
SYMPOSIUM: RESURGENT ISLAM IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Robert H. Pelletreau, Jr.; Daniel Pipes; John L. Esposito

The following is an edited version of the proceedings of a symposium sponsored by the Middle East Policy Council on May 26, 1994, in the Hart Senate Office Building in Washington, DC. Former Senator George McGovern, President of the Council, introduced the panel; Thomas R. Mattair, the Council's Director of Research and Policy Analysis, was the organizer and moderator; Michael Collins Dunn, Senior Analyst of The International Estimate, Inc., and editor of its biweekly newsletter, The Estimate, was the discussant.

SEN. MCGOVERN: This morning we're going to examine the nature of political Islam, the reasons for its resurgence, the differences between moderate and extremist Islamist movements in the Middle East, and the policies of the United States and its friends in the region relative to these movements. We have brought together a group of panelists who will give us various perspectives on this problem.

AMB. ROBERT H. PELLETREAU, JR., Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs: The Middle East has entered a period of complicated transitions. The peace process is moving forward, forging new political and economic links across traditional fault lines of conflict, and perhaps leading the way to a new era of coexistence in the region. This comes at a time when across the region governments, as well as the governed, are seeking appropriate responses to the historical currents surrounding the end of the Cold War. Resurgent political Islam is and will be part of

the evolving indigenous equations and thus a concern for the U.S. policymaker.

The prism through which we assess trends and conditions in the Middle East is the protection and advancement of U.S. national interests. These are, briefly: a just and lasting peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors, Israel's security and well-being, a security framework in the Gulf that assures access to its energy resources upon which we and other industrial nations continue to be dependent, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, control of destabilizing arms transfers, promotion of political participation, and respect for basic human rights, ending state-supported and other forms of terrorism, promotion of economic and social development through privatization and market economies, encouragement of American business and investment opportunities.

In short, we would like to see governments responsive to the aspirations of those they govern, operating in ways that attenuate the politics of despair, discourage extremist political alternatives, and seek to resolve disputes by peaceful means. We do

not kid ourselves that attaining any of these objectives will be easy, but it is proper to set our sights high, establish milestones and then measure progress toward those goals.

In examining the impact of the resurgence of Islam on these issues, I find that reasoned debate and deliberation is often muddled by a confusion over terminology. The term "Islamic fundamentalism" is frequently and often imprecisely used to refer to any number of Middle East phenomena, ranging from the Saudi Arabian government to Muslims seeking to reinterpret their faith in constructive ways or to simplify their values or purify their lives or to protest corrupt governments or corrupting Western influences, all the way across the spectrum to groups that acclaim religious motives to justify acts of terrorism and violence. Thus it bears using with requisite caution.

In the foreign affairs community, we often use the term "political Islam" to refer to the movements and groups within the broader fundamentalist revival with a specific political agenda. Islamists are Muslims with political goals. We view these terms as analytical not normative. They do not refer to phenomena that are necessarily sinister. There are many legitimate, socially responsible Muslim groups with political goals. However, there are also Islamists who operate outside the bounds of law. Groups or individuals who operate outside the law, who espouse violence to achieve their aims, are properly called extremists, and extremists in the Middle East, as elsewhere, can be secular or religious.

In the United States, public concern has been raised by the World Trade Center bombing, by attacks against foreigners in Egypt and Algeria and by the rhetoric and actions of Iran and Libya. In our media, references to Islam and Islamic fundamentalism tend to be found most often in reports on political violence, ethnic strife or

acts of terrorism. In this context, the image of Islam in the minds of the average newspaper reader is often one of an undifferentiated movement hostile to the West and ready to use violence and terrorism to achieve its ends.

As my fellow panelist, John Esposito, has put it in a recent article, "Concern about the threats posed by extremists has led to an equation, both in scholarship and public discussion, that Islam equals Islamic fundamentalism equals extremism. This is," as John notes, "skewed, overly simplistic and inappropriate as a description of the complex and diverse impact that Islam is having on Middle Eastern societies today."

Secretary of State Warren Christopher and other administration spokespeople have made clear that we view the religion of Islam with great respect. Islam is one of history's civilizing movements that has enriched our own culture. In many areas where Islam has taken root over the past 1,400 years, the arts and sciences have flourished. The Islamic community consists of nearly a billion adherents, including several million of our fellow citizens. Any movement that broad with a history that rich cannot be neatly stereotyped.

Instead of stereotypes, we need to deepen our analysis, beginning with the understanding of the motivations behind resurgent Islam. First, it suggests that people in the region are dissatisfied with their current lot and leadership. They are searching for ways to guide and improve their lives, to achieve more responsive and accountable government, to build better futures for their children, and to have guarantees of basic human rights. Very often they are reacting against the existing order rather than inquiring whether governments organized according to Islamic tenets would be able to deliver social justice or be compatible with the forces of moderniza-

tion or be able to manage productively the inevitable broad interaction with the West.

Today, Islamic political groups vary in their attitudes and ideas about how to address the needs of their societies. Some choose to participate in their country's electoral processes hoping to effect change within existing political structures, while others are denied such a role or themselves reject the electoral ground rules. In other cases, Islamic groups have opted for the use of violence against existing governments, indigenous minorities and foreigners, at times leading to a spiral of violence between governments and Islamists.

While it is true that the concepts and symbols of Islam can be and at times are exploited by extremists, this should not blind us to the legitimacy of the broader study and debate about the proper role of Islam in societies and governments of the region. In this respect, we strongly support the establishment of centers such as the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown and the Islamic Law Center at Harvard, where scholars and jurists of the Western and Islamic traditions can meet and deepen their respective understanding of each other's values and accomplishments to the benefit and enrichment of both.

We, as a government, have no quarrel with Islam. We respect it as one of the world's great religions and as a great civilizing movement. Our own societal values, however, as well as our national interests, cause us to question certain features of the Islamic resurgence. For example, we reject the notion that a renewed emphasis on traditional values in many parts of the Islamic world must lead inevitably to conflict with the West. However, certain manifestations of the Islamic revival are intensely anti-Western and aim not only at elimination of Western influences but at resisting any form of cooperation with the West or

modernizing evolution at home. Such tendencies are clearly hostile to U.S. interests.

