parliamentary elections, either as independents or under the banner of other parties. Several of these have been elected to successive national

assemblies. During periods of relative liberalization, it has won control of professional associations like those of journalists, lawyers and doctors, and then ceded such control when the state has decided to crack down.

But, through all of these ups and downs, it has maintained intact its base among a rather diverse constituency, through non-governmental organizations, charitable endowments, social service networks, women's centers and publishing enterprises. Most of the time, it has compromised with the regime on terms that limit its influence, but do not eradicate it.

During the past few years, the most modern and politically ambitious elements amongst the Brotherhood have floated a party called the Wasat, the central party, which is referred to as a post-Islamist party. This party, although it hasn't been licensed by the Egyptian state, bears a close resemblance to the Justice and Development Party, the AK party in Turkey, which currently governs that country.

Turkey's Justice and Development Party can also, in one sense, be termed a post-Islamist party, having learned from the vicissitudes faced by Islamist parties from the 1970s until the end of the 1990s. The moderate and modernist elements within the Turkish Islamist movement came to the conclusion that they had to repackage themselves as "Conservative Democrats," who emphasize the role of tradition and culture, including religion, in Turkish society, but do not challenge the secular basis of the Turkish state, and abjure the overt use of Islamic vocabulary for political purposes. They have depicted themselves as the Muslim counterparts of the Christian Democrats in Western Europe.

While constitutional requirements, as well as electoral calculations, may have compelled the AK party to modify its Islamist agenda, this transformation has also demonstrated its commitment to democratic functioning, thus furthering the process of democratic consolidation in Turkey. The Jamaat-I-Islami of Pakistan, like the Islamist parties in Turkey, has from the very beginning been committed to parliamentary and electoral politics when such activity has been permitted in Pakistan, in spite of the fact that its electoral performance has been far from stellar. And there are various reasons for that that I do not have the time to go into.

In the most recent elections in Pakistan held in October 2002, the Jamaat-i-Islami and other Islamist parties, particularly the Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Islam, came together to form a united front that did well in the Northwest frontier province in Belugistan, and succeeded in forming the provincial government in the former province. But, it was not the Jamaat-i-Islami, but the JUI representing the Obundi Mullahs with a Pashtun base that really formed the leading edge of this victory for reasons connected, amongst other things, to the American military operation in Afghanistan against the Pashtun Taliban.

The major point here is that most of the political activism of the Islamist parties in Pakistan has been challenged through parliamentary and democratic means. While terrorist groups have engaged in periodic violence, they represent the fringe element among Islamist political formations in Pakistan. Very often these extremist terror groups have been nurtured by the Pakistan military's inter-services intelligence to serve its objectives in the Indian-administered

portion of the disputed state of Jammu in Kashmir. The Pakistani deep state, rather than Islamist ideology, bears greater responsibility for the violence committed by these organizations.

All these above instances indicate clearly that specific contexts have determined the development and transformation of Islamist movements. They also reveal that it is wrong to argue that Islamist political formations have been primarily violent in nature.

However, there are a couple of major cases where Islamist political groupings clearly straddle the violent and non-violent worlds. The foremost examples of this phenomenon are the Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Israeli-occupied Palestine.

However, the violence that both have engaged in is, once again, context-specific. Hezbollah was born as a result of the Lebanese Civil War, which began in 1975, and pitted several Lebanese factions against each other in inter-confessional and intra-confessional conflicts. Hezbollah, representing the poor and the downtrodden Shi'ia of South Lebanon, was a latecomer to the scene, but it gained considerable support following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, and flourished during the two decade-long Israeli occupation of predominant Shi'ia South Lebanon when it fought a guerilla campaign against the occupation forces.

The end of the Civil War in 1990 led to its transformation, however, from a radical clandestine militia to a mainstream political party with a resistance ring. Hezbollah is represented in Parliament as one of the two major Shi'ia parties. It has become an important player in Lebanon's political game, thanks largely to its vast network of social services that cater to the needs of the most underprivileged and vulnerable sections of Lebanese society.

The withdrawal of Israeli troops from South Lebanon in May 2000 augmented Hezbollah's prestige as the only Arab force capable of compelling Israel to cede conquered territory. Now, this may be a debatable point but, nonetheless, that was the image that it had been able to project.

Paradoxically, it also made Hezbollah largely redundant as a military force. Moreover, the compromises it has had to make in the process of parliamentary participation has diluted its originally stated vision of turning Lebanon into an Islamic polity, ala Iran. Now, Hezbollah leaders openly accept the reality of Lebanon as a multi-confessional polity, while stressing their special role as an Islamic—read Shi'ia—pressure group within that polity and their commitment to parliamentary politics. This is something that was reiterated to me in person by some of the top leadership of the Hezbollah in Beirut last August or September.

The Hamas movement is the political wing of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood. Ironically, the Israelis were responsible for building up the Brotherhood in occupied Palestine in the 1980s in order to divide Palestinians who overwhelmingly supported the secular Fatah-dominated PLO as their sole representative. However, with the outbreak of the first Intifada in 1987, the Brotherhood, until then engaged primarily in social and educational activities, set up its political wing called Hamas, or the Islamic Resistance Movement.

As the Palestinian resistance became increasingly militant post-Oslo, in great part because of Israeli policies of continued Jewish settlement and interminable delays regarding turning over

territory to Palestinian control, Hamas gained greater popularity since it had declared its unequivocal opposition to the Oslo process.

Hamas' popularity also resulted in substantial part from the PLO's conversion into the Palestinian authority and the latter's role as the intermediary organ of control, as the buffer between the Israeli occupation and the occupied Palestinian population. This diluted the PLO's position as the leader of the resistance movement because it was impossible for Arafat, or for that matter any other leader, to be both DeGaulle and Bataan at the same time. The corruption and inefficiency of the Palestinian authority added to Hamas' appeal.

At the same time, Hamas developed a military wing, especially in Gaza, which has carried out attacks against Jewish settlers, the occupying Israeli military, as well as civilians within Israel. During the past few years, Hamas members have undertaken several suicide missions both within Israel and in the occupied territories. However reprehensible, such suicide missions and other violent activities conducted by Hamas, as well as other Palestinian groups, including offshoots of Fatah, cannot be divorced from the fact of Israeli occupation and increasing economic and political desperation amongst Palestinians in the occupied territory.

What distinguishes, I would argue, both Hamas and the Lebanese Hezbollah from Al-Qaeda and other transnational Islamist organizations that take recourse to induce them into violence, is that the former's violence is restricted territorially and is directed against specific targets that they consider to be obstructing their goals of achieving national independence or freeing occupied territory.

Despite America's strong support to Israel, both Hamas and Hezbollah have largely desisted from attacking American targets during the past two decades. While this could change following Israel's targeted assassination of Sheikh Yassin, and now President Bush's endorsement of the Sharon plan, overall, both Hamas and Hezbollah are organizations that fall well within the logic of the state system and do not have universal visions of an international jihad. In this sense, they are similar to the IRA rather than to the Al-Qaeda network.

The third issue that I wanted to address was the relationship between religion and politics, or religion and state in Islam, because it's commonly believed in the West that the two are inextricably interconnected, and this makes Islam and Islamic politics unique. This, I argue, is a myth to which Islamist rhetoric—and this morning we heard a lot about it, which really proves some of the points that I wanted to make—this is a myth to which Islamist rhetoric has contributed in considerable measure.

Consequently, an image has been created, not merely of the indivisibility of religion and state, but of religion being in the driver's seat determining the political trajectory of Muslim states, including their inability to accept the notion of popular sovereignty. Nothing could be further from the truth, and I hinted at that during my interjection this morning.

Anyone familiar with the historical record of Muslim polities would realize that, in practice, the religious and political spheres began to be clearly demarcated very soon after the death of the

prophet in 632. This was inevitable because, according to Muslim belief, revelation ended with the prophet's death.

His immediate, temporal successors, the first four Caliphs, known as the Righteously Guided, while respected for their piety and closeness to the prophet, could not claim that their decrees were divinely ordained. Several of their actions and interpretations were, in fact, openly challenged, and religious and/or political dissenters assassinated three of the first four Righteously Guided Caliphs.

Civil War often loomed on the horizon, and two major inter-Muslim battles were fought during the reign of the fourth Caliph, Ali, largely as a result of inter-tribal rivalry. Intra-Muslim strife culminated in the massacre at Karbala in 680 of Ali's son and the prophet's grandson, Hussein, and his 70-odd companions by forces loyal to the newly established Omayyad Dynasty and the usurper Caliph Yaseed. The religious schism between Sunni and Shi'ia dates back to this supremely political event, a war for the throne. Politics was clearly in the driving seat.

The fiction of the indivisibility between religion and state was maintained in order primarily to legitimize dynastic rule and to provide a veneer to the reality of not merely the separation of religion and politics, but frequently the subservience of the religious establishment to temporal authority.

Criteria established by Muslim jurists to determine the legitimacy of temporal rule were minimal. There was a consensus that, as long as the ruler could defend the territories of Islam and did not prevent his Muslim subjects from practicing their religion, rebellion was forbidden; for fitna, or anarchy, was worse than tyranny.

