



# The III-Assorted Triangle: Arab Regimes, Islamist Opposition and the American Role in Promoting Democracy in the Arab World

**Mohammed Gulrez\* &  
Abdussalam M. Hashim\*\***

## **The Current Arab World: An Overview**

Perhaps no region in the world today is as turbulent and unstable as the Arab world. The region is rocked by both internal as well as external factors. Increasing Western intervention still goes unabated and more projects for reshaping the region have been introduced, ranging from military intervention to containing or toppling regimes as well as supporting others. The region also experiences internal upheavals and dire crises, declining levels of literacy, increasing unemployment, crumbling economies and a host of other crises. These developments have touched off increasing popular discontent with the existing regimes, and calls for democracy as a way to lift the Arab countries from the sordid realities into which they have fallen and to put an end to the topsy-turvy state of affairs that is dominant in today's Arab countries. The consequences of ongoing turmoil will not be confined to the Arab region but are likely to affect the rest of the world in such matters as energy security and the like.

Democracy has spread everywhere in the world except in the Arab world. Previously authoritarian states have embraced democracy as

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\* Professor, Centre of West Asian Studies, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India

\*\* Research Fellow, Centre of West Asian Studies, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India

the determining system of governance. The Arab world still lags behind the rest of the world in this regard. All Arab countries, except Saudi Arabia, in fact, have written constitutions. In some Arab countries which call themselves democratic republics, such as Yemen, Egypt, Tunisia, Lebanon, and Algeria -varying degrees of basic freedoms and formal tools of democratic rule are provided for in written constitutions and laws, and in some minor cases are enjoyed and used by the peoples, provided that they do not transcend certain limits.<sup>1</sup> Lebanon may be singled out as the only Arab country in which free and fair elections are held periodically, and where the populace enjoys a substantial measure of freedom. Yet, even here, the situation is questionable. According to Rejwan, “pre-1975 Lebanon practiced a version of democracy made perfectly to measure to fit the Christian minority and left the Muslim majority grumbling and embittered ... the fifteen-year-long civil strife that was presumably coming to an end in those very days was nothing but the cumulative outcome of forty-five years of a regime run by a handful of Maronite feudal-type warlords and chieftains”.<sup>2</sup> Saudi Arabia is still the only state dominated by a theocratic rule, yet this seemingly religious government uses religion only as a veneer to camouflage one of the most libertine governments in the region. As for the Gulf Sheikhdoms, Kuwait and, more recently, Bahrain are the only states that introduce some measure of constitutional government and run periodic elections. The others- Qatar, the UAE, Bahrain and Oman are ruled according to traditional tribal norms and make no mention of democracy even in theory.<sup>3</sup> Rejwan aptly observes: “[w]hile participatory norms are accepted formally in many of these countries — in democratic republics and constitutional monarchies as well as in the one theocracy — the regimes in many of them do not allow these norms to exist in practice.”<sup>4</sup>

Following the decolonization period, the Arab states have been ruled by traditional, authoritarian, regimes that have shown a steadfast stubbornness in refusing to tolerate any dissenting views or even mild contestations of their rule. And this is still the case. The Arab countries are still ruled by regimes that are antagonistic to change and display an aversion to opening the political space and adopt democracy as the ultimate factor of assuming power. They resist every call to democratization and react severely to any attempts to contest their legitimacy through the ballot box. More so, these regimes show a burgeoning propensity to establishing their sons as their successors not merely in the monarchies, but also in the

alleged republics. Syria is already a case in point. King Hussain of Jordan changed the constitution in the eleventh hour, just a few hours before his death, to make his son the legitimate successor. Saddam Hussein was preparing his son, Qusay, for succeeding him had not matters followed a different trajectory. Egypt, Yemen, Libya, not to mention the monarchies and Gulf Sheikdoms, are following suit. This has become a widespread phenomenon in the West Asian States.

The public domain in the Arab world is overwhelmed by the cult of the leader who represents the will of the people, the whole people, and embodies their aspirations and dreams. Arab elections testify to this fact. The leaders sweep the elections and secure mostly 95+ %.). The public media functions within this framework and revolves around the cult of *az-za'im* (the leader). The press, opposition leaders, the intellectuals and the intelligentsia in general have assigned red lines that they are expected not to cross. Freedom of information is also absent. Publications are sponsored by the governments and any undesired information is simply prohibited.<sup>5</sup> The Internet has now modified this situation as the regimes proved unable to control it.

Mohamed Talbi has given a vivid description of Arab elections,

[i]n virtually all Arab states, democracy in practice is no more than a theatrical production. We [the Arabs] are actors in a democratic play, with all the stage settings and all the Western words that the play demands, including the suspense that surrounds the counting of the votes. Western newspapers speak of fairs and carnivals, and they are not wrong. As a matter of fact, elections in the Arab world are nothing but a bad joke, a farce, an immense masquerade, after which the stuffing of the ballot boxes begins behind closed doors. All the Arab democracies are characterized by surreal and absurd vote totals for the ruler, whoever he may be.<sup>6</sup>

A wide gap has emerged between the people and the governments; chasm between dissatisfied people who see their governments as no more representative of them and the rulers who are ready to carry out massacres and annihilate every voice of dissent to consolidate their coercive rule. Serious participation in elections is a great nuisance these regimes cannot tolerate and they soon regard it as an open violent revolt and insurrection.

This has paralyzed development at all levels in the Arab countries. Many Arab intellectuals and activists flee for their lives and seek asylum mainly in Western countries. Perhaps no region or country in the world has as many political refugees as do the Arab countries.

In short, people are not ready to defend their rights and set limits to the regimes' violations of their rights. Intimidation and open threats mollify those who won't appease. These masses also are in part, however, responsible for their misery. Where all these won't do, conspiracy theories provide the answer. Conspiracy theories are rampant; indeed they are the preferred discourse of the regimes by which they seek to discredit their opponents; they constitute the pillars that buttress crumbling ravished desert tents of their regimes. The president of Yemen, instead of addressing the concerns of the people who are undergoing extreme poverty, massive unemployment and are subject to one of the most corrupt regimes in the world, dedicated his presidential campaign to propagating conspiracy theories and even directing insults at his opponents, whom he called "mean and villainous", quoting a line of verse in one of his campaigns:

When you honor the noble people you win their hearts,  
But when you honor the mean and villainous, they rebel (against you).<sup>7</sup>

### **The Rise of Islamism**

Much ink has been spilt on the phenomenon of the "Islamic revival" that has been on the rise for the last four decades or so. This phenomenon has given rise to heated debates that are still very vigorous. Islamism (also variously known as Islamic resurgence, Islamic revival, Islamic fundamentalism, radical Islam, militant Islam, and even Islam International) is a myriad plethora of mosaic movements which are separated by worlds of difference in their *Weltanschauungs*, ideology, and goals. Some are violent while others are not; some are political and others apolitical; some are pacifist and others militant; some are exclusionary and rejectionist, while others are tolerant, accommodating and participatory; some are retrogressive, extremist, fanatical and fundamentalist, whereas others are progressive, moderate, dynamic, innovative, open to change, and reconciliatory. The following sections will deal with the most important Islamist movements in the Arab world; namely, Islamically-oriented political parties and the Wahhabi movement.