Because we believe that opening political systems to participation offers the only proven means to preserve civil liberties and render governments accountable to the will of the people, we're opposed to those who, regardless of religion, oppress minorities, preach intolerance, practice terrorism or violate human rights. We're suspicious of those who would use the democratic process to come to power only to destroy that process in order to retain power and political dominance.

We believe that peace between Israel and the Arabs is important for international stability, and equally important to improving the quality of lives of those in the region. We're thus opposed to the politics of rejection and confrontation and urge all parties to share our commitment to securing a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. We value the right of people to express opinions without fear of persecution. Thus, we encourage governments to remove constraints on press freedom and the open exchange of opinion. We're concerned about third countries' exploitation of Islamic extremist groups throughout the region, and over Sudan's role, for example, in supporting such groups in North Africa, either in its own right or as a cat's-paw for Iran. But we see no monolithic international control being exercised over the various Islamic movements active in the region.

Finally, we maintain that differences between groups and nations should be addressed through constructive non-violent engagement. We will oppose those who substitute religious and political confrontation for constructive engagement. In the final analysis, it is in large part the lack of economic, educational and political opportunities that gives extremists of any sort their constituency. The viable long-term

means to defeat extremism is to address the conditions on which it thrives. Thus, our policy is supportive of steps that states in the region take toward sustainable economic and social development. With this objective, we encourage governments in the region to take steps towards advancing the rule of law, enhancing local governance and developing democratic institutions. These are essential elements of the ability of nations to sustain development efforts. We're not trying to impose Western models of government on the Middle East, but we do regard broad political participation as an important and necessary contributor to long-term stability.

Let's turn for a moment from the abstract to a specific example. Our views on Algeria, which is in the midst of an Islamist insurgency, provide a living example of our policy and practice. The U.S. government has long believed and has repeatedly stressed to Algerian leaders at the highest level that there is an urgent need for real political dialogue. The regime must find a means of bringing disaffected elements of the populace into a process to chart a new and democratic course for Algeria. We agree with the major Algerian parties, which insist that this process must involve a broadening of political participation to encompass all political forces in the country, including Islamist leaders who reject terrorism.

We have followed with interest indications from Algiers that government officials have met with representatives of the Islamic Salvation Front, but we have not yet seen the fruits of such contacts, if indeed they have occurred. In order for such a dialogue to succeed, each side will need to take tangible steps to show goodwill. As each month passes without progress, chances will recede for political accommodation between the regime and its opponents, Islamist or secular.

Given the complexities of this highly fluid situation, it is difficult to speculate about the eventual outcome of the crisis in Algeria. What is clear is that we remain deeply concerned over the steadily deteriorating situation there. Events of the past two years demonstrate that Algeria's leaders cannot ease this crisis through over reliance on repressive policies. While recent economic steps have been positive, in the absence of serious political change, violence is likely to continue to escalate and to threaten Algeria's stability. President Liamine Zeroual's recent statements hold out some hope for an approach based on compromise and dialogue. We sincerely hope that these words will be matched by actions.

To sum up, Islam as such is not a factor in our foreign policy toward any state or group. The United States has close relations with states in the Near East and Asia that seek to govern according to the traditions of Islam. As has been said before, the United States does not view Islam as the next "ism" confronting the West or threatening world peace. We do, however, object strongly when we are labeled as a great Satan or when our culture and values are derided or our citizens taken hostage or violence and terrorism practiced, either randomly or to advance political ambition.

The United States will continue to work to promote peace, stability and prosperity in the Middle East because it is the right course to take and it best serves our own interests to have peaceful, stable and prosperous partners in this important region.

However, we will urge at the same time that these goals be accompanied by social justice and respect for human rights so that they can be shared fully at the individual level. This is not inconsistent with the Islamic fabric of some countries. We will work in partnership with governments and peoples of the region to assure that the

powerful forces of change are directed toward the achievement of these universal goals.

DR. DANIEL PIPES, Editor, *Middle East Quarterly*: I will address three questions. First, is Islam the enemy? No, I answer, but fundamentalist Muslims are. Second, should we distinguish between what, for purposes of concision, I'll call good and bad fundamentalists? No, there is no such distinction. Finally, what does this mean for U.S. policy? That we take rather more active steps than those delineated by Ambassador Pelletreau today or National Security Adviser Anthony Lake a week ago or other administrative spokesmen in preceding months.

I begin by drawing a distinction between Islam and fundamentalist Islam. As someone who has studied Islam for some years, I am acutely aware that the religion has nearly a billion adherents and is a fast-growing religion. I also understand that Muslims find their faith immensely appealing and are intensely devoted to it. As Patricia Crone, a scholar of Islam, puts it, "the world of men and their families" in Islam has an unparalleled record of success.

Putting it very simply and very generally, through its first early centuries, and indeed its first millennium, Muslims looked around the world, and they saw that they were doing well. By almost any index, be it longevity, literacy, wealth, power, Muslims outpaced non-Muslims. This long-standing correlation between Islamic faith and worldly success widely assumed that the one went with the other. The holy books tell nothing about God favoring Muslims with mundane success, but an outstanding civilization built over centuries caused this notion to spread widely.

During the last two centuries, however, Islam has been a religion in crisis. The

beginning of the difficulties can be dated almost exactly, in symbolic terms at least, to the arrival of Napoleon in Egypt in 1798. The trauma of the modern Islam results from the fact that Muslims are doing badly by the very same indices at which they excelled previously. The great challenge for Muslims has been to explain why the Islamic world has fallen, and to remedy the problem. If being Muslim establishes a state of grace, why are Muslims doing so badly?

Thinkers offered three main replies to this question. Secularists hold, in brief, that Muslims can escape their current problems by immersing themselves in the most advanced civilization of our time, the West's. This means reducing Islam to the private sphere.

Reformists call on Muslims to appropriate from the West what suits them, picking here and there the elements they deem useful.

Fundamentalists—our topic today and the approach that concerns the U.S. government at the policy level—call on Muslims to adhere strictly to Islamic ways and believe Muslims will prosper only if they do so. Fundamentalists vehemently reject Western ways (with limited exceptions, such as medical knowledge or military technology), suspecting the West of trying to undermine the faith through conspiracies and other subterfuges. They believe Westerners wish to lure Muslims—especially young Muslims—by concocting a seductive alternative to Islam. It's not just our low culture, but also our high culture that steals Muslims—not just Madonna and blue jeans but classical music and universities. All of it, the whole mix, high and low, seduces Muslims away from the straight path and renders it impossible to organize a society along Islamic lines.