The lessons of internecine conflict during the early years of Islam immediately following the prophet's death were well learned. Political quietism, as was pointed out this morning, was the rule in most Muslim polities most of the time for 1,000 years, from the 8th to the 18th centuries. The distinction between the temporal religious affairs and the temporal authorities de facto primacy over the religious establishment continued through the reigns of the Umayyad Abbasid and Ottoman Caliphs.

The Ottomans, in fact, institutionalized this subservience superbly by absorbing religious functionaries into the Imperial bureaucracy, a tradition carried on by the secular Turkish Republic today.

The link between religion and state in the Muslim parts of South and Southeast Asia has been more complex, as well as more distant, thanks to the greater prevalence of Sufi and syncretic forms of Islam, which have allowed religion to carve a sphere distinct from the state and autonomous of it, in many respects.

In the case of the Indian subcontinent, the presence of a large non-Muslim majority, over whom Muslim potentates ruled for several centuries, created a special situation. In such a context, statesmanship demanded creative compromises that turned mogul emperors into near deities for their Hindu subjects, and the Hindu Rajput into the sword arm of the nominally Muslim empire.

Islam could only act as a periodic break on this process, but it was certainly never in the driver's seat.

Attempts to apply puritanical Islamic precepts in matters of state turned out to be extremely shortsighted and counterproductive, because they alienated large segments of the Hindu military and civilian elites and, as under Aurangzeb, contributed to the collapse of the empire, already suffering from imperial over-stretch.

Muslim polities are, therefore, heirs to the twin traditions of the separation of the political from the religious arena; in fact, the domination of the political over the religious, particularly in Sunni Islam, and where the two intersect, as I said, to political supremacy.

However, one could argue that religion as marker of political identity is a different matter, and that here, Islam has a very distinct record that inextricably links the religious to political identity, thus making it possible to politicize religion and much more easily than is the case with other religions. But on closer scrutiny, it would be clear once again that, even in this case, there is nothing unique about Islam.

Zionism as ideology and political project can aptly be termed political Judaism, responsible for settling European Jews in Palestine, establishing the Israeli state and defining the political identity of Israeli Jews and many others around the world. Jewish fundamentalists form the hard core of the Jewish settler movement in occupied Palestine, denying Palestinians any right over their homeland.

Anyone familiar with the spread of Christianity outside Europe through the medium of colonialism in the Age of Enlightenment will realize that the cross invariably accompanied the flag, inextricably mixing the political and the religious in the narrative of colonial domination. The intertwining of Christianity with ethnicity in Europe, visible today from the Balkans to Ireland, also testifies that political Christianity as an identity marker is alive and well.

Currently, the growing power of the Christian right in American politics, particularly the Evangelical movement with its apocalyptic vision, epitomized by such concepts as the Rapture and the Second Coming, is changing the political culture of this country slowly but surely. It also has tremendous implications for American policy toward the Middle East by its zealous support for the return of all Jews to the Holy Land, although for all the wrong—one could even say genocidal—reasons.

The references by both Gore and Bush to Jesus Christ as the primary source of their political wisdom during the 2000 presidential election campaign can be educed as further evidence that political Christianity, both as ideological inspiration and as identity marker, is resurgent today in an avowedly secular but predominantly Christian country such as the United States.

Examples abound from non-Judeo-Christian traditions as well. Hindu nationalism in India is but political Hinduism, in whose name mosques are demolished, shrines desecrated, and hundreds, if not thousands, of Muslims massacred, as happened in Gujarat two years ago.

Anyone even superficially acquainted with the politics of Sri Lanka would recognize the importance of the Buddhist Sangha, the Monastic Order and, therefore, of political Buddhism in defining national identity in that country and contributing hugely to the civil war that started in 1983 between the Sinhalese and the predominantly new Tamils.

Now, I come to the final section of the paper, and I won't take too much time. What is unique about political Islam? If all religions are, as I say, quoting an (inaudible) proverb, "If all religions are equally naked in this Turkish bath," then why is Islam singled out in the West as the unique culprit that permits, indeed demands, the mixing of religion and politics?

The answer is relatively simple. Most other religio-political movements either emanate Western societies or, like the Hindu manifestation of politicized religion, do not challenge Western hegemony, but prefer to form an alliance with it. There's a dimension of political Islam that stubbornly refuses to accept the current distribution of power in the international system as either legitimate or permanent. Islamist movements, including the vast majority that work peacefully within existing political systems, continue in multifarious ways to challenge, not only the domestic status quo, but the international status quo, as well. Since the latter often props up the former, the two become closely intertwined from Islamists' perspective.

This is particularly true of Islamist movements active in the greater Middle East, from Morocco through Pakistan to Central Asia. The support extended to oppressive and authoritarian regimes by Western powers, especially the United States, makes it easier for the anger against domestic rulers to be challenged against the United States, and vice versa. The most virulent anti-American feelings at the popular level, as borne out by polls taken in the last few years—and I cite them in the paper—are expressed in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Pakistan, whose regimes are close allies of the United States.

Furthermore, it is the Muslims' collective memory of subjugation by and the current perception of weakness vis-à-vis the West that provides the common denominator among the many divergent manifestations of political Islam. It is partly in search of an explanation for past humiliation and a remedy for the Muslims' present plight that most variants of political Islam advocate the return to the imagined pristine purity of early Islam to this romanticized notion of the Golden Age. Most Islamists believe that, if Muslims can get their act together, they can transform their relationship with the West into one of equality rather than subordination.

The common denominator, therefore, is the quest for dignity, a variable often ignored by contemporary political analysts in the West. This Islamist emphasis on the restoration of dignity strikes sympathetic cords even amongst those Muslims, and they form a large majority, who cannot be characterized as Islamists in terms of their religious or political orientations. It resonates with Muslims of all strata because of the injustices that they perceive they continue to suffer at the hands of the West or its surrogates.

Since the United States is currently the leader of the concert of powers, commonly referred to as the West, the Muslim sense of outrage usually takes the form of anti-Americanism. For most Muslims, this antipathy towards America is not based on opposition to American values of democracy or freedom. It is fundamentally grounded in particular aspects of American foreign

policy, especially the perception of the blatant use of double standards by Washington in relation to the Middle East, once again demonstrated by Bush in the last 24 or 48 hours.

Many of these concerns relating to dignity, for example the status of Al-Quds (known to Christians and Jews as Jerusalem), the expulsion of Muslims from their homes, the settlement of Muslim lands, the oppression suffered by an occupied population that is predominantly Muslim, and the conviction that Israel is an extension of the West aided and abetted first by British Colonialism and then by American hegemony, come together on the issue of Palestine. Palestine has, therefore, become the Muslim grievance par excellence.

Most politically conscious Muslims believe that all Muslims are potentially Palestinians, the ultimate outsiders who can be dispossessed and dishonored with impunity, and the justice of whose cause will always be dismissed by the West as irrational fanaticism.

The occupation of Iraq has further fueled Muslim anger against the United States, since it is seen as a ploy to control either the oil wealth of the Middle East or to consolidate Israel's regional hegemony. The Islamists manipulate this general sense of disenchantment and anger to advance their own agendas against U.S. supported regimes in the Muslim world.

It is the disillusionment with American foreign policy that makes resistance to Western domination come alive in the Muslims' political imagination. This, in turn, makes political Islam appear both as a monolith and a dangerous phenomenon when seen from the West.

While the threat from political Islam to the West has been accentuated and its antagonist image reinforced by the terrorist attacks of 9/11, Western perceptions of this threat pre-date the events of 2001. Influential Western analysts, such as Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington, have been writing about the roots of Muslim rage and the clash of civilizations much before the terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

In Western perceptions political Islam is unique, but not because it uses religion for political purposes in order to create national identity or transform society. It is seen as uniquely threatening because it can also be used as an instrument to challenge the West's continued domination over structures of international power, whether directly or through client regimes in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Politicizing religion, therefore, is not the principal crime that Islamist groups commit. The West can easily forgive this, as the Zionist and Hindu nationalist cases demonstrate. It is the potential international consequences of the terms in which the Islamists politicize religion that makes them appear threatening to the dominant powers of the international system.

Thank you.

MR. MELZER: We'll now hear a reply from Husain Haqqani.

MR. HUSAIN HAQQANI: Thank you very much. I think I'd rather sit down. That was a lot to take in.

As it is, one afternoon is too little time to discuss the phenomenon of political, radical or whatever other adjective we want to apply to it for Islam. There are 1.4 billion Muslims estimated to be part of the world's population, 57 countries with a Muslim majority. Those 57 countries happen to be located in 7 different regions of the world, including Europe, South Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia. So, we really have a very large canvas that we are trying to paint on. And in that sense, I think that Professor Ayoob has done a great job of just teasing out the subjects.

I think that there is some merit in his argument that what we call political Islam today is essentially related to the Muslim quest for both dignity and identity. I think that his other point that needs validation is the fact that, in most of Islamic history, directorial authority has had de facto primacy over religious authority, and it was country rulers who ruled in the name of religion as an (inaudible) theologians. It wasn't necessarily a theocracy by definition.

I think another important point he made was that political Islam is a modern phenomenon, and I'll come back to that, a modern phenomenon as in terms of being basically a response to Western ascendancy. And then, I think he is also right in saying that the Islamists tend to de-historicize Islam and try to romanticize a pristine Islam, towards which we can travel as a way of getting rid of perceived humiliations.