**The Wahhabi movement**

This movement originated in eighteenth century Arabia and was inspired by the teachings of its founder Mohammed ibn Abdul-Wahhab (1703-1792). It began as a reaction against what ibn Abdul-Wahhab deemed un-Islamic and infidel practices, especially saint glorification, a widespread custom in Arabia at the time. Ibn Abdul-Wahhab's task was initially unsuccessful. After studying in Damascus, Medina and Basra, he returned to Arabia to preach his fundamentalist cult with hardly any success at the beginning. However, he headed towards Dir'iyah, the town of Mohammed ibn Saud who was struggling with the attempt to establish a Saudi state with little success, too. This latter lacked the resources to preserve his burgeoning state and was unable to mobilize strong support for his claims. They hitherto developed a strong relationship that culminated in striking a big deal. Mohammed ibn Saud's claims became buttressed in religion, and Wahhabism gained the support of a conquering state, an advantage that granted it power to proselytize people by force of arms, where necessary.<sup>8</sup>

The contract between the two founders endured. Wahhabism spread rapidly across the Muslim countries following the establishment of the second Saudi state in 1932. This puritanical cult has indeed gotten a firm footing in approximately all Muslim countries as well as in minority Muslim communities. As is often the case, the spread of a movement leads to its bifurcation and the emergence of various offshoots of it which seek to domesticate the value system, ideas and beliefs of the movement to suit the demands and needs of the community in question. Wahhabism is no exception in this regard. However, nonetheless, Wahhabism proves adamant regarding some basic principles, mainly due to its aversion to change, which it deems as a *bida'a* (unorthodox innovation).

The Wahhabi movement and its offshoots are originally based on strict Puritanism, combined with a high degree of self-righteousness that make it strictly fundamentalist and give rise to an exclusionary attitude towards anyone outside the group. The notions of *jihad* – against both what the Wahhabis see as decadent Muslims (the non-Wahhabis, that is) and non-Muslims- and *takfir* (judging Muslims as apostates) are central to the Wahhabi cult.

Both the first (established in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century) and second Saudi

state(s) relied on tribal fighters for the establishment of the Saudi state. Abdul-Aziz ibn Saud, the founder of the second Saudi state, established an army of tribal fighters usually known as the *Ikhwan*.<sup>9</sup> With the Saudi state established in the Hejaz region (which comprises the holy cities of Islam, Mecca and Medina), these militants sought to purify Islam in the newly-conquered regions. Coming as they did from the consummately closed tribal communities of Nejd (Central Arabia), they sought to reform the metropolitan life-style of the Hejaz, especially Mecca and Jeddah.

The success of ibn Saud in overcoming his supporters can be attributed to factors within the Wahhabi cult itself. Wahhabism is after all a contractual movement that was established on a basic principle; namely, blind obedience and loyalty to the ruler as long as he protects the Wahhabi cult. This was the core of the contract between the founders referred to above. Their agreement stipulated blind support and obedience to be accorded to the monarch by his subjects in return for the former's protection of the cult and espousing its cause.<sup>10</sup>

### **Major Wahhabi Sects**

The major Wahhabi sects in the present are the pacifists and the militant *jihadists*.

**The Pacifists:** This group sticks tenaciously to the founding principle of Wahhabism; namely, according blind obedience to the ruler whatever his failings may be as long as he proclaims Islam as his religion in principle. Any deviant practices, however gross they may be - including oppression and dictatorship- do not provide a justification for impeaching his legitimacy in so much as he does not publicly renounce Islam (*kufr bawah*). In short, this is a reactionary group that adheres to an outdated version of Islam (actually of its own making) that is incompatible with modernity. They view democracy as an "infidel" system at odds with their version of Islam. Hence, elections are strictly prohibited and those Islamists who participate in the political process are often under Wahhabi attack. The regimes use this brand of Wahhabism to discredit the mounting upsurge of the defiance posed to the regimes by the Islamist parties. It is not uncommon in the Arab countries to hear a fuss by this Wahhabi wing during election campaigns, ranging from cassette sermons to pamphlets, prohibiting the "infidel practices" of elections and democracy and demanding the "subjects" to remain loyal to their *walay al-amr* (custodian) and providing

protracted justifications for such reactionary views. More often than not they are urged by the regimes to withhold the supporters of the Islamists from voting and to mobilize the uneducated masses to vote for the ruling dictators. This group comprises the mainstream Wahhabi cult of Saudi Arabia and their supporters and offshoots in various countries.

**The Jihadists:** This brand of Wahhabism is insurrectionary in nature. They are the heirs of the *Ikhwan* militants of the 1920s and early 1930s. Outside Saudi Arabia, some of them are also influenced by the radical teachings of the Egyptian thinker Sayyed Qutb, and to a lesser extent, the Indian scholar Abul-Hasan Nadvi and the Pakistani Abul Ala Maududi, in spite of the contention of some scholars that the thought of these three can be debated.<sup>11</sup> Some of these comprise those militant groups that dissented from the Egyptian Muslim brotherhood and rejected its approach; and instead became radicalized, choosing the path of violence. In Egypt they include *at-takfir wal-hijra*, the *Jihad*, and *al-jama'ah al-Islamiyyah* (the Islamic group). This latter, however, to which the Sadat's assassin belongs, has ultimately renounced violence following the events of 09/11/2001 and sought incorporation in the political process.<sup>12</sup>

The *jihadists* also draw heavily on the Wahabist notions of *takfir*; thus, viewing all the regimes and governments of the Muslim countries as virtually "infidel", and therefore must be deposed and demolished by force. They resort to violence and terrorism to achieve their goals. They see their actions as acts of *jihad*, targeting both Muslims and non-Muslims in general. They came mostly from the ranks of the Afghan *mujahideen* of the 1980s.