Waving a banner that reads "Islam is the solution," fundamentalists have, perhaps

unintentionally, developed an ideology with distinct social, economic, and political views. Or, to quote the Malaysian leader Anwar Ibrahim, "We are not socialist, we are not capitalist, we are Islamic." It bears stressing that politicized Islam of this nature is a very novel twentieth century formulation. It shares very little in common with Islam as traditionally practiced. Fundamentalist Islam represents not tradition but a radical (and, at base, quite Westernized) political agenda.

A great battle is now underway for the soul of Islam and it is not taking place between Muslims and the West, but between Muslims and Muslims. Fundamentalists and secularists are fighting it out. Pick up the newspaper and read the news from almost any Muslim country and you'll see exactly what I mean. On the international level, the battle is between the governments of Turkey and Iran. Secularists and fundamentalists constitute a small proportion of the Muslim population, each perhaps counting some 10 percent, but they are active, organized, and political. In contrast, the reformists make up a great blob in the middle who count far less than their numbers.

We non-Muslims are bystanders to this battle. As Americans we have more of a role than most non-Muslims, but it's a small role. And that brings me to the second topic, whether we can distinguish between good and bad fundamentalists. The Clinton administration argues that only those fundamentalists who engage in terrorism challenge our interests, not those who engage in the political process and who work within the system. I disagree. While fundamentalist groups and ideologies differ from each other in many ways, all of them are inherently extremist and all despise our civilization. They despise us not for what we do but for who we are.

There is no such thing as a fundamentalist who simply wants to live his life quietly; a quietist fundamentalist is an oxymoron. Fundamentalist Muslims insist on two points: that the Sacred Law of Islam be applied in Muslim lands and that Muslim rule be extended. Both goals imply an inherent aggressiveness. They might, for tactical reasons, modify or suppress these aspirations but they do not abandon them. By definition, fundamentalists seek a way of life deeply incompatible with our own ideals. Therefore, the U.S. government ought in principle not to cooperate with fundamentalists, not encourage them, and not engage in dialogue with them. We should not work with fundamentalists but stand up against them.

Of course, principle is one thing and practical reality quite another. At times working with fundamentalists is the right decision. The CIA worked with fundamentalist Muslims in Afghanistan because successive Pakistani governments made that a condition of our helping the *mujaheddin* fight the Soviet forces. We bit our lip and did so, correctly, for it meant aligning with the lesser evil against the greater one. Similarly, we tacitly worked with the Iranian government against Iraq during the Kuwait crisis. These cases resemble the American decision to work with Stalin against Hitler.

Here I'd like to digress for a moment and, at the risk of entering a quagmire, compare fundamentalist Islam with Marxist-Leninism. Until five years ago, the Left had a global network that posed a threat to American interests, while the Right was made up of isolated regimes that did not threaten us. It made obvious sense to work with the Right against the Left. Roughly speaking, the roles have been reversed: it now makes sense for the U.S. government to work with the Left against the Right. The Left has little ideology left, but consists of the odd shipwreck of a regime, such as the FLN (National Liberation Front) in Algeria or

Dostam in Afghanistan. They stand for nothing, except the retention of power. They have few aggressive intentions against the United States.

Instead, it's the Right, made up of fundamentalist Muslims and others, who form an international network and combine to put forward an aggressive agenda. Beyond actual aid, for example from Iran to Sudan, the network provides each participant with important psychic support. Fundamentalists feel the strength that comes from being part of a surging international network, somewhat like Marxist-Leninists must have felt in the 1950s. This new network, like that old one, has the United States of America in its sights. This bourgeois society infuriates its ideological opponents by virtue of its unabashed pursuit of happiness, its commercialism, and its military preeminence.

Turning to the final point, I advocate an active policy toward fundamentalist Muslims. But before getting to that, two introductory points to make myself very clear: I advocate standing up to the fundamentalists, not to Muslims in general. We're talking about a U.S. policy not toward Islam the religion but toward fundamentalist Islam the radical ideology. Ambassador Pelletreau's distinction along these lines cannot be repeated too often. We must not tar moderate Muslims with the fundamentalist brush. Moderates, by the way, have plenty of problems of their own with fundamentalists. Indeed, they probably hate fundamentalists more than non-Muslims, for they are the first ones in the line of fire. After all, it is Salman Rushdie, not Norman Mailer, whose life is in danger.

Second, in choosing a policy, Americans must keep in mind that while fundamentalists watch our actions very closely, they don't have a clue about the United States. This makes it hard to send them signals. For example, in November 1977 when the

shah of Iran visited Washington, Iranians living in the United States took advantage of his presence to rally on the Ellipse near the White House. As pro- and anti-shah Iranians began trading physical blows, the police used tear gas, some of which wafted over the White House lawn just as President Jimmy Carter was formally welcoming the shah. The gas settled, causing the high-ranking figures to cry, wheeze and cough. While American officials saw this mishap as embarrassing but not terribly significant, Iranians saw it as a public humiliation of the shah and a sure indication that he would be abandoned by the U.S. government. Communicating with fundamentalists, in short, is not easy.

Now, turning to policy: Our general goal has to be to impress fundamentalist Muslims with our resolve. They have to see that the flabby and weak reputation they have imposed on us is wrong. They need to understand that this country is a dynamic, healthy, and optimistic country, that we take pride in our culture and are ready to stand up for our ideals. Americans are not slaves to pornography and drug addiction; rather, we have strong resolve and we will stand up for our principles. We are ready to protect ourselves—our borders, our citizens, and our policies. These are, to be sure, exceedingly simplistic points, but believe me, if you read the fundamentalist literature, you'll see that these points need to be made, and made just as often as possible.

This general goal has specific implications for policy in the Middle East (and for policy in the United States, but that's another subject).

First, I urge support for those governments and groups in combat with the fundamentalists. In the case of Algeria, we should join the French in making it clear that we don't want the fundamentalists to take power. Should they take over, of

course, we will try to work with them. But at this point we make it clear that we stand by the government in Algiers. I acknowledge that it is a corrupt government, with a nasty history, but it is preferable by far to a fundamentalist government. It does not threaten our interests in Algeria and North Africa, in Western Europe, or in Egypt and the Middle East. Further, it harms the human rights of the people in Algeria less than will a fundamentalist order. Algeria is a very important country today, the battleground that can deeply affect events in Western Europe and the Middle East. I never thought I'd be saying good words or urging support of the FLN, but at this point it is not a threat to us and the FIS and its allies are.