And I think he was also on the mark in pointing out the context-specificity of various Islamic political movements. That's it. I think we need to broaden the context a little bit more.

Most of the Islamic political movements that you see in the world today did not start as political movements. The Muslim Brotherhood and the Jamaat Islami in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, which are the two most important in ideological terms, started out by defining themselves as ideological movements, not political ones. And in the early years, in fact, denied that they had aspirations for political power. They described themselves as Islamic revivalist movements. And then, they tried to build an alternative history in which they link themselves to various Islamic revivalist movements throughout Islamic history, and their argument was that Islam offers a complete alternative way of life to the one that we see in the world today.

So, they were not even politic-specific. For example, the founder of Jamaat Islami, Maulana Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, has written about 126 books and pamphlets on the subject of Islam, including a six-volume (inaudible) of the Qur'an, even though he was not a qualified theologian. He wrote books on the ethical system of Islam, the economic system of Islam, the political system of Islam, the social system of Islam. Sayeed Qutb wrote a book on the economic system of Islam as well.

So [Muslims] attempt to try and say whatever the West represents, represents a different body of knowledge, and [Muslims] are the inheritors of a different set of knowledge, of a different tradition. So, it was an attempt to try and pursue either an alternative or a selected modernity at the time when modernity became inevitable.

And if you go back into context, Muslims have had difficulty accepting Western ascendancy and Westernized modernity for quite a while. It's not something that happened only after colonialism. It had started even earlier, for example when the Sultan of Turkey was presented, I think in the 15-16th century with a printing machine, which had been invented in Europe. He asked his court what they thought of it and a majority said, "We don't need this device because this device is going to be a device of perfidy."

The reason being that, quite often in many areas Islam uses precedent as theory—as a substitute for theory. It's not abstract theory in circumstances. For example, political science. There is no clear political theory in Islam. You can think of only three [political theorists] in early Islam, or relatively early Islam. In the line of 14th century history, what is early also becomes difficult to identify. But, you know, you can think of (inaudible) as having said something that is relevant to political theory, al-Mawdudi (sp), al-Farabi. But really, this wasn't the subject of Islamic thinkers through history.

Modern day Islamists are the first ones to try and define an Islamic [political] statement. Professor Ayooob is very right in saying that the very formulation Islamic state, *Adol-i-Islamia* (sp), which would be the Arabic equivalent, is not a term in the Qur'an. You do not find the term "The Islamic State" in the Qur'an. So, Islamic state as an idea is an idea that is related to the desire to be different and to start trying to define yourself differently.

I think that that needs to be explored, in my opinion. I think that it is important to remember that political Islam is part of a bigger revivalist agenda or idea which, essentially, is rejectionist in terms of accepting not only the ascendancy that is political but, I think the ascendancy of ideas, and that is where the Islamists are at a disadvantage. That's why they are having to constantly make compromises.

For example, there is reference in Professor Ayooob's paper to the various compromises that Jamaat Islami in Pakistan has made, the Muslim Brotherhood had made. And that is because, even though they have set the various stages of their revolution in their literature, they cannot always adhere to these stages, and so they change track, which makes them also difficult to predict sometimes.

The second thing that I think is somewhat missing is the impact of Marxism-Leninism on the Islamic world. I think that the Islamists decided to invert Marxism, for example Maududi describes the Jamaat Islami as "The vanguard of the Islamic revolution." That's the term he uses.

Similarly, the structure of membership he uses, he uses a three-tier membership for his organization, which includes fellow travelers, full members, card-carrying members. And so, that whole structure is essentially, in my opinion [borrowed from Marxism]. There is also the timing. The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in 1928. The Jamaat Islami was founded in 1941, and the discussions to form it started in 1937.

This is also the timing of when the Communists started gaining ground in many parts of the Muslim world. Many of these movements taught, that this is new theology that is about to take

over, and it's a godless ideology, and Islam is going to fall by the wayside as a result. We have to create something that has enough dynamism.

If you notice the pattern, for example, the Muslim Brotherhood always went to the same pattern as the Marxist-Leninist in terms of working with trade unions, working with professional syndicates, working in student unions, working on features, having newspapers and publications, having this expanse of literature. And I have occasionally been known to make the comment that there's very little taught in those books, but there are a lot of books.

And here, I would like for you to consider that why is this solely—I mean, in his paper, he's kind of referred to the Soviet Union. But, I'll tell you where I think the Soviet influence has been greatest, and that is that, after the Muslim Brotherhood leaders moved to Saudi Arabia, a lot of the books of Qutb and Maududi, etc., were translated into many languages and distributed free with Saudi money.

And so, the influence on the world of ideas in the Muslim world of the Islamist thinkers answers a question that (inaudible) asked this morning, which is, "What happened to all those people who were the reformation thinkers of Islam in the 19th century and early 20th century?"

Islam is what happened to them, in my opinion. Because, Sayyid Ahmad from India, Mufti Abdul from Egypt, *Sheikh Rashidera (sp)* from Syria and Mohammed (inaudible) looked at Islamic crossroads, actually summed it up at the turn of the century. He said that the dilemma for the Muslims was, in this day of modernity, do they want to go forward with Islam, or do they want to go back to Islam? This was the dichotomy he saw. And the thinkers like Sayyid Ahmad and Abdul and Rashidera, they were people who said we need to go forward with Islam. We need to embrace those issues that are not available in our precedent.

For example, the Islamic theology moves forward with precedent, in an age of tremendous modernization, the biggest problem was there is no precedent for many things. There is no precedent for a situation where the Muslims will not be rulers, or the majority, for example. That was something that they realized. I mean, in Spain, the Muslims ruled and then were expelled. The Mongols came and conquered the Muslims but, within a generation, the rulers converted to Islam, so they all had a problem now. How do you deal with a situation where the rulers are non-Muslim and the majority is Muslim? These are things for which there was no precedent for people to consider.

The whole absence of precedent it required new thinking, and these thinkers at the end of the 19th century and early 20th century emphasized the two notions of hegemony, consensus, and *Ishtihad*, innovative thinking or exertion to think. They said that these are the two doctrines that required the maximum effort and attention.

But, the Islamists actually caused the collapse of this whole reformation. So those—especially considering that we have a majority here who are not necessarily born Muslims and don't have the benefit that Professor Ayoob and I have of knowing some things from what we were taught at the Muslim (inaudible) Sunday school. Some of us have probably read a little beyond that, hopefully.

But, for that, we can say that there has to be an Islamic reformation. I think that there was an aborted reformation at the end of the 19th and early 20th century. And the abortion of that reformation came because Islamist political movements because what they did, is that they said that Islam—al Fad (sp)—is the solution, so let's stop thinking about these contemporaneous disciplines, which I would submit is something that Zionism has not done and Hindu fundamentalism has not done and Christian fundamentalism has not done,.

So, when they start saying, “Well, the solution to the economic problem lies in the Qur'an and not in the study of contemporaneous economics,” then they actually cause an abortion of the thinking process that is going on within the society. And that explains part of the crisis that they are now addressing, the crisis of Islamic humiliation and lack of dignity, because I think that part of the problem in the Muslim world is the lack of dignity and the humiliation after humiliation that comes from the inability to absorb technology, inability to absorb economic change, inability to come to terms with a world which has different rules than those rules which existed in the early parts of Islam.

So, there are two other things that I would like to submit, and that is that one of the most important elements—I mean, yes, the Palestinian issue and things like that have an impact on the Muslim world in terms of how people perceive them. But, I would submit that, for example, the founding of the Muslim Brotherhood and the founding of the (inaudible) and the founding of the Jamaat Islami all precede the founding of the state of Israel.

So, that is something that has to be borne in mind, that the ideology was born before what people today say is the main reason for it. It became more fashionable now just as, of course, one could argue, that the Holocaust helped the Zionist cause in the sense that people who were previously Jewish, but comfortably sitting in New York and didn't think much about their fellow Jews, now started thinking about them. And so the impetus for creating a Jewish state became more important because of the suffering of the Jews in Europe.

But, the point is that Zionism as an idea predated [the Holocaust], and I think that Islamism as an idea predated the Palestinian problem, and that is something that shouldn't be ignored, just as those criticizing Islamism sometimes grossly generalize and simplify. I think that those who simplify Islamism as a phenomenon can also over-simplify by just keeping it all focused on [the Palestinian issue].

Intellectually, the Islamists have two important concepts, one in Iran by one of the Iranian scholars, Jalal Al-i Ahmad, who came up with the term “Occidentosis.”

This Occidentosis, which as you know, [refers to] Muslims who get totally overwhelmed by the West's intellectual and scientific and whatever achievements. And then, Maududi uses a term, “Westoxification,” being intoxicated with Western ideas.

So, suppose those thoughts had something to do with a broader issue than just the specific political issues that we would want—although I would agree with Professor Ayoob that the

political context helped that. These may have been movements that would have fallen by the wayside if it hadn't been for the context.

And the Marxism factor also played a role in the rise of Islamists because, in many cases, Muslim rulers imposed colonial states, taught that while they were trying to forge statehood on the basis of abstract nationalism, or historic nationalism or linguistic nationalism, they felt threatened by the Communists and the Marxists on the one hand.