The so called Al-Qaeda<sup>13</sup> Network is their principal organization. They are to some extent the product of the Cold War. They received military training and support from the United States during their war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The CIA, in collaboration with Pakistan's ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) and the Saudi government recruited these militants and provided them with military, financial and logistic support in their fighting against the "godless communists" as the Soviets were referred to by successive White House administrations. Little observes,

the Carter and Reagan administrations would funnel nearly \$3 billion into Afghanistan to help the Muslim resistance fight pro-Soviet president Babrak Karmal, his like-minded successor

Mohammed Najibullah, and a 100,000-man Russian expeditionary force. By July 1980 Washington was providing the mujahadeen with everything from captured Soviet AK-47 assault rifles to Chinese rocket-propelled grenade launchers via a CIA-ISI arms pipeline.<sup>14</sup>

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, these militants turned against their former benefactors and waged a new wave of *jihad*, this time against the “infidels” both in the Islamic countries and the West, especially the United States.

The *jihadist* militants adopt a wholesale rejectionist ideology. They dismiss democracy as the product of the “infidel” West, and therefore to be completely rejected. They view the Islamist parties as equally erroneous and off the track since they accept “infidel” systems and acknowledge the legitimacy of the “infidel” rulers by participating in the political process. Ayman al-Zawahiri, bin Laden’s right-arm man, wrote a book entitled *The Muslim Brotherhood’s Bitter Harvest in Sixty Years*. The book denigrated the Muslim Brotherhood for following a misguided path by its unequivocal renunciation of violence.<sup>15</sup> He regretfully bemoans this sad reality:

The Ikhwan participate in elections in Egypt, Jordan, Sudan, Kuwait, Algeria, Syria, and other Muslim lands governed by infidel governments. What is truly regrettable is the Ikhwan’s rallying of thousands of duped Muslim youth in voter queues before ballot boxes instead of lining them up to fight in the cause of Allah. They have substituted Allah’s bidding with the conditions and regimes of the infidels.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Islamist Democrats**

Given the sad reality described above, the rift between the regimes and their peoples widened significantly and public discontent snowballed rapidly. The addition, the failure of the nationalist ideologies of Nasser and the Ba’athist regimes in Iraq and Syria with their ideal visions of a united Arab Nation which inspired their rhetoric yet, never materialized and their turning into scourges of intimidation and machines of oppression added to the dissatisfactions of the already simmering populations and alienated them further from their rulers. Wide portions of the people underwent a sense of disillusionment and even identity crisis, and sought to reaffirm

their identity in Islamic terms not only on the personal level, but on the political and social levels as well. The Muslim Brotherhood and its offshoots across the Arab world seemed to answer this need. "Islamic organizations have been successful in responding concretely to people's problems. Their Islamic ideologies offer a framework for meaning and purpose that responds to issues of identity, faith, and authenticity. As social movements they respond to the needs of many by providing educational and social welfare services."<sup>17</sup> The increasing American intervention in the region, and the two Gulf Wars enforced this reality further and increased the popularity of the Islamist parties as the viable alternative to the pro-Western regimes. Furthermore, the stagnant situation, and in some cases the deterioration, of the economy and the resulting higher level of unemployment as well as the low standards of development contributed to the unpopularity of the regimes and fanned increasing opposition to their rule.

The Islamist parties have dedicated themselves to non-violent participation in the political process. Right from its inception in 1928, the MB in Egypt sought integration in the political process. Hasan Al-Banna, the founder of the MB, competed as a candidate in elections in the 1930s. The crack down on and suppression of the Islamists during Nasser's tenure, however, led to temporarily erasing them from the scene, and they stood their ground to eschew complete annihilation. It is true that Nasser's regime and the hostility and intolerance it displayed toward the Islamists produced radicalized elements within their ranks, as is evident in the fiery rhetoric of Sayyed Qutb. Yet, the Ikhwan, while paying homage to the memory of Qutb as a major ideologue died espousing their cause after all-they disassociated themselves from his thought on the practical level right from the start. Hasan Al-Hudaibi, the General Guide of the Brotherhood in the 1950s and 1960s authored a book entitled *Du'ah la Qudah (Preachers, Not Judges)* in 1969 in which he refuted Qutb's views towards the regimes and Islamists functioning within the society, as well as his rhetoric of achieving the goals of the Brotherhood.<sup>18</sup>

The MB and its offshoots have shown a complete dedication to wielding change through participatory channels in politics. What helps these parties in this regard is their dynamic view of Islam and the facts that their thoughts and programs are open and therefore susceptible to revision, subject to the demands of the circumstances. This flexibility helps them to operate as political parties acting on the spur of situation in which they find

themselves rather than being a closed system fixed in time and place. They appreciate the role of pragmatic politics instead of embracing a rejectionist ideology. They have indeed revitalized the field of Islamic thought after it remained stagnant for centuries, and developed a full-fledged branch of Islamic judicial thought, known as *fikh al-waqi* (Realist Jurisprudence) - a field of religious thought that takes into consideration the changing reality of time and place, and plays the rules of pragmatic accommodation, revision and revitalization of religion.

The Islamist parties have learned lessons from their experience in politics. In Yemen, for instance, in the 1993 parliamentary elections, the Yemeni Islah Party adopted religious jargans (mainly as a pragmatic means in order to win the support of a religious population and to assert its presence on the political arena) at a time when the leftist Socialist Party aspired to change the face of the country. Both parties distrusted each other on a large scale. Four years later, that religious terminology diminished considerably, and the party came to view itself more as a political party motivated by economic, political and social concerns than by establishing the *Sharia*. In a more dramatic move - as the regime consolidated its grip on power and monopolized this position for advancing its own ends, the Islah and the Socialist parties, together with the major Nasserite Party and two other conservative parties, formed a coalition that have proven enduring despite the regime's attempts to break it, even by resorting to such means as assassinating a key figure in the Socialist Party during an Islah conference, an effort to attach the act to the Islah Party (which figures in the regime's rhetoric as a "terrorist extremist" party). However, the attempts to dismantle the coalition have hitherto failed. In Egypt a similar coalition (Kifayah (Enough!)), in which the MB plays a vital role, exists. More coalition among the Islamist and secular parties also exist in several other countries. Their cooperation is not restricted to the periods of elections, but operates throughout in defying the oppressive nature and the failed policies of the regimes.