The same goes elsewhere; we should stick by the anti-fundamentalists and make it clear we don't want fundamentalists in power. This applies to the Egyptian case, to the PLO versus its fundamentalist opponents, to Turkey, and to Jordan.

Secondly, the West should press fundamentalist states—the Sudan, Iran, Afghanistan—to reduce their aggressiveness. We have a wide range of commercial and diplomatic tools at our disposal, with a military option always there in the background.

Third, let us support individuals and institutions standing up to the fundamentalist scourge. Since the Rushdie affair five years ago, secularist Muslims have been the most beleaguered people of the Middle East. They are losing their voice as a curtain of silence and terror comes down around them. Anti-fundamentalist Muslims see the world more or less as we do in this country and they look to us for aid and inspiration. We should use our prestige, funds in the United States Information Agency and the Agency for International Development, and other means to support and help these brave people.

Finally, we must be very careful how we press for democracy. Unfortunately, it's become common to identify democracy with elections, leading to a single-minded emphasis on elections, which become an end in themselves. Instead, we should press for more modest goals: political participation, the rule of law (including an independent judiciary), freedom of speech and religion, property rights, minority rights, and the right to form voluntary organizations (especially political parties). We should, in short, urge the formation of a civil society. Only when civil society has come into existence are elections appropriate. Or as Judith Miller put it last year, "elections tomorrow and civil society today." I would amend this slightly to read, "first peace, then civil society, then elections." If elections come too rapidly, as was the case in Algeria, these tend to bring anti-democratic forces to the fore. They succeed in part because they are the best organized; in part because the citizenry is not ready to make fully informed electoral decisions.

DR. JOHN L. ESPOSITO, Director of the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University: What I've come to value the most about Daniel Pipes is that unlike some people, he states his position very clearly, and I think that makes the discussion a lot easier. I'm also delighted to be here with Ambassador Pelletreau, particularly because as a second-generation Italian who feels very strongly about this country, I've often felt compelled to disagree with U.S. policy. But I don't have very much reason to disagree with Ambassador Pelletreau.

Political Islam, commonly referred to as Islamic fundamentalism, has often been regarded as a major threat to regional stability in the Middle East and to Western interests in the broader Muslim world, and with good

cause. The Iranian revolution, attacks on Western embassies, hijackings, violent acts by groups in the name of religion, groups with names like Army of God and Holy War, signal militant Islam is on a collision course with the West. And a series of events—Egypt, North Africa, the World Trade Center—reinforces the sense of an expansive and explosive reassertion of Islam in global politics.

Islam does constitute the most pervasive and potentially powerful transnational force in the world. I can remember that literally twenty minutes after I signed the contract to do a book called *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* and was wondering whether or not I should do it, I met with a very senior member of the government who began by saying that with the death of communism, Islam is the global alternative.

He said, "I don't consider it a threat but a challenge." However, throughout the interview, he did what many of us do, and that is to constantly say, "Is Algeria another Iran?" "Is Abassi Madani another Ayatollah Khomeini?" In other words, he saw everything through the prism of Iran/Khomeini that has affected in many ways how we try to understand this broad-based and diverse phenomenon in the Muslim world.

If we actually look at its emergence, as was pointed out before, we see a diversity of governments appealing to Islam, from Saudi Arabia to Iran, Libya, Pakistan. You cannot predict, on the basis of referring to these governments as Islamic or even as fundamentalist, the nature of the government, whether it is a conservative monarchy or a radical populist state. You can't predict the nature of its Islamic orientation. Consider the difference between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Nor can you predict its attitude or relationship to the West.

Some so-called Islamic governments are seen as our allies and others are seen as

enemies on our terrorist list. And yet there is a knee-jerk reaction to equate fundamentalism and even political Islam simply with the extremist or radical option. I find, for example, that many will now say we don't consider Islam or Islamic movements necessarily as a problem; we only consider extremists a problem. Few would then name any of the movements that they considered not to be extremists. Often they'll go on and identify the extremists, but very rarely will they say, "I don't consider this group or that group to be extremist for this or that reason." I think getting into specifics becomes really important.

We see, then, a vast array of governments as well as Islamic movements across the world. A significant number, if not a majority, will participate within the system; a small minority is extremist, committed to violence, almost unalterably committed to the violent overthrow of their regimes. A small minority is anti-Western—and we can get into discussions as to why, but even the why often clearly does not excuse many of the actions that take place. But I think the critical distinction between extremists and those that are more moderate or realistic or pragmatic needs to be made.

Much of the 1980s was dominated by fear of a radical Islam. The Iranian revolution and its export dominated most people's consciousness. Indeed, soon after the Iranian revolution there seemed to be cause for concern. There were uprisings in Saudi Arabia, in Bahrain, and elsewhere; there was the slaying of Anwar Sadat, Hezbollah's role in Lebanon.

One of the things that was missed in the eighties but clearly emerged in the nineties is the extent to which Islamic movements were functioning in their societies as social and political forces alongside the extremism. One of the great ironies is that the "wisdom" of the eighties labled these movements extremist, therefore justifying

repression. Many said that if they would participate in the system, it would be shown that they have no real significant following and no platform. However, nobody was about to take that risk or even encourage it.

At the end of the 1980s, we saw the opening of political systems and something new emerging that indicates what's happening in the region and what will continue to happen. Alongside the extremist groups, there are moderate Islamic groups that are social and political forces—engaging in education and social welfare, running clinics and hospitals—and that will participate within the political system.

We begin to see a new generation of elites emerging alongside the modern-educated, secular-oriented elites: modern-educated, Islamically oriented Muslims. Sometimes we forget this when we caricature so-called fundamentalists.

Ironically, to the extent moderate groups wish to participate within the system—and elections have occurred in a number of Muslim countries—Islamists wind up emerging as the leading opposition, or as in Algeria, a movement that looked like it was going to come to power. Therein arises the problem.