And so they thought, let the Islamists take them on. And the Saudis played a crucial role in that, and I think the West also had a role in it. Because I remember as a very young student activist on the outer edges of the Islamic movement in Pakistan at that time, sort of finding that the Western journalists who covered our demonstrations or radical meetings, etc., were always quite pleased with the fact that these guys hate the Communists.

And so, it was always assumed that Islamists would always be anti-Communist, and therefore (inaudible), and that's what drew us into Afghanistan in that particular manner, the whole Jihadist phenomenon, the ideology.

The context was strategic. These guys don't have any theology that has an engine of its own. And the rulers used them in terms and services – the strategists thought of them as a potentially useful device.

But, in the process they began developing a theology, constantly, and they're continuing to do it. It may not make sense to a lot of us, but it makes a lot of sense to somebody who has had no direct exposure or education except in the theological sense, and then stole that simplified narrative of history (inaudible) go in and make the Muslims look great till the West became great. Which, by the way, is not historically correct. The Muslims have far more humiliation in their 14th century history than the Islamists concede. The Islamists have what I would call a simplified version of history also.

But this over-simplification sells. It describes Muslims as being humiliated only by these Westerners and their ascendancy, and all they have to offer is their technology. Yes, they have technology, but [Muslims] can selectively modernize by adopting that technology. And that brings me to my last comment, that the Islamists, whenever they have had the opportunity to try and build an alternative order, have failed.

For example, when I was a young journalist in Pakistan I remember General Zia (sp) telling me—and General Zia could be a very animated and interesting person; Pakistan has tremendous capability to produce dictators who can be charming—“(inaudible) this Jamaat-i-Islami they always talk about, an alternative system,” and all that? So, when I came to power, I said, “Okay, we are going to try the Islamic system.” And I asked them to take over the finance ministry, the planning ministry, the information ministry, the production ministry, etc., and come up with an alternative Islamic system. And what have they done? All they can tell me is how to introduce Hijab for the women, which is their head covering for the women, and how to ban obscene billboards and cut out the music—is that a modern Islamic system?” And he was right.

In Sudan, the same happened. A general who took over power with the head of the Islamists, (inaudible), got Hassan al-Terabi who, by the way, having spent a couple of years at Harvard represents, in my opinion, the most complicated personality that you can have. You know, an Islamist educated at Harvard and the Sorbonne.

And Terabi is saying, we have a whole system, it's an alternative system. And what were they able to do except ignite a civil war against the South, the non-Muslims, and some restrictions on women and some symbolic things with the educational system, and in the mass media.

And so, I think that is another area that needs to be covered, that while the (inaudible) is much larger, the success is much smaller. And in Malaysia, where they have controlled certain state governments, again, they have had the same kind of failure.

And so, perhaps the theology needs to be dealt with, and the more extreme agendas of ideology. But, I don't think it should be looked upon as a completely benign phenomenon either, because a phenomenon does have within itself the potential for igniting difficulties and problems.

I'll leave it at that. I hope I have completed it in my assigned time. And I'm sure that Hillel will have some more interesting things to say. And in the questions and answers, I'm sure there will be enough provocation on my part for you all to get interested.

Thank you all very much.

DR. HILLEL FRADKIN: I want to talk a little bit about the way in which Professor Ayooob approached this subject, and what he had to say about what objectives he wanted to achieve in the discussions. And I'll say a few things about how I understand that and what I think are the plusses and minuses of it.

The first thing is that Professor Ayooob approached our subject, political Islam, in two ways. I mean, to say what it is and to say what it is not. And I think in a certain way, he spends more time on the latter than on the former. And he states a reason for this, that to discuss this subject at this point, one must struggle with established understandings, or rather misunderstandings. And the latter takes the form of what he called unstated assumptions. Political Islam is monolithic; political Islam is inherently violent; intermingling of religion and politics is unique to Islam.

All the many things that Professor Ayooob said, with many of which I concur, were organized through that framework, a framework that was designed to correct these views, which he (inaudible) as false. And in a way, the object of his paper was to correct those views.

So, I want to say at the outset I agree with Professor Ayooob that these views are false, though sometimes for different reasons and sometimes to a different degree. But, I'll try to communicate those specific areas of agreement as I go along.

But, I want to raise the question here whether there is a particularly great necessity, at least for Western audiences at this time, to correct these misunderstandings. In fact, whether they are

misunderstandings of the West or, rather, misunderstandings that characterize Muslim discussion rather than Western discussion. And in fact, you allude to this possibility when you say that a large part of what you've [characterized] as misunderstandings about political Islam and about Islam generally as being the result of the Islamists themselves.

This I think really has to be reflected upon, whether what you have to say in the paper is something that really has to be directed to Muslim audiences at least, if not more, than to Western audiences. And then, I felt there was a certain difficulty with the paper because it tended to be driven a bit by correcting those misunderstandings.

There's another difficulty, which I'll come to later on, but it bears again on blaming the misunderstanding, but also blame in the creation of this phenomenon. A question which Husain raised when talking about whether Islamism didn't start out as an ideological movement, that it predates a lot of the specific historical developments to which it relates at the present time, specifically Israel but other things as well, including, one should say, the whole context of the post-World War II world, that is, it existed as an idea before.

For example, if I may put this bluntly, there's a certain way in which your paper moves in the direction of being—(inaudible) against those two evil geniuses, America and Israel. And Husain it seems to me is quite correct in pointing out that this movement started before either Israel existed and before America was in any way a major player in the Muslim world. America didn't become a major player in the Muslim world until well after World War II. And that means, as I see it, that your theory of the development of radical Islam or political Islam doesn't explain very well the original inspiration behind it.

Let me try to illustrate these judgments by going briefly through these three points. Is Islam monolithic? No, but I think it is actually a long time since people in the West have promoted the view that it is. Scholars, including myself, are endlessly talking about the great variety within Islam, both historically and in every (inaudible). And more importantly, so do our public officials, beginning with President Bush. So, I don't think this is a particularly dominant view at the moment, either publicly or academically.

The question is whether Muslims themselves believe this, whether they believe it's a diverse phenomenon. Quite a few, it seems to me, do not; and especially, but not only, radicals. Of course, radical Muslims or political Islamists do not believe that Islam is simply identical in all times and places as a matter of fact. But, they have a very great tendency to insist that it should be simply one thing. And they've gained a great deal of sympathy for this view, whether or not they believe in violence as a means to attain it.

Now, Professor Ayoob argues that this is patently false. It's patently false even for the radicals, that they have ultimately been restrained by—I forget how you put it, but it was a very elegant way of putting it—essentially, it's reality fights back. And that they've been constrained by the fact of a state system which arose after World War I and World War II, and have wound up often finding their agendas in local ways.

This is true, but it's important to say and stress. A related point—this is related to a point that Husain made—insofar as radical Islam it can be said, with certain qualifications, to have literally been founded in a certain time and in a certain place by the founding of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928, it was founded as a rejection of that state system, and instead it had already consciously the idea that this was wrong.

Now, it may well have been frustrated in its goals to date to dispense with that unsolicited or that inconvenient reality. But, it doesn't mean that it doesn't keep trying to conceive itself as a transnational movement. And I would say, at least for Islamism as such—I'm not talking about Islam as a broader phenomenon—the trend line is rather in that direction than in the other; that is to say despite these frustrations—the frustrations created by the fact that the Muslim world is illegitimately, by their likes, divided into states—they keep trying to act as if it wasn't or isn't.

And one sees that there may be other factors, and probably one sees that precisely in things like Al-Qaeda, which was a remarkable assimilation of Muslims from so many different parts of the Muslim world. It's true that there was a particularly convenient way to gather them. But nonetheless, it did gather them, and it did mold them into something like the transnational movement.

I want to say here also in passing, because I think it's relevant also to a certain historical side of the scholarship on radical Islam or political Islam. Professor Ayoob finds himself in sympathy with and cites French scholars like Olivier Roy who and his disciple, Gilles Kepel, and I would say I find a lot of their observations useful and helpful as well, including the concentration or the degree to which the paradox for the Islamist has been how to simultaneously destroy states while trying to take them over.

But, I'm not sure one has to ask how much to rely on, say, the views of Roy and Cappelletti for the following reason. This is not a normal American anti-French beef, but one has to remember that Roy predicted the end of political Islam in 1992, and Cappelletti did so in 2000 and, somehow, it's still around. I mean, their point was that the failure of Islamism to transform the states would lead to its collapse, and that's not exactly what happened.

I want to say a few things also about the treatment of Saudi Arabia for more or less the same reason that Husain mentioned. **We put a lot of emphasis on it, and I think there's a good reason to do so, that it is one reason for the (inaudible) is everyone is talking about it, but the other is that it seems to be, as you put it in (inaudible) terms of kind of limit (inaudible) as a way in which even a sort of a state sympathetic in principle to the Islamists for example; put political Islam into its own purposes rather than vice-versa.**

But, I think your history of the ups and downs of that arrangement, or the actual history of it leads to somewhat more ambiguous conclusions. Yes, the Saudi family suppressed the (inaudible) in 1926, (inaudible), but the story was actually a lot different, and molded the clerical establishment to its purposes, and made sure for a long period of time that they would not be the tail that wagged the dog. But, the story was a lot different, as you sort of implied, in 1979 when radicals seized the great Mosque, which I think actually may be the first act of radical Islam. I'm not sure.