The focus on Islamists, however, does not mean that they are the only politically active agents in the political arena, or that Arab countries have become bulwarks of Islamism or the Arab people Islamists to a man. In fact an assortment of liberal, leftist nationalist, pan-Arab (Ba'athist and Nasserist) parties do exist, and enjoy a substantial following in the Arab World. Yet, these parties lack the comparatively large grass roots support

enjoyed by the Islamist parties in several countries. Those parties, however are fragmented. (There are three Nasserists and two Ba'athist parties in Yemen, for example). Moreover, they lack the organization of the Islamist parties, both in their internal organization and in offering social services whether specialized (Student Welfare funds, syndicate services to members, youth funds including collective marriage projects) or to the public at large (welfare funds for the poor and physically challenged, and material and moral support in times of crises and natural disasters). Some parties such as the Socialist parties, the Ba'ath, Nasserist parties have also lost some of their supporters and lost appeal for winning new supporters, and are increasingly seem as rhetorical revivals of already failed ideologies. Indeed, Shahin goes as far as to assert that "liberal secularist opposition is unpopular and ineffective. They have been unable to gather a constituency that can match the popularity of the Islamists."<sup>19</sup> Tamara Whittes further notes that Islamist parties command the majority of opposition in the Arab world today.<sup>20</sup> The Islamists parties, Shadi Hamid remarks, "offer the most effective and organized opposition to the region's autocratic regimes."<sup>21</sup>

### **International Organization or Indigenous Political Parties?**

Empirical reality seems to offer little support for the claim of an Islamic international organization with leaders and committees to guide its actions, formulate its policies and manage its affairs. Leiken and Brooke, with reference to the Egyptian MB, opine that "[t]he Brotherhood's dreaded International Organization is in fact a loose and feeble coalition scarcely able to convene its own members. Indeed, the Brotherhood's international debility is a product of its local successes: national autonomy and adjustability to domestic conditions. The ideological affiliations that link Brotherhood organizations internationally are subject to the national priorities that shape each individually."<sup>22</sup> Shared goals and common aspirations may exist among these parties; a unified agenda with cosmopolitan aspirations is very doubtful.

The Egyptian MB's attempt to establish coordination among its offshoots in the early 1980s was met with unanimous opposition. The leaders of the Sudanese with MB, Hasan al-Turabi, objected "You cannot rule the world from Cairo." The Kuwaiti Islamists, rejected the MB's reaction to the American involvement in the Gulf crisis and withdrew their financial support for their counterparts. In Iraq, the offshoots of the MB participated in the US installed government, thus dissenting with the Islamist

parties rhetoric of a “puppet” Iraqi government. The Syiran MB offshoot based in Europe allied with the dissident former Syrian Vice-President, Abdel Halim Khaddam, again parting opinion with many of its counterparts.<sup>23</sup>

The indigenized nature of these parties can also be seen in their programs and activities, whether they are allowed to participate or excluded from the political process. Their programs and activities vary considerably from one country to another. Differences are not restricted to the economic, social and political disparities of the different countries, but also include disparate ideological views, subject to the requirement of the country in question. The AKP in Turkey is much different from the Islah Party in Yemen, for instance. Each functions within the scope of the demands and reality of the country of which it is an integral part, without giving much attention to ideological considerations that are presumably binding them together.

Moreover, variations go beyond the level of National Indigenization to local decentralization within a given country. The Egyptian MB is typical case in point. The MB has adopted decentralization in running the internal affairs of the party. Al-Awadi observes that the “most important change in the MB” structure was the introduction of a decentralization system of management process and to give a degree of autonomy to the different regional branches distributed throughout Egypt’s 28 provinces. While the central leadership, based on Cairo, shaped and expressed major policies ... the regional leaderships were left to make day-to-day decisions on regional issues”<sup>24</sup>.

However, this by no means rules out the possibility - some would say the certainty - that the Islamist parties maintain contacts with their counterparts in various counties. Indeed, some transformations and developments occur simultaneously in several countries. This, however, can be explained by shared grievances, common regional anxieties, changes and developments. Most of these parties share common concerns and follow similar trajectories. They are, after all, offshoots of one mother – movement, the Egyptian MB. Several Islamist parties, nonetheless, do not fit into this category. Some are based on the Shiite sect such as Hizbullah in Lebanon, the Da’wah (Call) Party in Iraq, Al-Haq (Right) Party in Yemen. Others are so-called Salafist (Orthodox) such as the Justice

and Spirituality Party in Morocco, while others are thinly Islamically-oriented such as Al-Wasat (Median) Party in Egypt, some founders of which were Copts together with former MB leaders. Thus, far from following a monolithic essence, these parties constitute a myriad of mosaic orientation that defies any single definitions, and even renders the designation “Islamist parties” misleading.

Different scholars have asserted the Islamist parties dedication to democracy and peaceful transfer of power (Hamid, Hamzawy, Al-Awadi, Emerson and Leiken). These parties programs and activities stress their dedication to this goal. As Shahin observes, the Islamist parties have “demonstrated adherence to the democratic process”, competing in elections, mostly in alliance with other political parties. Contrary to the widespread belief, Islamists do not uphold rejectionist attitudes towards other parties. They have accepted political pluralism, “viewing it as a natural and inevitable evolution of society.” They “recognize the right of secular parties, liberal or communist, to legally exist and freely express their political views”.<sup>25</sup> They have matured within the political game as they often enter into alliances and coalitions with rival parties to achieve short-term as well as long-term goals and advance the process of democratization in drawing concessions from the regimes. Homzamy asserts that Islamists have embraced the democratic procedures and have shown a “strong commitment to the rule of law,” and espoused “non-violence, pragmatism and democratic procedures”<sup>26</sup>. Rather than tenaciously clinging to utopian visions of an Islamic theocracy, they chose to participate in the political process and work within the political institutions to promote democratic openings. Hamzawy observes that they “exclude radical strategies as options for political transformation and see gradual democratic openings as the only viable way”<sup>27</sup> to challenge oppressive regimes.

The Islamist parties have experienced deep transformations over the last three decades. Until the 1980s, and in some countries till the 1990s, they did not see themselves much as political parties as social movements. With the introduction of the multi-party system, though it remains nominal, they became more politicized and underwent major transformations. Their radical views on some issues have been revised considerably. This seems to apply to the offshoots of the Egyptian MB as well as to other Islamically-oriented parties throughout the region. Samir Amghar writes “Islamist parties in Morocco have seen an ideological transformation from a radical

- even violent - political doctrine to a more pragmatic and progressive strategy in recent years.”<sup>28</sup> He also observes that “In Parliament, PJD [Justice and Development Party] politicians now downplay religious themes and questions related to religious faith in favour of more political and secular matters.”<sup>29</sup> Boubekour echoes similar views about Algerian Islamist parties,