We should not lose sight of the fact that Islamists have served in parliament and in cabinets, that Anwar Ibrahim (referred to by Daniel Pipes), the founder of a group that in the seventies or early eighties was the most vital Islamic movement, is now the deputy prime minister of Malaysia. We do have diversity here. If we want to talk about a Hassan Turabi, we also have to talk about an Anwar Ibrahim when we look at the Muslim world.

Let me address some policy issues. Contemporary Muslim history and experience reveal a number of issues that impact upon the relationship of Islam to political participation, democracy and the West. The more general questions that emerge are

whose Islam? And what Islam? This is part of the debate within Muslim societies. Who speaks for Islam? There are many Muslims who get upset when the term Islamist is used because they feel it identifies this group of activists as Islamic and implies that other Muslims are not Islamically oriented. So who is to interpret or apply Islam? Is it to be generals and kings? Is it to be a parliamentary system of government? This is part of the debate that's going on in the transformation of Muslim societies.

Then there is the issue of "what Islam?" Are we talking about restoring an Islamic paradigm from the past, restoring classical laws? Or are we talking about a process of reformation? In other words, is the process one of restoration or reformation?

To move to a more specific political issue, in the 1990s the issue of "hijacked democracy" has been raised. Former Assistant Secretary of State Djerejian, in what I thought was a very forward-looking statement, his Meridian House statement, (see *Middle East Policy*, Volume I, 1992, No. 4) talked about the acceptance of Islam and populist movements but indicated that the United States would have trouble with any movement that sought to hijack democracy in the manner of one man, one vote, one time.

Alongside that statement has to be a question we ask governments. Do they only believe in risk-free democracy? If someone says Islamists are anti-democratic, I think in the same breath they ought to say that there are many governments that are equally anti-democratic. Often when we look at a country we will say that we're not sure because this Islamic leader has never been in power, what his attitude toward democracy will be. But we'll be referring to a country where there is someone in power who clearly has a track record of being anti-democratic. He may then call for elec-

tions, and when they don't turn out the way he wants, clamp down.

So I think there is a dialectical tension between the question of hijacked democracy and risk-free democracy in terms of issues that emerge. It seems to me that one of these issues with regard to Algeria, is this very question. It is a complex issue. On the one hand no one can predict what the FIS (Islamic Salvation Front) would have been like. On the other hand, one can predict with regard to some of the leadership in Algeria what they would be like. For those who would say that the FIS didn't have any great economic program, well, the FLN had 30 years to prove they didn't.

Concern that Islamic movements or any movement, secular or religious, might use the ballot box to come to and then in effect seize power is rooted in a realistic possibility. At the same time, this issue must be balanced by an equal awareness that given the authoritarian nature of some governments, rulers' commitment to political liberalization or the democratic process is equally questionable. There is an attitude of risk-free democracy.

The manner in which most rulers in the area have come to power and retained it produced a reluctance to tolerate opposition. Their pragmatic response to recent public unrest by opening up the political process was followed by a limitation or cancellation of political liberalization and suppression of Islamic movements at the first sign of the emergence of significant political opposition. This has happened in Algeria, in Tunisia, and it may happen in Egypt.

The failure by some governments to distinguish between extremists avowedly committed to the violent overthrow of the prevailing system and organizations that have demonstrated a willingness to participate within the system has increasingly led to indiscriminate state repression.

This approach runs the risk of setting in motion a spiral of violence and counterviolence that leads to self-fulfilling prophecies—radicalization and the growing polarization of society. As a result, in many Muslim societies, as in Algeria, one is faced with a choice between being a secular Muslim and an Islamically oriented Muslim.

The example, it seems to me, of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Jamaat in Pakistan is historically instructive. Both are long-term movements. Both were in opposition and dissent. Both at times challenged the government. But the difference is that more often in the past, under Nasser for example, the use of repression spawned violence and the radical groups that came up under Sadat. On the other hand, in Pakistan it wasn't that the government didn't attempt to contain the movement, but the government was never totally repressive. As a result, the Jamaat never became as radicalized, never engaged in the kind of violence that occurred during the sixties in Egypt.

The same argument can be made with regard to Malaysia, where Islamic groups have been able to function. In fact, if you take the examples of Pakistan and Malaysia, one can argue that if Islamic groups are allowed to function, they change over time. They do not become a direct threat to the government. One can even argue in one case that the movement, while having an influence on society and on political rhetoric, has, in fact, lost its political clout. Look at the most recent elections, for example, in Pakistan.

Looking outside the Arab world is quite useful. As several leaders in Pakistan and Malaysia have said to me, "We were arrested, and prison wasn't that comfortable, but often it then became house arrest. If we had been in many of the Arab countries, we would have been killed." The question of

government response and repression leading to greater radicalization is an issue.

Let me underscore that I'm not saying that there aren't Islamists who are radically oriented, but what I am talking about is government policies that push moderates into a more radical position, government policies that convince those who would participate within the system that participation is pointless.

To be very specific, if one looks at Egypt today, I think it's important to distinguish between the Gamaa al-Islamiyah and the Muslim Brotherhood. Unless that distinction is made—if all are lumped together—then there is a risk of contributing to radicalization. On the other hand, with regard to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, or in Jordan or other places, one can certainly cite individual Muslim Brothers and Muslim Brotherhood statements that are worrisome or even threatening.

But most Islamic movements are very much like many political parties. Under one umbrella there are diverse forces. Put in one room five Democrats or five Republicans, give them one policy, you can wind up with five very different opinions or interpretations. And yet we call them Democrats or Republicans. Similarly, if you put in one room a group of Christians or a group of Muslims, you will find very diverse opinions within each group.

Today we are seeing a global resurgence of religion. This isn't just something in the Muslim world. In fact, many religions are in crisis, and believers are disagreeing and doing battle intellectually as well as physically among themselves, let alone with other groups. Islamic movements should be seen in this context.

As we look at the politics of the region for the near future, one of the realities is that political Islam, or whatever we want to call it, is here to stay. And there are many reasons. The political situations, the socio-

economic situations, the development issues, the disparity and maldistribution of wealth, unemployment, etc. are critical issues. Underlying issues have to do with the role of religion in society, with identity, authenticity, dependence versus independence—all of these are alive.

Political economy is important, but political economy and religion have to be evaluated together to understand the current phenomenon. To think that simply giving people jobs is going to change the situation is unreal. Some societies that are experiencing the force of political Islam are cases of abject poverty. In others, that's not the case. In some societies, most of the youth are unemployed and turning to Islam. In others, as in Egypt and Jordan, we're talking about doctors, engineers and lawyers.