That, too, was repressed, but only apparently with the use of French troops and mercenaries. This seems to show that the regime itself thought that it—however much it wanted to put down this movement or keep it under control—it lacked sufficient power within itself to do so. And that seems to be shown by the fact that it wound up, unlike after 1926, in basically ceding an enormous amount of control to the Wahabi clerical establishment over education and various other matters, so that the movement grew rather than receding.

In this connection, I want to stick with (inaudible) for a moment in the past—in the context of Pakistan—and if I'm wrong, Husain will correct me. But, you say that their influence, where it was achieved, depended on the context. You offer Pakistan as an example, as a place where they did really achieve quite a lot of influences. And you say that was because of poverty and other factors (inaudible). That's true, but all political movements depend on particular circumstances. The French revolution began with a food riot, but that isn't, over time, what came to define its objectives and its effects.

Now, I want to say by way of reservation, my own remarks that the Neo-Wahabis may not succeed in the long-term in spreading their views. There are times, I confess, when their efforts can seem like something from a Woody Allen movie, out of which I will offer the following example. There has been a huge amount of recruitment of young people from other parts of the Muslim world to go for training in Saudi Arabia, from Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan of course, South India and elsewhere.

One such effort concerned the region of Aceh in Western Indonesia. And someone I know who had spent a lot of time in Aceh actually told me that a group arrived back from their sojourn in Saudi Arabia with one of their Saudi mentors. And their [goal was] to establish a school and to purge, naturally, the mosque of impurities. But, the other great act they undertook was to change all the signage in the town to Arabic, which was, of course, ridiculous. Nobody in Indonesia speaks Arabic. Fortunately, of course, the people in the village knew where the cobbler was and they knew where the grocery store was. Those things don't change that much.

So, there's something sort of insane about this. On the other hand, they and other of the Islamists—especially those, it seems to me, who fell under the influence of the Saudis—cleared the way for the radical movement that was independent of the Wahabis to be merged with the Wahabis. They keep making the case that true Islam is Arab Islam and only Arab Islam, and they still have takers for this notion.

I want to talk a little bit about this issue of dignity and the conditions which have led to such force as political Islam does have. You attribute this to [the fact] that it stems from the weakness of the Muslim world, vis-à-vis the Western world. And I think that's true, and I think it's terribly important, and also terribly dangerous.

But, what is the cause of that? What is the cause of that weakness? It seems to me the clearest cause in the present circumstances is the failure of Muslim nation-states and Muslim nationals in general. These states can provide, and have provided, basically nothing to Muslims over the 50

or 60 years they've been in existence, except to a very small elite who treat these countries like their private fiefdoms.

And this failing is really responsible for not the formation of radical Islam—which predated it, or which was coincident with the founding of the states— but rather its real rise to power is coincident with the collapse of nationalism, though not, as it turned out, of the nation-states themselves. The states go on, but the justification for them has disappeared.

And here, I wanted to concur in a point you made. I think it is true that America committed a great error, as well as an injustice, in helping to prop up the (inaudible) states over a very long period of time. It would be an important discussion for us to have now that we have at least formally rejected that promise. Formally, I said, because there was a reference early this morning to the Bush-Mubarak talks, and you don't [know] exactly what happened there. But I think it seems to be proper to say that Muslim nationalism collapsed under the weight of its own incompetence and corruption and not really nefarious Western designs.

To put the point even further back historically, it doesn't seem to me that the Muslim world became weak because of, or at least not entirely because of Western domination. To the extent that it came under Western domination, it was because it had already (inaudible). And that means that the point you make earlier in your paper that somehow radical Islam is both the result and product of domination seems to me not adequate. It's also a product of whatever it was that led to the weakness of the Muslim world.

And to put it sort of fairly crudely, in the 16th century, Ottoman Turkey and other Muslim powers, including the Saudis, could settle matters with the equivalent of what in the 19th century became a famous sort of phrase, "one British gunboat." By the end of the 17th century, they proved it. And that certainly permitted the West eventually, along with other interests and with other factors, to come to dominate the Muslim world as it did more or less from the beginning of the 19th century on, [which begs the question] how did that happen? That all happened well before the West was powerful enough to affect its will.

I think I'll stop there.

MR. MELZER: So, Professor Ayoob has expressed a desire to make some brief reply to the very challenging comments of the commentators. After that, then we will of course open questions to the audience.

PROFESSOR AYOOB: Thank you. First of all, I'd like to thank both Husain and Hillel for their extremely useful and perceptive comments. They've found all the holes in my argument. And I wish I had the opportunity to write a 100 page paper, which I might, sort of taking into consideration all the points and objections that were raised, but it would have driven the audience away.

So let me begin with the question of audience. And responding to Hillel first, he very correctly pointed out that the balance in the paper in terms of describing the phenomenon of political Islam was tilted towards saying what it is not rather than saying what it is. And the attempt that the

primary thrust was to try and remove certain misconceptions that I perceived to exist amongst Western audiences, of both lay and scholarly.

The simple response to it is that, as I was telling some friends during the coffee break, that I always speak to a specific audience. Just as in my writings, I tend to harp on the fact that phenomena are usually context specific, I believe that presentations should be audience specific. And therefore, having gauged the potential audience, I pitched it in the way I did.

I always, just to give you anecdotally a couple of examples, when I speak to Muslim audiences, for example, I tell them what's wrong with them. But in this audience, to tell Muslims that these things are wrong with them and what they should do, I don't think would cut much ice.

I am opposed to the phenomenon of Islamism in the sense that it is projected. In fact, I was telling somebody again during the coffee break that to say that Islam is the solution is no solution.

So having said that, in other instances, I mean, I remember a few months ago, I was in Damascus at a Friday prayer led by the Grand Mufti of Syria, who out of the blue invited me to speak to 5,000 members of his congregation. I'd never spoken in a mosque before. But I told them where Muslims had gone wrong and I told them that for 20 minutes. And I told them how they could become, not really better Muslims, but globalized Muslims in this particular context. But for me to give you that speech—and that was all without any notes because I didn't even know I was supposed to speak.

I told my Hindu audiences that they are now trying to recreate Hinduism in the image of Islam. And this is Islam's greatest victory over Hinduism. But in the process, they'll destroy the great country, India.

So, you know, I usually pitch my [messages to a specific audience]—so that's probably the best explanation I can give on that.

But, regarding the two major points that you made and that Husain made about Islamism or these movements being rooted in a broader context of revivalist movements—broader both in terms of time and ideology—is very correct. You can go back and situate them in that wider context. I just wish I had the time to do so.

But, it would be wrong to say that the Muslim brotherhood or other Islamist movements, since they just came before 1948—actually, the Muslim brotherhood goes back to the late 1920's and the Salafi movement even before that—that what was happening in the Middle East in terms both of the Colonial project and Zionist project, both of which predate 1948, didn't have an impact on Islamist thinking.

So 1948 I think is an artificial date. You have go much beyond that in order to try to figure out [the development of Islamist ideology]. Muslim perceptions, widely shared Muslim perceptions, regard American hegemony in the Middle East and Israel's predominant regional role in the Middle East as extensions of the Colonial project. So there's a historical, at least a perceived

historical continuity to that. And therefore, the responses are also in a sense historically continuous.

About the transnational movements like Al-Qaeda and so on, I agree that one needs to go back and see why exactly they took the shape they did, and that maybe there was something in terms of a transnational neo-monolithic element in Islam that allowed them to flourish. But I again think that the context, particularly of Afghanistan and the fading state of Afghanistan, was more important than that element. And secondly, I think when we are looking at these transnational movements, particularly Al-Qaeda, one should not forget who they were the creations of—the ISI and the CIA, and not necessarily in that order.

There is a very good recent book by Mahmood Mamdani called *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, in which he addresses this issue of who created transnational terrorism, not just in Afghanistan but also in Sub-Saharan Africa and how it was related to the politics of the Cold War. And how, after the end of the Cold War, it got out of hand and the creators of these movements were no longer in control of them. So I think there is much more to it than just a form of monolithic Islam.

I do agree that there are Muslims who believe naively that there is something called Islam which is all the same around the world. And when I speak to Muslim audiences, I try to disabuse them of that fact because I don't want to give up my Indian Islam for this notion of Islam which is highly Arabised or Saudi Arabised, which I don't consider—well, I wouldn't say anything more than that.

So there is an element amongst Muslims which I think arises out of this solidarity with the Umma which is in a way rarified. And I keep trying to tell them, you know, please don't talk about Umma because the Umma in any real sense does not exist. But that's a different matter.

About Husain's comments, he also said some of these things.

But about what are the critical variables that would explain, not just the rise of Islam, but when and how Islamism will lose steam. And here I think both Husain and Hillel raised this point, and this is something that I hadn't properly addressed, but I think it needs addressing.

I look at two critical variables here; one, as Hillel pointed out and I think Husain did also, the nature of regimes. I don't agree with you that the nation state has collapsed. It's still—

MR. FRADKIN: No. I said it didn't, but nationally—

PROFESSOR AYOOB: —I don't even think that nationalism has collapsed because the existence of the framework of the territorial state, and even the effort at nation building engaged in by the State of Leagues, however inefficient and imperfect, has led to the emergence of a sense of nationalism amongst the people.