The Movement of Society for Peace (*Harakat al Moujtama’ As-Silm*, MSP; formerly called *Hamas*) and the Movement for National Reform (*Harakat al-Islah al Watani* or *el-Islah*, have adapted their ideology to the daily concerns of civil society, moving away from their previous revolutionary posture. This evolution demonstrates how Islamism as a social movement has become one of the most important forces for change in the region, having spread to different sectors such as trade unions, women’s associations, young people and students, and even business networks.<sup>30</sup>

Referring to the Egyptian MB, Shaheen observes, “In recent years, the Muslim Brotherhood has revised its political strategies and policy orientations. To many observers, it seems as if it has made a clear and deliberate departure from its traditionally cautious approach.”<sup>31</sup> El-Ghobashy opines that “Over the past quarter-century, the Society of Muslim Brothers (Ikhwan) has morphed from a highly secretive, hierarchical, antidemocratic organization led by anointed elders into a modern, multivocal political association steered by educated, savvy professionals not unlike activists of the same age in rival Egyptian political parties.”<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, Hamzawy sates that the Islamist’s rhetoric of the establishment of Islamic states across the region is increasingly a “matter of symbolic language and traditional metaphor. In real politics these ideals are subordinated to the priorities of liberal democratic reforms.”<sup>33</sup> The Islamists are obsessed by the sordid economic, social and political realities rampant in rather countries. They are also aware of the challenges lying ahead. Therefore, their programs and rhetoric often extol international peace and cooperation and positive relations of exchange and inclusion. Hamzawy remarks that a “new consensus has emerged within movements [across the Arab world] ... that the ideals reflected in the utopia of the Islamic state in the contemporary Arab world can best be realized by adhering in each country to the principles of democracy, the rule of law,

and human rights.”<sup>34</sup> He further elucidates this point:

The meaning of democracy and rule of law within the moderate Islamist spectrum does not differ much from secular Arab views. Universal citizenship, peaceful transfer of power, checks and balances, citizens’ participation, neutrality of public authorities in approaching multiple religious and ethnic identities, and tolerance of diversity are principles that are as accepted among moderate Islamists as they are in liberal circles. Certainly, Islamists will never use the adjective “secular” to describe the neutrality of public institutions, but they convey identical connotations when they assert the “civility” of the public sphere. Nor should Islamists be expected to drop their rhetorical emphasis that the teachings of Islam should guide all action, because this emphasis maintains the distinctiveness of religion-based political perceptions and sustains to a great extent the popular appeal of the Islamists.<sup>35</sup>

Clearly, pragmatism and democratic reforms have become central components of the Islamist’s agenda.

By embracing pluralism and political participation, the Islamists have emerged as major contributors in fighting the spread of radicalism and violence. A senior member of the Egyptian MB asserts, “[i]f it wasn’t for the Brotherhood, most of the youth of this era would have chosen the path of violence. The Ikhwan has become a safety value for moderate Islam.”<sup>36</sup> Similarly, the leader of the Jordanian Islamic Action Front (IAF) claims that the party outdoes the government in spreading moderation and discouraging violence and terrorism, “We’re better able to conduct an intellectual confrontation, and not a security confrontation with the forces of extremism and fanaticism.”<sup>37</sup>

The Islamists have shown a willingness not only in theory but also in practice, to work with other parties in order to bring about a meaningful reform. Such strong alliances include Kifayah (Enough!) in Egypt and the Joint Meeting Parties in Yemen. These alliances involve an assortment of the opposition forces in the political spectrum.

### **American Orientalists and the Islamist Parties**

It would be useful here to underscore the fact that Edward Said’s critique of Orientalism does not apply much to the American Orientalist

variety as it does with regards to the European Orientalist tradition. While it is true that much of what Said says about Orientalism does capture a scene of the American discourse about Islam and the Arabs, it fails to zoom in the whole panorama, even at the time of Said's publication of *Orientalism* in 1978. American discourse on Islam and Islamism is by no means monolithic. Indeed, for the last two decades the American intellectual scene has witnessed an unabated debate between the major trends in among Middle East (West Asian) experts that is perhaps unprecedented in the history of the intellectual life in the United States. On the one hand, there is a hardliner trend that seems to embrace the traditional Orientalist legacy, and on the other, there is a parallel approach that does not subscribe to that legacy. This section will provide a brief account of these trends and present some of the major ideas each of them proliferates.

### **The Confrontationalists/Hardliners**

These are scholars who come from different backgrounds. Some of them are pro-Israel scholar-lobbyists such as Bernard Lewis and his protégés, Daniel Pipes, Martin Kramer<sup>38</sup>, Judith Miller, etc. Others are Arab-Americans renegades - or, to borrow a term from the Zionist discourse, "self-haters" - (Fouad Ajami, Shibley Telhami). These scholars' views are partly inspired by their Zionist tendencies; and as Gerges observes, what binds them together is "their explicit identification with Israel."<sup>39</sup> They maintain a tenacious reverence to the European Orientalist discourse of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. They still draw heavily on Arnold Toynbee's notion of history employing such erratic and archaic concepts of analysis as civilization and culture with minor variations.<sup>40</sup> Such analytical frameworks were revitalized by Samuel Huntington's publication of "Clash of Civilizations?" in the prestigious journal *Foreign Affairs* in 1993 which he enlarged to a book in 1996, omitting the question mark that appeared in the title of the article.

According to this trend, the 1.3 billion Muslims stick to a monolithic essence and follow a unified view of the world that stems from a fanatical religion and inherent cultural essence. Broad generalizations inform these scholars' views. Conspiracy theories of an "Islamic threat" and a fundamentalist scheme to destroy Western civilization and establish a universal fundamentalist system on its debris are rampant in their writings and public appearances.<sup>41</sup> They buttress their views on such events as

the Iranian Revolution of 1978-9 and the Algerian civil war of the 1990s and similar events to put forward their arguments of a “Muslim rage” and antipathy to the West. More recently, the events of 9/11/2001 have provided them with a new “conspiracy” to propagate a discourse charged with notions of hatred and confrontation; and seemed to many in the West to confirm their Islamophobic fears. After the events of 9/11/2001, they have increasingly advocated a line of confrontation and “final solution” that mounted up to preaching military intervention in the region. Bernard Lewis, notorious for his catchy phrases, summarizes this burgeoning propensity in a highly charged sentence, “Get tough, or get out.”<sup>42</sup> “A Time of Toppling” runs as the title of one of his articles in which he advances the argument for toppling the former Iraqi regime.<sup>43</sup>

The confrontationalists tend to lump all movements, parties and groups together and put all sorts of people in one basket, heeding little the differences between them. They simply disregard the fact that there are moderate parties which adhere to democratic principles and plurality, denounce violence and seek integration in the political process through peaceful democratic means. They reject the notion of “Islamist moderates” and view the popular Islamist parties as opportunists who merely seek to come to power through the ballot box in the manner of “one man, one vote, one time” only to demolish democracy, spread terror and turn the region into a theocracy ruled by Khomeini-like turbaned bearded *mullahs*.<sup>44</sup> They feed these ideas on the notion that Islam is inherently undemocratic and that Muslims can never be democratic.