Secondly, when we analyze the Muslim world, we have to avoid what I call secular fundamentalism. We have a tendency to forget that our secular democratic world view is but one of many. We may think it's the best, but it is not the only one. It is an alternative.

If we think our world view is the only one, then we become the norm. If somebody differs from my norm, they're abnormal. If someone disagrees with my position and I regard myself as rational, then I tend to conclude they are irrational. Rather than saying that they are rational but see things differently than I do, they are deviant.

A final observation. If you open up the political system, there is as much chance of growth and forward movement as there is of disruption and unrest.

Look at development in the West in the post-Enlightenment period. There was not only religious debate but religious bloodshed. There was not only political debate in establishing the nation-state or political-party systems, but civil wars. But if we're thinking long-term today as well as short-term, if we're going to talk about the devel-

opment of civil society, then risks will have to be taken at some point. If not now, when? And if we don't address this issue, we'll always be saying, "Isn't it curious, it must be something about the Arab and Muslim culture. They seem to be so against political participation."

If you open up the system, then Islamist groups do not become the only game in town. If you allow a strong opposition to develop, then you can promote a more pluralistic society, and Islamists will have to compete with other Islamists and with secularists for votes. Also, in dealing with the practicalities of politics, Islamists will be forced to rethink and transform their ideology. And finally, remember that Islamists, if they come to power, are going to have to deal with the political realities of their own country as well as with the fact that we live in a globally interdependent world.

There may be some absolute rejectionists, but I think the majority will probably function within the system. Let's keep in mind the track records of many governments in the region. I think our policies have to be short-term smart but also long-term smart. Otherwise one can get the impression that presidents are worried about reelection, and the media are worried about the short-term headline rather than thinking about where the movement is going to go and how we ought to be responding to it.

DR. DUNN: Senior Analyst at the International Estimate, Editor, *The Estimate*: Most of us knew when we came here that we would hear very different approaches from Daniel Pipes and John Esposito. I think that those expectations were fulfilled. I think, too, that Ambassador Pelletreau has given us yet another good statement of the same sorts of approaches discussed by his predecessor Edward Djerejian in his Meridian House speech over a year ago. I am pleased

to see that we continue to at least state this as our official policy. I'm not sure that this always gets carried into effect in our dealings with specific cases and specific countries, but I am at least pleased to know that it continues to be our policy.

I've known Dan Pipes for over 20 years. We both started out working in medieval Islamic history, and I think sometimes we hear "fundamentalism," with quotes around it, discussed as a return to the Middle Ages, when, as Dan knows and I do, it is not that at all. It has very little in common with Islam as it was practiced in the medieval period. Dan has given us a concise and pithy statement of a point of view that I may not share, but which I think we can chew over and talk about as we go along. I am almost astonished to have lived long enough to hear Dan Pipes call for support of the PLO. (Laughter.)

I think that John Esposito's points were extremely well made, and I tend to share most of them. I think, however, that when it comes to policy, it is not always easy for policymakers in the United States to apply the broad principles we would like them to apply. Perhaps in our discussion we may want to look a little more closely at Algeria. It is an intriguing case study because it brings up the conundrum of how you promote democracy without encouraging the ascension to power of an anti-democratic movement. This is not to say that FIS was an anti-democratic movement, but to say that this is the issue that we're trying to wrestle with here.

If you achieve one man, one vote, one time, you have not really accomplished much in the way of democracy.

Dr. Pipes has alluded to the necessity to build civil society in advance of elections. This is not a particularly objectionable principle, and certainly we have to recognize that in the West, democracy was not simply born full grown like Athena from the brow

of Zeus. It evolved over a great deal of time and is perhaps still evolving and perfecting itself. To take a society that doesn't have democratic traditions or institutions and simply hold multi-party elections is not necessarily the smoothest way to transfer power and to guarantee the accountability of the state to the people who are voting.

On the other hand, I think it's also true that in many cases Islamist movements have themselves done a great deal to promote the evolution of civil society. The Egyptian professional syndicates, especially those dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood, such as the Lawyers' Syndicate, which has been in confrontation in the last week with the Egyptian government, have been among the most democratic and pluralist institutions within that society. The Brotherhood, in the development of its investment companies and so forth over the past few years (while some of these were pyramid schemes), has also been far more capitalist, far more free-market-oriented than the government itself. When we talk about the evolution of civil society, we mustn't forget that sometimes Islamist institutions have been working very hard to develop civil society.

I think that we need to avoid stereotyping. One of the points that Dr. Esposito and Ambassador Pelletreau have made clearly is that fundamentalism is a slippery term. It's a category, a name that we have applied to something, but at various times my colleagues in the press have been known to apply it to Qadhafi, the Iranian government, the Saudi Arabian government and the Sudanese government, and if you can think of anything these four institutions have in common other than the fact that the press has applied the name "fundamentalist" to them, I'd be delighted to know what it is.

Any word that can be applied so broadly is far too slippery to be comfortable with.

We are looking at such a wide variety of movements and expressions that it is dangerous to start talking about what our policy should be toward fundamentalist Islam because there's no such thing. There are Islamist movements with political agendas of their own, political agendas driven by the particular situation in individual countries, and we should judge them individually.

There may be circumstances where it is in our interest to oppose their agendas. There may also be countries in which it is in our interest to support them. Pakistan and Malaysia have been mentioned—two countries with, if not perfect democracies, functioning democratic, multi-party systems. They are both countries in which Islamist groups have played major political roles and in some cases continue to do so.

One can say that these aren't Islamist movements in the sense that we are talking about today.

People say, "When I talk about fundamentalists, I don't mean the Saudis," or "I don't mean the Pakistanis," or "I don't mean the Malaysians"; "I mean those other people out there." I think it's extremely important to define our terms.

Perhaps the one thing that we missed in the Algerian case was the question of what would have happened if FIS had come to power? Would FIS have somehow managed to neutralize the secularism of the Algerian army, or would the army still have had the opportunity to step in if FIS proved an undemocratic movement? These are questions we perhaps can't answer because we weren't given the opportunity.