I mean, now when you travel in the Middle East, you go to the various countries in the Middle East, Syrians are Syrians, Iraqis are Iraqis, Palestinians are Palestinians. There is a sense of

nationalism. And that at one level coincides with the nation state but it doesn't necessarily coincide with the regimes that preside over those states.

So I think, again, the nature of the regimes and the support extended to them by the west, particularly the United States, is a critical variable. And I said this in my paper as well. So if regimes change—because amongst other things, the second generation authoritarian regimes in the Muslim world are greatly efficient in doing one thing— they decimate secular opposition. And the Shah's regime in Iran, above all, demonstrated that. And then they leave a political void in which the Islamist forces move in. It happened in Iran. It happened in Algeria. It's happening in Egypt. It's happening in Pakistan now by Musharraf. There's a very good article recently in the *Journal of Democracy* called, "Pakistan's Armored Democracy," which addresses this issue very cogently. So, it's actually the nature of regimes which is very, very important and critical.

The other [critical factor], of course, is American foreign policy, not only in support of the regimes, but its own approach to the Israeli-Palestinian issue that has created this image of the West, because the United States has come to embody the West as a leader of the concert, that really wants to do the Muslims in. And the solidarity of the Umma—or the perceptions of the solidarity of the Umma—is sort of based to some extent [on this perception of American foreign policy].

So I think those are the issues that we need to address as well.

What else? I think Husain agreed with most of what I said so, that's good for an Indo-Pakistani to (inaudible).

MR. MELZER: Only one if you're very good. One minute.

MR. FRADKIN: I will be very good. It's not a response to Professor Ayoob's remarks, it's rather something else that was occasioned by them and also by what Husain said. Also, in the way of the morning discussion, there was a group discussion this morning about whether political theory needs to be revived, or created maybe even, as an important motive of contemporary Islamic discourse. And I don't want to disagree with that, especially as a person who spent most of his life as a political theorist.

But, what has occurred to me out of this discussion and others more recently, that one discipline that is terribly necessary for these discussions, not for ours so much, but for those within the Muslim world, is history. And I'm following on your point about the Islamists—I'm sorry, the Islamists being terribly a-historical, which is absolutely true. But there's a way in which that has come to be true. I don't know how it came to be true, of a civilization which had an extraordinary historiographic tradition.

But, it has come to be true that history as a really serious discipline has lapsed in the Muslim World. But in order to get at what you call context for there to be the kind of understanding that is necessary for dealing with these issues, it seems to me what one needs is really very, very solid history.

And I don't know how to encourage that, but I do think that it would be absolutely crucial for fruitful discussions within the Muslim world about how it got to where it is, what its actual condition is, what are the causes that are within its control, what are the causes that are not within its control. And that was the main thing I wanted to say.

MR. MELZER: All right. We will now open up for questions. Once again, let me ask you, if you would, to move to the microphones with your question and please begin by identifying yourselves. Also let me urge you to keep your questions or comments as short as possible. And in exchange, we will keep the answers as short as possible.

Yes.

PROFESSOR NASSER BEHNEGAR: Nasser Behnegar of Boston College. I want to say a few kind words for the Islamists, I guess in terms of their understanding of Islam. First, Husain's point was the absence of political theory or the fact that it (inaudible) long time for political theory to emerge Islam. So what is the cause of that? The cause of it is that political questions were answered in Islamic traditions by (inaudible). So religion and politics were inseparable.

And second, as to the question of the Islamic state—it is true that Islamic state is a new discussion and concept in Islam. But it's a new concept not because political Islam is something new, but because the question of Islamic political systems outside of the Caliphate is a new question.

And finally then, my last thought was going back to Professor Ayoob's account of what political Islam is, that it's a phenomena that uses instruments for political purposes. In light of that definition, I wonder how one would explain this phenomenon. The phenomena of the prophet ruining the Islamic views as a general—as a person who will punish people.

What was seen at that time—do you think—was it at that time politics that was driving it or religion? Or if that question doesn't make sense, then does the distinction between politics and religion that we take for granted because we assume a Western specifically modern understanding of the purpose of politics have to be revised?

MR. MELZER: Who wants to take that?

MR. HAQQANI: Let me just say that I should rephrase the term and say there is an absence of coherent political theory because these devices that have been arrived at — divine sovereignty, for example—raises the question, who will exercise divine sovereignty? Will I have to (inaudible) essentially an attempt by Ulama or the (inaudible) to exercise divine sovereignty?

The Pakistani constitution and Maududi's device for that was that there will be the pious people chosen by the people. So the people will elect, but they're restricted to electing only pious people, which I have sometimes described as a variable on the dictatorship of the preliterate with the dictatorship of the pious. And so I find all of that a little incoherent, as far as I'm concerned.

Now, to your question as to why it took so long, maybe. I mean, I have no dispute with your explanation or anybody else who may attempt another explanation. But that is not the question we are addressing, and do we even have to be apologetic or analytical about it, that it took a while to emerge. It didn't, period. And so what we have to figure out is where do we go from now and where are we going right now?

And I find that what Islamists are trying to do is essentially to create pity out of precedent. And that is a real life example, examples of the prophet. Yes, the prophet ran Medina, but Medina was—we don't have exact demographics for that period, but it couldn't have been a city of more than a few thousand or a few tens of thousands of people. And how that was run may not necessarily be the direct model for running Indonesia, which is several hundred islands with a population of almost 250 million.

Secondly, I think that the other thing that has changed is that the Caliphate itself has collapsed. And you must remember that, especially the Ottoman Caliphate and even before that, it was minimalist—there were many minimalist rulers. They had very little. You know, the function of the state was very limited. And because the function of the state was limited, it was very simple to draw on some precedents and kind of extend them a little bit and then move on.

Now, I don't know how many pages the IRS code runs into, and some of us would probably like it to be reduced to a shorter version, but you know, in a more complex age of government, the simplifications that come from just taking the precedent and adapting it is not necessarily valid and may not necessarily be valid. And to the extent that the Islamists have tried to invalidate it, they haven't done a very good job.

PROFESSOR AYOOB: Just very briefly. I think Husain has said much of what I would have said. But this absence of political theory question that you raise is very relevant, as well as the very perceptive comment that political questions were answered by reference to the law, what you call divine law. But this so called divine law is really a human artifact. It was Islamic jurists rendering opinion based on their understanding of what God and the prophet would have wanted them to. So there's a human agency involved.

It also demonstrates that Islamic polities in the classical age were driven by what, for the lack of a better word, one would call a commitment to constitutionalism, which actually prepares the ground for liberal democracy in Islam. The Council of the Sharia of the legal code of constitution cannot be amended easily -- it needs expert opinions of the top jurists and so on and so forth.

And this study of constitutions or constitutional law and so on, can actually be a good first step towards the study of political theory. I mean obviously there's political theory in the Western tradition that goes back, but when I first studied political science, I studied constitutions. We came to political theory only later. So there is a connection there between constitutions and the study of constitutions and political theory.

About Medina, I agree with much of what Husain said. But I'd only like to add that it was really an exception, because the prophet could do what he did and get away with it because he had

direct access to the word of God. But the revelation came to an end with the death of the prophet. And everything else that followed was very clearly structured by human (inaudible). And that's when religion was used to legitimize temporary rule.

The fact that even after the massacre—and I say this not as a Shi'a, I'm not a Shi'a—that after the Massacre of Karbala, Yazid's Caliphate or the Umayyad dynasty could be legitimized by Islamic (inaudible) demonstrated the instrumentalization of Islam.

So, there's more to political Islam or Islamism than just instrumentalization, but that is a major dimension which, incidentally, most Muslims ignore when they talk about Islam and Islamic politics. Now, this is for the Muslim audience, they don't want to believe that Islam can be used as an instrument for the furtherance of temporal, secular political ends.

PROFESSOR RICHARD ZINMAN: Richard Zinman, James Madison College at Michigan State.

This has been a very helpful day so far, and especially a very helpful session. But it's not clear to me that we're really biting the bullet, so to speak, and face up to the most difficult question. Now maybe that's a good idea. We need to start (inaudible).

But, I want to follow my friend and colleague, Professor Behnegar and perhaps put in a good word for the Islamists. And what I mean by that is I want to take their concerns seriously enough so that what I think are some of the difficult questions that need to be addressed are at least on the table.

I mean, it seems to me if you take the Islamist concerns seriously, they're two-fold also. One is how does one restore proper dignity? Now it seems to me that the answer can only be you need to become powerful enough to earn a place in the world where you cannot be humiliated. And in the present circumstances, that means you have to become like the United States or some equivalent, at least in terms of science, technology, and economics and so forth. There is no alternative. If you can't do that, you're going to remain weak and you're going to remain subject to ongoing humiliation.

But that's not the only thing as far as I can tell Islamists are concerned with. They're also concerned about—let's call it purity or the moral health of their fellow Muslims. And as far as I can tell, their argument is, well, if you look at the West, the West has failed to maintain a harmonious relationship between a serious, morally responsible way of life and (inaudible).