The hardliners present the Islamic parties as a global ideological movement, the successor of Marxism, Fascism and Nazism.<sup>45</sup> They invoke images and concepts from the Cold War to present the Islamist parties to the American officials and public alike, recommending containment and annihilation of these parties where necessary. Therefore, these policy prescriptions unfailingly call for the preservation of the status quo. Daniel Pipes, thus, advised the Bush Administration in a list of “dos and don’ts”: not to “engage in official or public dialogue with Islamists,” not to “appease,” not to “help Islamists”, to “support those confronting militant Islam,” and to give up its agenda of democracy promotion.<sup>46</sup>

### **The Moderates/Accommodationists**

On the other side of the spectrum, there are the moderate scholars.

These are mainly based in the American academy and the majority of are members of the Middle East Studies Associations (MESA). Prominent among them are John Esposito, Richard Bulliet and Zachary Lockman, besides many Israeli (the late Fawaz Gerges, Nissim Rejwan) and Arab-American scholars (Yvonne Haddad Amr Hamzawi, Rashid Khlalidi). These scholars reject such notions as the “Islamic threat” and “clash of civilizations”, and instead give priority to the empirical reality of the Arab and Muslim worlds. They advocate a moderate line in their policy briefings and argue for a tolerant policy of inclusion of the Islamist parties in the political process, call for sincere support for democracy, and stress the need for dialogue and engagement in place of antipathy, rejection and exclusion. John Esposito is especially active in this regard. The bulk of his writings focuses on these issues.

The issues of democracy and the Islamist parties are central to the debates of the confrontationalists and the accommodationists. Gerges observes:

The question of democracy sets accommodationists and confrontationalists apart. The latter claim that the lack of democracy in Muslim states can be explained by reference to internal factors, mainly religion, culture, and history. In contrast, accommodationists assert that political considerations, including the West’s recurrent meddling in the Muslims’ internal affairs, account for the persistence of authoritarianism in Muslim societies. In their attempt to understand the dearth of democratic politics in the Middle East, accommodationists assign much more weight to external variables or externally inspired internal developments. Some of these include the impact of colonialism, the existing autocratic political order that is supported by the United States, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and recurrent external intervention. Accommodationists go further to challenge the very notion of democracy as defined by the West. Unlike their counterparts, accommodationists allow for a more encompassing form of democracy that takes into account Islamic practices and experiences.<sup>47</sup>

Given the record of official American policy record towards the Islamists and democracy promotion, one can safely conclude that the

confrontationalists get the upper hand in formulating the consciousness of the policy-makers with regards to these matters.

### **U.S. Policy towards the Islamist Parties**

It is a well-known fact that the United States successive administrations have unfailingly followed a course of supporting the authoritarian regimes throughout the Arab and Islamic world, more broadly, over the last sixty years. The CIA-inspired overthrow of the democratically-elected government of Mohammed Mosaddeq in Iran in 1954, the American support for The Shah of Iran, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, in the 1960s and 1970s in spite of growing public discontent, not to mention its support for the Arab dictators for decades, are examples of the negative record of the U.S. in the region. David Smock notes, "U.S. administrations have generally chosen to build strong ties with those regimes in Muslim countries that seem to support American interests, ignoring their records on human rights, accountability, and democracy."<sup>48</sup> U.S. policy towards the Islamists fits into this wider framework. The U.S., Smock observes, "has generally accepted the fiction that repression in the Muslim world is the best way to prevent Islamism from growing as a threat to the West and to U.S. interests."<sup>49</sup>

The United States' democracy promotion record in the region points towards the preservation of the status quo. In spite of its claims of spreading democracy, the U.S. has always remained silent in the face of the Arab regimes' severely repressive measures and crack down of the opposition, their hijacking of democracy, violations of human rights and narrowing the scope of political pluralism. The U.S. has actually digested the anti-Islamist discourse proliferated by the hardliner scholars and the U.S. media. It has been hitherto content to accommodate and uncritically accept the conspiracy theories proliferated by those scholars and echoed by the Arab despots. The Arab regimes have always presented themselves to the United States as "bulwarks against Islamic extremism"<sup>50</sup> and terrorism.

The United States' rhetoric of supporting democracy in the Arab world and its real policies constitute a gamut of hypocrisy characterized by double standards and outrageous contradictions. Smock rightly observes that there has been "a glaring contradiction between U.S. rhetoric supporting democracy and human rights, on the one hand, and a policy

that held major violators of human rights like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to be key strategic allies while at the same time condoning repression by other allies, like Egypt, on the other hand.”<sup>51</sup>

During George Bush and Clinton administrations, the U.S. policy towards the Islamists partied was marked by ambiguity. Gerges remarks that “[a]ctual American policies toward Islamic movements and states reveal a deep residue of ambivalence, skepticism, and mistrust.”<sup>52</sup> Although, the Clinton administration made brief flirtations with the Islamists in Egypt and Jordan, these never materialized to full-fledged cooperation or formal recognition. “The American contacts with the Muslim Brothers in Egypt in the early 1990s was not meant as taking into consideration a powerful movement with an increasingly popular appeal.”<sup>53</sup> Rather, they were primarily conducted for purely American ends. A prominent American official explained this issue. “Collecting information is traditional diplomacy. This is true of American contacts with other non-Islamic organizations. The United States seeks neither protection nor the establishment of close ties with Islamists, only information gathering.”<sup>54</sup> Such a candid expression is reflected more recently (in 2002) in the remarks of Richard Haass, one of Secretary of State Colin Powell’s closest advisers, “No one should confuse promoting democracy with holding parliamentary elections the next day—in which case the Islamists would do well. . . . Supporting an authoritarian leader who is a modernizer and is willing to gradually loosen the reins,” Haass concluded, “that essentially should be our policy.”<sup>55</sup>

Following the events of 9/11, the two Bush administrations adopted a rhetoric of democracy promotion and swore a committed dedication to achieve this end in the region. This declaration eclipsed the previous administrations stance on this issue on the theoretical. However, in practice, nothing materialized. The 2006 elections in Palestine that brought Hamas to power touches of a turning point in the Bush administration’s rhetoric and a reversal of priorities. Democracy promotion was superseded by maintaining stability.<sup>56</sup> Not merely that but the U.S and E.U. denied the democratically elected Hamas government the fruit of its electoral victory and immediately imposed a strict siege upon it. When the blockade proved ineffective in delegitimizing and dismantling Hamas, they set Fatah against it defying its legitimacy and proactively meddling in its affairs to the point that Abbas ended up dissolving the Hamas government and appointing an illegitimate one in its place. Civil war rocked the Palestinian scene for

nearly three years. As Hamas still proved defiant, Israel, with all its military might and formal Western support, initiated a holocaust to eliminate Hamas altogether.