In the Jordanian case, one of the more successful democratizing movements in the Arab world, King Hussein brought Muslim brothers into the cabinet in 1991. They were given some key posts, like the Education Ministry, and after they had alienated a lot of Jordanians by some of the rules and regulations they instituted, they left the

cabinet. While they remain an important force in the Jordanian parliament, they didn't do nearly as well in the last elections as they had in the previous ones.

Perhaps this is the way, as Professor Esposito put it, to really test the Islamic agendas. If their only political agenda is "Islam is the solution," let them bring it in, let's test it. Let's see if they can meet a payroll. In the Jordanian case, they hurt themselves by their time in office. We will never know how well FIS would have done governing Algeria, although they did govern for over a year in most of the municipality councils. The debate about Algeria, therefore, is hypothetical: what would have happened if things had gone a different way.

I would pose a question to the panel, one that cuts to the core of the debate about Algeria. What happens when a non-democratic movement wins a democratic election? There is a Western tradition that goes back to the old Latin phrase *vox populi vox Dei*—the voice of the people is the voice of God. But if one is convinced that a particular agenda or set of religious laws is the norm for a society, will a genuine Islamist regime be prepared to yield power when the voice of the people goes against what they consider to be the voice of God? Will a democratically elected Islamist regime be prepared to yield power?

DR. ESPOSITO: Rashid Ghannouchi, Tunisia's Islamic leader, has said yes, one must be prepared to do it. Whether or not one can believe him, since he's never been in power, we don't know. On the other hand, he's taken this position, not only in a convenient way in his dialogue with the West, but also among audiences of Arabs and Muslims, many of whom disagreed with him.

This is a good question, but one could also ask the question about many of those

who are already in power. It seems to me that if you were to take just anybody in the region, whether secular or religious and ask them the first thing they would do if they came to power, they would say: I would immediately arrest the opposition and stabilize things.

There are Islamists who have gone on record, like Ghannouchi and others on this issue. We will continue to see a debate and a process of transformation within these groups.

Whether or not you can believe what people say when they are out of power, of course, is an issue. But we say the same thing about those whom we elect to office here. There are Islamists who are on record as saying that they would yield power. What we need to do, what we will do at some point, whether we like it or not, is to see how this works out.

DR. PIPES: In 1986, a unique event happened, not noted much in the outside world. A democratically elected leader of the Sudan resigned and left power, Fouad Adab. He was followed by the fundamentalists in a coup d'état. They have made it clear they are not going to leave power.

The Iranian government came to power in 1979 on the basis of democracy, revolting against the authoritarian shah. They're clearly not going to leave power by being voted out. I think the short record so far makes it clear that fundamentalists are not going to leave power.

I'd also like to address one other point. What possible coherence is there between the governments of Libya, Iran, Sudan and Saudi Arabia? Well, it's quite clear. All of them are governments that premise their policies on the basis of Islam and use Islam for political ends.

AMB. PELLETREAU: I think you can understand that most policymakers are aller-

gic to dealing with hypotheticals and for very good reason, because we have interests that we deal with every day on a practical, real basis, and we don't really have the luxury of looking out into the future and trying to adopt a policy toward some hypothetical that may or may not occur.

But I might mention that a few years ago, when I was ambassador in Tunisia, there was an effort by the government to encourage a broad-based national charter, and many political forces in the country were invited to participate in discussing and drafting a national charter. Some Islamists began the exercise and then decided that they would withdraw, because the whole question of participation with others in a power-sharing situation was uncomfortable to them and they had not thought it through. So I have to place a lot of responsibility on their shoulders for having withdrawn from that effort.

DR. DUNN: I think you can find other quotes by Rashid Ghannouchi which go in the other direction. Ghannouchi, like many of these people, sometimes speaks very differently when he's speaking to Western audiences. He has also said similar things to Islamic audiences, but at the same time, one can look at some of the speeches he has made, particularly when he's been in Tehran or Khartoum, which seem to flip the coin in the other direction. If you're trying to decide what Ghannouchi would really do, I think you have to say that he hasn't always been consistent.

I think, too, that for all of our discussions here in Washington about what our policy ought to be, it is going to have only a peripheral effect on developments within the Middle East. What we do may or may not help the Egyptian government or hinder the Algerian government, but in the long run, we are not going to be the major player

that determines the future of Algeria or Egypt or any of the other countries in the Middle East.

Democratization in the Arab world remains difficult. We looked at the success stories as being Algeria and Yemen just a couple of years ago, and today Algeria and Yemen are both plunged into what can only be described in one case as near civil war and in the other case as outright civil war. Jordan is perhaps the one relative success in the democratization field right now.

DR. ESPOSITO: I'd like to address a question to Ambassador Pelletreau, but I'd like to preface it, since it deals with Rashid Ghannouchi, by responding to the previous comment that was made. One has to remember that when you're dealing with leaders of movements, they are religio-political leaders and therefore they are politicians. And politicians do sometimes contradict themselves. They also honestly change their opinions. I'd like to ask Ambassador Pelletreau a question. Specifically with regard to Rashid Ghannouchi. What is the status of Ghannouchi's request for a visa to come to this country? This is an issue that Muslims are following. Rashid Ghannouchi was one of the first people to respond to Assistant Secretary Djerejian's statement with regard to Islam. He faxed him almost immediately and gave a very constructive response. As I understand it, he's been given political asylum in Britain and has applied for a visa to come to the States to speak to a group at a university.

AMB. PELLETREAU: On a previous occasion when I was in Tunisia, Rashid Ghannouchi visited the United States and spoke before some audiences. He had applied to come for one or two speeches. He stayed six months, continuing to try to reach higher levels and influence opinion in this country. The Tunisian government, some-

what unhappy with this order of things, asked me to come in and explain what the United States had in mind. I went in and I said that when somebody applies for a visa to the United States, the first thing we look at is whether they have a valid travel document and who issued it. He was traveling on a passport issued by the Tunisian government, and obviously the Tunisian government had given him authority to travel. The second thing we look at is whether he had valid reasons for traveling to the United States—invitations, so that he wasn't going to become a public charge. Thirdly, we looked at whether we had convincing evidence of our own that he must be excludable on the basis that he had been directly implicated in terrorist actions. I told the Tunisian government at that time that we had not found grounds to exclude him.

On the current application, which is under consideration by the U.S. government, we have these considerations still in mind. We recognize the validity of people coming to speak openly in the United States about their views. At the same time, we have visa laws that exclude people who are openly involved in terrorism. That is something that we are looking at very carefully.