And therefore in the West, let's say Europe as an example, the attempt to combine say, Christianity and modernity has failed utterly. It's failed utterly because Christianity has been essentially obliterated. Not serious. In the United States, it's failed in part. Yes, there are still Christian fundamentalists or Christian Orthodox, whatever you want to call them. But they already themselves have made at least a half peace with some things like capitalism and the way of life of capitalism.

So it seems to me the hard question then is well, isn't there something to this? Isn't there something to the view if you really are concerned with living a way of life that is conforming with the law as revealed by the prophet, can you do that in a world that is at the same time the kind of world you need to live in in order to become powerful enough to restore your dignity?

And it seems to me that those two things together are the real dilemma, not one or the other. And it seems to me that—and you know I just have to respect the political (inaudible) this group and my colleague, Professor Ayoob, but it seems to me that dilemma remains—if Zionism seems to be an issue, if colonialism never had taken place, the same dilemma would be present. It wouldn't take the same form, but the same dilemma would be present.

MR. MELZER: Yeah.

PROFESSOR AYOOB: Could I respond to that? Yeah. Those are two very fundamental questions and Dick is used to asking fundamental questions. I've seen it for the last 15 years, which makes life rather uncomfortable. But—.

MR. FRADKIN: It's supposed to stimulate.

PROFESSOR AYOOB: Yeah. I know.

MR. FRADKIN: That's the problem that we always—.

PROFESSOR AYOOB: But, no, both those questions, I do take both of them seriously. How does one restore proper dignity? And as you said very rightly, you have to become powerful enough. You have to be like those that have the power to determine, not only theirs but other people's future in order to be able to do that.

And I unabashedly, I mean, I tell my students that one of the attractions of the West for the third world—because I've been teaching third world politics for a long time, and I don't see anything negative about it—is that people, particularly state elites, want to emulate the powerful and the model of the powerful. And there's nothing wrong in it because, if you see a successful model, you need to emulate it. If I like the Honda Accord, I go and buy another Honda Accord. I don't go and buy a Toyota Camry. There's nothing wrong about it.

But, in order to become like the powerful, you must also be able to resist the domination of the powerful by stressing your autonomy, stressing your authenticity and so on and so forth. And I think the established agenda is at that stage in the resistance to domination by stressing the autonomy of the Muslim world, of the Muslim peoples, in order to be able to create an atmosphere in which innovative thinking can flourish and go beyond merely being an emulation project. I think that's where the Islamists fit in. Now, they may or may not be right. I mean, I don't agree with every prescription they've come up with.

But the second question of purity or moral health, the attempt by the Islamists, I think, to impose a form of morality that they want to through the use of state power is counterproductive. And basically, the Islamist movements want to capture state power in order to then to be able to

change society, which is going about it in the wrong way. Because imposition of morality by state power more often than not pollutes the model of morality that you want to impose, because it gets involved with all sorts of issues of power and so on and so forth.

I think moral health of Muslim societies can be preserved much better by avowedly and openly creating a private religious sphere which the state cannot dominate. I mean, this may be again, moving towards the Western secular model, particularly in the United States, where state and religion have separate spheres and do not intrude into each other except in very exceptional circumstances. And this is something that Islamists do not understand, because they start from the assumption that state and religion cannot really be separated and, therefore, you capture state power because there's no other way that society can influence public morality because the state is so powerful and the regimes are so perverse that they're trying to go about it doing the wrong way.

I think it's in the interest of real believers to protect Islam from the state rather than to take over the state. I mean, the creation of a sphere in which Islam can flourish as a religion, as a source of morality, is much more important than capturing the state. I think the agenda has been stood on its head.

MR. FRADKIN: Yeah. I just want to say to Professor Zinman, and in a way to Professor Behnegar, it was clear from your remarks that one can draw the conclusion the way to solve this problem is to have a very small state, very far away from everyone else and live your own life. And I believe that was proposed somewhere in Plato's laws.

But that would never, it seems to me, fit. There was no sense for the original Muslim community of simply being isolated in that way and being a special experience for a very limited number of people. And that's what, it seems to me, sharpens the dilemma because it's not supposed to be an other worldly or unworldly—I wouldn't say unworldly—religious orientation.

What might solve the problem would be something along the lines that Professor Ayooob mentioned, in which somehow the private sphere becomes that isolated place where—but again, even as I think you would say back to me, even within Western societies, that proves not to be a simple fortress against the outside world.

MR. MELZER: Yes.

MR. JERRY TOLSON: Jerry Tolson, *U.S. News and World Report*. Since (inaudible) can't be here, I think I'll put this question to Professor Ayooob and anybody else on the panel. And that is the prophecies of Roy and Gilles Kepel, and whoever was the disciple and whoever was the mentor, I don't know. I think there's debate about this. But their prophecies that the ascendancy of the violent wing of the Islamists is really over and that we're beginning to see the triumph of these politically non-violent varieties of Islamism on the ascendancy. I think it's at least an open question.

But rather than saying yes or no to that competition, I'm curious to know what Professor Ayooob thinks about the relationship between these aggressively violent and largely transnational

Islamisms, and those other varieties of political Islam that are trying to work primarily through non-violent means? And how they feed on each other or work against each other?

And also, I'd like him to speculate on the role of American foreign policy in encouraging or exacerbating those movements. Just to make that a little more specific, I know that Noah Feldman was sent to be constitutional advisor with the provisional government, that he was advocating when he returned here allowing some method of political Islam to be operative in putting together a constitution. There was a great deal of resistance here in the United States by, among others, Senator Brownback, saying that we're not going to allow Islam in the constitution because we'll have trouble down the road. And I think Professor Feldman responded, you know, if we don't have any Islam in the constitution, we're not going to have any down the road. We're going to have troubles in the short run.

So, I would just like you to comment on those related phenomena.

PROFESSOR AYOOB: Despite the skepticism expressed about the prophecies made by Roy and Cappelle, I think, I mean with all the qualifications, if you look at the evidence, they are more right than wrong. In the sense that violent political activity, although you have this transnational phenomena called Al-Qaeda and similar ones in Southeast Asia and elsewhere, violent political activity of a transnational type is really the exception rather than the rule. It's a minority phenomenon.

That's why in my paper I deliberately tried to give you illustrations from Turkey, from Egypt, from Pakistan, and if I had the opportunity and time, from Malaysia and Indonesia, where Islamically oriented political movements worked within constitutional frameworks, even when the dice is loaded against them. And that's the large majority of Islamists or Islamically oriented political activity that is attempting to transform polities and societies by working peacefully within constitutional means or through constitutional means.

But the interesting thing is that just as they attempt to transform society and polity working through constitutional frameworks and through participatory politics [that experience] transforms them. And so it's an interesting dual transformation that might take place. You get used to the habits of parliamentary and constitutional procedures. Just as the Communist movement in India was transformed into being one of the greatest pillars of Indian political democracy.

But I think the secular trend goes in that direction. Of course, that doesn't mean that Al-Qaeda and the like are going to totally disappear overnight. But, I think the existence of groups like Al-Qaeda embarrass the more constitutionally, politically oriented Islamists. And if you look at the relationship between the Egyptian Muslim brotherhood and the fringe elements, [you can see] the way the brotherhood has tried to distance itself from the fringe elements.

And I think—and Husain would know more about this than I do—I think there would be a parallel movement amongst the mainstream Islamic parties in Pakistan to distance themselves from terrorist groups like Jaish-e-Mohammed and so on, so forth, so as not to lose respectability and credibility amongst the populations. So, I still think that the secular trend is that way.

As far as U.S. foreign policy is concerned, Noah Feldman, as you said, made a very passionate argument after he came back from Iraq, particularly in that book, *After Jihad*, about this. But I think the best course for the United States would be in a way to stay away from this interim Muslim debate, and let it be seen as an intra-Muslim debate without weighing in on one side or the other.

But this is a part of a larger issue, which is that the United States must project an image—and this image can be only projected if it's based on substantive changes in American foreign policy—that it is evenhanded in its approach, particularly to the Middle East, to the Muslim world in general, but the Middle East in particular.

That's why this commission was sent out by the State Department to try and improve American public image in the Middle East, which I followed in their footsteps in several Middle Eastern capitals. And I spoke with people who had interacted with them, who were quite derisive of that commission because they said they wanted to talk about changing American's image without talking about American foreign policy and its content because they said, that's not our grief. I mean, that is nonsense. I would have used another word that Professor Zinman has taught me, but I will desist.

So, there has to be a substantive change in the substance of American foreign policy. The United States must restore its credibility with the Muslim peoples around the world, and particularly in the Middle East. I mean, if you look at the polls, three or four percent of the Saudis have favorable opinion about the United States. Six percent of the Jordanians do, even the Turks, members of NATO, only about a quarter of the Turkish population has a favorable opinion of the United States. It demonstrates that there's something radically wrong, not merely about the American image in the Muslim world, but about American policy in the Muslim world.

MR. HAQQANI: I have just a very quick comment. You see, because when you put two Muslims at the podium, then there will obviously be inter-Muslim dialogue here as well. And since I'm one of those Muslims who does not think that I'm going to tell the United States that it should keep out of trying to tell Muslims what to do in the (inaudible) dialogue, I don't think the Muslims can easily get away with, which we always want to get away with, telling the United States what its foreign policy ought to be.