Hamid observes, “The embedded contradiction between wanting democracy and fearing its outcomes has prevented the Bush administration from adopting a more effective, coherent approach to supporting democracy” in the Arab region. Thus, the last three years of the Bush administration witnessed a relapse into what Hamid accurately calls the “Faustian bargains of the pre-9/11 era.”<sup>57</sup>

In a nutshell, the U.S and EU governments are reluctant to engage the Islamist parties in dialogue or to offer them support. They mistrust the Islamists and shows propensity to view them as a threat; thus, falling under the spell of the confrontationalist hardliners among the Middle East (West Asian )scholars and media personalities. Several issues are central to adopting this stance towards the Islamist parties, prominent among which are the security of Israel - even though Israel is armed to the teeth- and the fear of disrupting American interests in the region. The Israeli policy makers fan these fears and exert pressure on the American and European officials. Shimon Perez published a book, *The New Middle East* (1994) in which he identified political Islamists as the enemy to world peace and stability in the region, and called upon the Arab regimes to align behind the free world in defeating them, drawing plans to that effect. Likewise, the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu edited a book as early as 1987 entitled *Fighting Terrorism: How the West Can Win*, in which all movements, violent and non-violent, were lumped together as terrorist networks. In their public statements, the Israeli officials unfailingly designate all democratic Islamist parties as terrorist organization threatening world peace.<sup>58</sup>

The United States ultimately discarded its supposed advocacy of democracy promotion in favor of maintaining stability in the region. On other words, it openly made clear its unwillingness to change the status quo. This stability is no more than the stability of the United States’ interests (even though they do not seem to be threatened, at any rate) and that of the despots, whereas the Arab peoples merely swallow the sour doses of the so-called stability only to suffocate in the middle of this American sponsored deadly prescription. The EU follows suit, also prescribing stability as the only viable solution to the degenerate reality in the Arab countries.

### **Islamist Parties' Attitudes towards the West**

Rather than adhere to a monolithic guideline, Islamists' attitudes towards the West are characterized by differences and variations in accordance to the country in which they function. This is due to several factors including the status of those parties in the political arena (legal/illegal), the extent of regime toleration of these parties, their geographical proximity to Israel, and the extent of American involvement in their countries. The Turkish AKP is engaged with the West despite the occasional ambivalence and sporadic expressions of apprehension on the part of the Western governments on the one hand, and the unconventional rhetoric and even actions of the Turkish Islamists on the other. Moroccan Islamists enjoy a higher level of prestige in their dialogue with the American officials. In Kuwait, they stick to the same attitudes towards the U.S. adopted by their government, and hence the anti-American rhetoric among Kuwaiti Islamists is almost absent.

In Egypt, the MB seems to fluctuate between deep ambivalence towards Washington's claims of democracy promotion. Given their as yet formally illegal status and the fact that Egypt is a major American ally in the region, they act very cautiously. This was the case during their brief contacts with the two Clinton administrations. During the Bush administrations, they seemed to distrust the American officials' statements, particularly after the 2006 Hamas electoral victory and the ensuing aftermath. This attitude is also partly motivated by their fears that the regime might seize such opportunity to tarnish their reputation or even implement a severe crack down upon them. Lately, they even sought government approval to engage in dialogue with the Western intellectuals and autocrats. This is mainly due to increasing ambivalence towards the credibility of sincere American and European dedication to democracy promotion in the region, particularly after the U.S. and EU shifted priorities from promotion of democracy to enforcing stability.

American involvement with the Islamists seems to focus less on countries which are not close to Israel and in which American interests are not so much vital such as Yemen, Algeria and Morocco. These parties even enjoy a larger margin of freedom than their counterparts in other countries. This is the case with the Islah party in Yemen. American interest in these parties appears to focus in attempting to obstruct them from seizing

power, and thus touching off the undesired outcome of setting a precedent example to their counterparts throughout the region. This can be seen in the American silence towards the military's coup against democracy in Algeria in 1992 which soon mounted to supporting the military regime.

Although the majority of the Islamist democrats criticize increasing American involvement in the region, denounce the brutality of American military campaigns, arrogant policies, and current support for despotic regimes, sometimes in severe terms, they express their readiness to engage with the U.S. administrations in dialogue and cooperation in the promotion of democracy in the region. They often appeal to the American government to exert its leverage on the regimes to open the political system and interfere to save political pluralism. One even senses a burgeoning apologetic tone in their discourse and programs and in their interactions with the West. A leading figure in the Egyptian MB appealed to the Bush administration to interfere and put an end to the Egyptian regime's suppressive policies and intimidation of the opposition, following the remarkable success achieved by the MB in the 2005 parliamentary elections:

It is time now for President Bush to decide either to go with freedom and democracy as a principle claimed by his administration and lectured to the Egyptians by Mrs. Rice, his Secretary of State, or to continue supporting despotic regimes by turning a blind eye to their oppressive actions. In either case the consequences are expected to go beyond Egypt leaving ample room for all extremists to reinforce their claims against democratic reformers who renounce violence like the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>59</sup>

After Obama assumed his post, the Islamists expressed their hope that the new American administration would reconsider the American policy towards the such issues as the promotion of democracy and human rights in the region, and expressed their willingness and desire to engage with the new American administration towards enhancing the status of democracy, political pluralism and human rights in the region. Yet, it is too early to tell the course the Obama administration would adopt; whether it would align itself with the aspirations of the wider Arab populace, or lend its ear uncritically to the opponents of democratization in the Arab world (including the despotic regimes, the Israeli officials and the hardliner Orientalists at home), and thus alienate itself further from the effective political forces in

the Arab scene and the wider Arab populace. One, however, cannot end but with a note of hope. It would be appropriate, therefore, to round up with Shelley's famous optimistic invocation of the "Wild West Wind", "O Wind, if winter comes, can Spring be far behind?"