Having said that, let me just say that on the Roy and Gio Cappelle prophesies, just a little historic anecdote. In 1918, the British war cabinet was discussing what is now Saudi Arabia. And somebody said, "And what about the Wahabi movement?" And Mr. Sikes (sp), who was supposed to be the great expert on the region turned around and said, "Oh, they are a dying flame." And of course, only a few years later they not only took over but they managed to get Nudged (sp) and Hidaz (sp) and Asiv (sp) together into the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

So I am slightly skeptical of these sort of simplified prophesies. I think both trends are visible. I think that there is a trend where the militants are gaining more recruits.

Now, the fact of the matter is that the Islamic world in sheer numbers is amazing, I mean, 1.4 billion people. Now, just for mathematical (inaudible) if it was 1 billion and only 1 percent of

them were Islamists, that would be a good 10 million. And if only 10 percent of the Islamists were militant or terrorists or whatever, that would be 1 million. That's pretty big.

So I would think that this is a simplified version of [Islamism] because there's enough Muslims to go around. I mean, there are enough Muslims to be secular, and there are enough Muslims to be moderate Islamists wanting to work within political systems, and there are enough Muslims around the world to be militant. And there are enough Muslims to be globally militant, which is another offshoot of the militants because there are militants who just want to restrict themselves to their theaters of operations, the Chechnyans who want to fight only in Chechnya, Kashmirans who only want to fight in Kashmir, Bosnians who are concerned with Bosnia.

And so I think that, as book selling goes, great idea, great book, and I hope for their sake and for every author's sake, good revenues. But I don't necessarily think that it is definitely the accurate prophesy. And I personally would avoid getting into that prophesy because of the very nature of the beast.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: There was another (inaudible) minority called the Bolsheviks.

MR. HAQQANI: Yeah. Yeah. So I mean, you know.

MR. BUD FAIRLANE: I have a great many things that seem to bear fruit (inaudible) said about political Islam in this session. And yet it seems to me that in many similar discussions that they do circle around certain things which are not explained. And the particular thing I'd like to mention is what is the reason for the extraordinary indifference to religious morality that characterizes Islamist terrorists?

We have off and on talked as though the attempt to achieve an Islamic faith, or to seize power through the use of Islam, was something very, very new since the early Islamic centuries. But in fact, as recently as the 19th century, there were many states which were ruled by religious figures like Imam Shamil in the north (inaudible) Ahmad Jimar in West Africa, the so called **maccti (sp)** in the Sudan. And all of those leaders were characterized by having a program of Jihad against infidels or bad Muslims on the one hand, but also a program of ethical reformation of the community.

And whereas, it seems to me that Al-Zawahiri and Osama bin Laden and so forth have never said anything about the reformation of morals and so forth. And I don't understand why this is.

MR. HAQQANI: I have a very simple answer to that. It's for the same reason that the popes did not condemn the crusaders who sacked and virtually burned Jerusalem. I mean, the claim to moral superiority sometimes erodes all moral restraints. You just delude yourself into believing that, because you are morally superior, therefore you can be immoral. And I think that is my explanation for this phenomenon. It's not my justification for it, but it's my explanation for it, that people who have this claim to moral superiority when it comes to devising political stratagems, they can sometimes be quite immoral.

MR. FRADKIN: I wonder if it doesn't have something to do with an earlier period of fascism as well. And that as a modern ideological movement, it shares in common with those movements a kind of liberation from moral restraint on the grounds of the greater good. That may be a bit different.

PROFESSOR AYOOB: If I may add to both of those comments. I think both of them capture the reality or parts of it. Now, as I see it, the present spate of terrorism undertaken by the Islamists, incidentally, are not really by Islamists. After all, the largest numbers of suicide bombings were conducted or have been conducted by the Timal Tigers of Sri Lanka, who are by no stretch of imagination Muslims. And by other terrorists in Sub Sahara and Africa as Mahmood Mamdani points out.

But I think international terrorism is an expression of a combination of desperation plus technology. Now that you do have the technological capability to inflict damage on large numbers of people, you do so. And the equivalent of that can be seen at the beginnings of the nuclear age, where you have this new technology that you can use to bring the enemy to its knees, even if the collateral damage runs into thousands or hundreds of thousands of people, you use it. And I think that's probably what's driving it.

For these people, terrorism is the equivalent now of the high-tech RMA technology. And just as the latter can inflict immense amounts of collateral damage, the killing of civilians by these terrorist elements is seen merely as collateral damage, I think. There are parallels to that on both sides of this divide.

MR. MELZER: I think we have time for one last question. Yeah.

MR. PAUL MARSHALL: Yes. Paul Marshall, Freedom House. Just like to make some suggestions on some language or concepts of vocabulary that, you know, in a lot of the discussion of Islamism, there's a tendency to use very common American expressions such as separation of church and state, separation of religion and politics. And I think this is one in which it's manifestly clear those terms have no determinate meaning within the United States. Our courts have spent decades trying to make sense of them and failed. So to use them to understand situations elsewhere, I think, is well nigh futile.

Religion and politics always intertwine. I know of no setting where they do not. The question is what aspect of politics and how do they relate to each other? In terms of what aspect of politics—there was earlier discussion about the sort of the autonomy of the Caliphate, [whether it] dominated religious figures or co-opted them.

But here, I don't think a game that is in question about politics and religion—it's the relation between the executive branch and the judicial, the people. Again, we have a tendency to export the word clergy into the Islamic world. Most of these people are like Rabbi Ayatollah Sistani, not a clergyman. He's not a priest, he's not a Methodist pastor, he doesn't have any of those type of mediatorial functions. He's not this either, but he's much closer to being a judge.

So disputes within Islam are much more understood as to who controls what particular branch of government. And it strikes me that what has been distinctive about Islam is that the judicial function of government has been much more intimately tied to people we call religious figures. And it's that element we need to focus on.

The other one is, you know, by what means do religious figures (inaudible) politics. And just one anecdote. I heard a speech about four months ago where someone denounced people who had formed their religion from politics, a critique of the Bush Administration, and then proceeded to critique Bush policy in Iraq in terms of classical (inaudible) Christian (inaudible). You don't know that, but he was going through Augustinian and Thomistic concepts because that's where the idea comes from.

Discussions of welfare and all sorts of other things are shaped by religious concepts. I think that's unavoidable and I think it's very good. [It relates to] the question of whether you're trying to legislate those things or a host of other questions.

So I think we need to subdivide and break these down. And in particular in clarifying what's problematic with political Islam, knowing it's diverse, is the fact it seeks to create a reactionary form of law, to make lawmaking the province of—I will use the term religious figures—and often deny political participation as a means of discussing what that law should be.

Thank you.

PROFESSOR AYOOB: Very briefly, I think the [idea that] separation of religion and politics conceptualizes the separation of the two spheres as a separation between the executive powers and the judicial powers is a very interesting one. But one must also recognize that judicial powers—if you look at the history of the Caliphates, I mean, I don't like to use that term, but of the Caliphates, the Umayyad, the Abbassid or even the Ottoman—there were two types of judicial systems. There were the Sharia courts or the Sharia courts in Arabic, and then there were the Mazalim (sp) or the Mazalit (sp) courts, which carried on much of the judicial activity because the Sharia only says so much about a few things. I mean, you can take things out of the Koran and the Hadis and the voluminous interpretations of them.

But much of the state's activity, and the interaction even within society and between state and society, could not be governed by the laws of the Sharia because this simply didn't speak to them. So you had the Mazalim (sp) courts and the Mazalit (sp) courts and so on, which were firmly in the temporal domain. So the judiciary itself was not unified.

The problem with the modern day Islamists is that their conception of law is extremely primitive. They think that the Sharia is God-given and all answers are there. They think the Sharia somehow was showered from heaven like manna or whatever. They don't realize that what we call Sharia was a corpus of law built up meticulously with great effort over a thousand years or more by jurists, luminaries who knew the law and so on and so forth, with some contribution during the colonial period by the colonial bureaucracy itself.

It's very interesting that what's called Muslim personal law today in India, which is supposed to be in Muslim perceptions Sharia law or Shariat law, until the independence of the subcontinent in 1947—and Husain will bear this out—used to be called Anglo-Mohammedan law because British jurists had clarified Sharia as they thought it was being implemented by the mogul courts in India. So you can see even in the way the Shariat law itself was compiled, not merely that it was manmade, but how important temporal intervention, both Muslim and non-Muslim, was in that enterprise. And it's much more true probably of the Ottoman.

MR. FRADKIN: I wanted to just comment on this way of conceiving of the distinction that Paul Marshall made. And it could be helpful in the following way especially because it highlights the question from the point of view of the overall concern that was expressed this morning concerning democracy.

You can't conceive of a state without an executive. All states have executives, and probably not without a judiciary. But you can conceive of a state without a legislature. And most states have not had them.

And the question is how to be perfectly fair to describe the distinction that has existed historically in terms of the dispute between or the distinction between and sometimes the dispute between executive and judiciary. But what's been missing has been any kind of legislative institutions. And the question is where they would come from, not only from out of an understanding of the tradition, but what would legitimate them, and also how they would be formed. That seems to me to be the problem.

MR. MELZER: Well, we have certainly not exhausted our subject matter, nor I think even our speakers but they're about to kick us out of here. So please join me in thanking our panel for a very (inaudible).