### Notes and References

1. Nissim Rejwan, *Arabs Face the Modern World: Religious, Cultural, and Political Responses to the West*. (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1998) p. 206.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 208
3. *Ibid.* p. 206.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 205-206
5. Mohamed Talbi, "Arabs and Democracy: A Record of Failure," (Tr. Zerkx Spencer), *Journal of Democracy* (11:3, 2000) p. 62.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
7. The Yemeni President's campaign in the 2006 presidential elections
8. Hayne H. Bowen, *The History of Saudi Arabia*, (West Port: Greenwood Press, 2008), pp. 69-70
9. These are not to be confused with *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun* (the Muslim Brotherhood) founded in Egypt by Hasan Al-Banna in 1928. In fact, these militants have nothing to do with the Egyptian MB.
10. Notice the use of terminology which is consciously selected to reflect the outmoded anti-democratic nature of understanding the relationship between the government and the people. Within the Wahhabi system, there are only rulers to be accorded total obedience and glorification and servile subjects who are expected to pay their rulers full respect under all circumstances. Such notions as the government and citizen are alien to them and these concepts may even be viewed as *bida'a*. Two cases would clarify this point: the ceaseless debate in Saudi Arabia about granting women the right to drive cars, a matter that is met by obstinate refusal on the part of the clergy. The other is a recent *fatwa* that was issued by a prominent Saudi *sheikh* during the Israeli offensive in Gaza, and it has to do with the popular protests in some Arab countries against the barbarity of the Israeli incursions on Gaza. This *fatwa* strictly prohibits demonstrations deeming them as "dissuasion from remembering God"!
11. Radwan Ziadah, "A Response to Western views of Islamist Movements," in *Arab Insight* (1:1, Spring 2007), p. 94.

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13. It is interesting to note that this group does not refer to themselves as al-Qaeda. Indeed, this is an exclusively American designation. The term refers to the database (in Arabic *qaedat bayanat*, or simply *qaeda*) the CIA kept of the fighters in Afghanistan. A group of these militants visiting the United States in the 1980s were greeted by President Regan as "freedom fighters".
14. Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: the United States and the Middle East since 1945*. 2nd ed., (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004.), pp. 152-153; see also Michel Chossudovsky, *America's "War on Terrorism"*. 2nd Edition, (Québec: Global Research, 2005), pp. xiii, 5; Diana Ralph, "Islamophobia and The 'War on Terror': The Continuing Pretext for U.S. Imperial Conquest," in Paul Zarembka (ed.) *The Hidden History of 9-11-2001* (Amsterdam: JAI Press, 2006), p. 265
15. Shadi Hamid, "Engaging Political Islam to Promote Democracy" *Progressive Policy Report*, Policy Report, June 2007, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/Articles>
16. As quoted in Mona El-Ghobashy, "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers" *Int. J. Middle East Stud.* 37 (2005), pp. 390-1
17. John Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*. 3rd ed. (NY: Oxford UP, 1999), p. 208
18. Angel Rabasa, *et al. Op. Cit.*, p. 93
19. Emad El-Din Shahin, "Political Islam: Ready for Engagement?", (Madrid: Fride Publications, 2005), p. 2. The paper was presented at the Workshop on 'Barcelona + 10' and the European Neighborhood Policy.
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23. *Ibid.*
24. Hesham Al-Awadi, "Mubarak and the Islamists: Why did the "Honeymoon" End?", *Middle East Journal*, (59:1, Winter, 2005), p. 67
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26. Amr Hamzawy, "The Key to Arab Reform: Moderate Islamists," Policy Brief (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment, August 2005), p. 1
27. *Ibid.*, p. 2
28. Samir Amghar, "Morocco," *Arab Insight*, (1:1, Spring 2007), p. 14
29. *Ibid.*, p. 16
30. Amel Boubekeur, "Algeria," *Arab Insight*, (1:1, Spring 2007), pp. 29-30.
31. Emad El-din Shahi, "Political Islam in Egypt," in Michael Emerson and Richard Youngs (eds.), *Political Islam and European Foreign Policy: Perspectives for Muslim Democrats of the Mediterranean*. (Brussels: Center for European Policy Studies, 2007), p. 66
32. Mona El-Ghobashy, "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers" (*Int. J. Middle East Studies*: 37 (2005), p. 373
33. Hamzawy, *Op. Cit.*, p. 2
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*
36. As quoted in Robert Leiken and Steven Brooke, *Op. Cit.*, p. 112
37. As quoted in *Ibid.*
38. Martin Kramer is an Israeli scholar and a Washington Institute Ira Weiner fellow and past director of the Moshe Dayan Center For Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University. He is a constant visitor of the United States where he indulges in policy debates, participates in debates in the American academe and is a constant contributor to several prestigious American journals on policy as well as intellectual issues regarding the Arab and Islamic scenes. He published, besides many other books, *Ivory Towers on Sand: The Failure of American Middle Eastern Studies in America* in 2001. Hence, his inclusion in the American scholars on Arab and Islamic worlds.
39. Fawaz Gerges, *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests?* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999) p. 36
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41. For such views, see Daniel Pipes, *Militant Islam Reaches America* (NY: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2002), "The Muslims are Coming, the Muslims are coming". Indeed, all of Pipes' writings monotonously follow

this line of thought. See also Lewis' "The Roots of Muslim Rage" which appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1990, and from which Huntington borrows the phrase "Clash of Civilizations". The article was reprinted in Bernard Lewis, *From Babel to Dragomans: Interpreting the Middle East*. (NY: Oxford University Press, 2004). See also, Lewis' *What Went Wrong: Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response*. (NY: OUP, 2002).

42. Bernard Lewis, *From Babel to Dragomans. Op. Cit.* p.350
43. Lewis, "A Time for Toppling," reprinted in *Ibid.* pp. . 378-380
44. Lewis, *The Shaping of the Modern Middle East*. The paperback edition (NY: OUP, 1994) pp. 52-54.
45. See Pipes' *Militant Islam Reaches America. Op. Cit.*, especially the first four chapters where he depicts Islamism as the new totalitarian threat, the heir of Nazism and Communism. This theme also occurs repeatedly in the writings of Lewis and Kramer.
46. Pipes' *Ibid.* pp. 38-51.
47. Gerges, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 31-32
48. David Smock, "Islam and Democracy," United States Institute of Peace, Special Report: 93, September 2002, p. 2
49. *Ibid.*, p. 1
50. *Ibid.*, p. 7. See also Amr Hamzawy, *Op. Cit.*
51. Smock, *Op.Cit.* p. 8
52. Gerges, *Op. Cit.* p. 231
53. *Ibid.*, p. 178
54. As quoted in *Ibid.*
55. Douglas Little, *Op. Cit.*, p. 325
56. Hamid, *Op. Cit.*
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