We also have some pause when people come to the United States and use platforms to preach violence against friendly governments or the overthrow of friendly governments, even if they are not directly violating a specific American law. It makes us uncomfortable. And we tend to look at the evidence very closely and carefully of what their actual involvement in terrorism in the past might be.

Mr. Ghannouchi's speaking engagement, as I understand it, is now scheduled for late August or early September, and we will continue to consider very carefully all the pros and cons of having him come to this country.

DR. MATTAIR: I'm struck by what Dr. Dunn said about the impact of American policy. I wonder if others would comment on that. Is it not possible that by American support for the peace process and for the economic development of the occupied territories and the countries that are neighboring Israel, the United States can do something to address the grievances of the most militant people within some of these Islamist movements— Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah—and therefore, take some of the wind out of their sails and pave the way for more moderate Islamists to participate?

AMB. PELLETREAU: Let me approach the subject indirectly through reference to the Declaration of Principles between the PLO and the government of Israel, which calls for elections in the PLO self-governing territories. The original date to have elections conducted by was July 13. That date is not going to be met. But the question of organizing elections and deciding on eligibility and on elections is very much a current consideration in the Palestinian community and on the peace-process agenda.

With respect to Dan's comment that you need to spend time organizing civil society before you can have elections, that would interpose, in my view, a very elastic period, perhaps an indefinitely elastic period, before you would have elections, and maybe Yasser Arafat would be in full agreement with an infinite organization of civil society, but I have a feeling that most of the people of the new self-governing areas are very keen to have elections quite soon as a legitimizing event and to develop their participation.

One of the things we see developing in the territories is a split within Hamas between those who, perhaps reluctantly, have now come to accept that a peace process is inevitable, that efforts to block it are not

going to be successful, and that they should, therefore, shift the ground of their challenge to within the new political systems that will emerge, and those members of Hamas who continue to be absolutely rejectionist in their outlook and are continuing to try to undermine, overthrow and defeat the new implementation agreements with respect to Gaza and Jericho. I dare say that efforts of some members of the PLO have been very instrumental in bringing about this particular split.

Q: Since we're now looking at the Middle East more in a comparative sense, might not the example of the Israeli religious parties playing a role in the Israeli political system give us a model here for at least one possibility? Since Israel was founded, religious parties have played a role in the government and have split and split again, some on personality issues, some on religious issues.

[Dr. Esposito], you've talked eloquently about two different kinds of Islam—one, the radicals who want to overthrow the government, and the other, lawyers' groups, students' groups, people who want to work within the system. Could you possibly look at that also as a spectrum, with those working within the system on one end and those radicals trying to overthrow it on the other? What about the possibility of those trying to overthrow it using Islam to radicalize and mobilize those who work within the system?

DR. PIPES: You needn't go so far afield as Israel; what about Turkey? Turkey has a democratic tradition and it has fundamentalist parties, and their power is surging. Fascists and fundamentalists together took over one-quarter of the vote in the municipal elections last month. Their career is, in fact, a great experiment: What is the intent of the Turkish fundamentalists. If they do

take power, will they subsequently relinquish it? Let's watch. I'm dubious, but it's an open question.

DR. ESPOSITO: I would just cite the examples of Pakistan and Malaysia again, where you have multiple religious parties with long track records. One can look to Israel, but from within the Muslim context.

I think the possibility of radicals using Islam to radicalize moderates is clearly there, but I would argue that what really would tend to make that possible is government policy. If the government is repressive, that reinforces the argument of radicals who say it doesn't pay to operate above ground. This is particularly an issue where you have a time when moderates do operate above ground and then the government steps in. What radicals often say is, "Look, we could have told you all along. You've got the Nasser model, etc. You operate above ground, they know who you are, when the time comes these people don't want any opposition, let alone a religious opposition. Look at what they're doing now."

Q: As a representative of the PLO, I don't understand all this (concentration) on the Islamic movement. They have been with us all the time. There are Muslim fundamentalists or Muslims who stay with Islam and there are Jewish fundamentalists and Christian fundamentalists.

There are some things within our countries that need change. We are developing. We have been under colonization for quite some time. We are trying to free ourselves. Some people see it from a secular point of view; others see it from a religious point of view. There will be some elections. The trouble for us Palestinians in the occupied territories is, electing whom? and for what? Some people don't want to be elected to be under the thumb of the Israelis, and some

people want to be elected to a legislative council. I think 90 percent of the Palestinians will join in the elections regardless of whether their leadership wants it.

Q: I'm not here to engage in defending the Islamists, but those who argue that if Islamists reach power by the power of the ballot, so to speak, they will act the way the Iranian regime is acting or the Sudanese regime is acting, pose a conceptual problem. In Iran a revolution reached power. In Sudan we had essentially a military coup. Regardless of their content, whether bourgeois in the case of the French revolution, communist in the context of the Bolshevik revolution, or Islamist in the case of Iran, revolutions, especially when they reach power by force after tremendous opposition and bloodshed, give themselves a sense of absolute justice, reflecting absolute grievances. By extension, they give themselves the right to do absolute violence.

This is not the case, necessarily, when you reach power through politics. You have to play the political game of balancing interests. And for those who are going to give us an a priori judgment that the Algerian Islamists would have acted in as nasty a way as the Iranian regime are not necessarily intellectually honest.

From the first, it was impossible to talk about one monolithic Islam, just as it is nonsensical to talk about one monolithic Christianity. There's a world of difference between Christianity in Scandinavia and in Spain and in my own country, Lebanon. There's a world of difference in the Islamic world, from Morocco to the Himalayas. It's nonsense to talk about Islam as monolithic. Who represents Judaism? Those folks in Brooklyn who have their own messiah, or reformed Jewry, or what?

Daniel Pipes has written in a number of places that Islamist resurgence is a function of oil wealth. Now we have a different

perspective on Islam. He exposes himself to the charge of being too cynical when he advised us to support—and he admitted that—a movement like the FLN, which is completely corrupt and oppressive and led Algeria to ruins, just because the FLN is engaged in a mortal fight with the FIS. This was the same argument that Daniel Pipes made in the mid-1980s justifying militant support to Iraq just because Iraq was engaged in a bloody fight with Iran. In 1990, when Iraq invaded Kuwait, Daniel Pipes switched position and pushed for the military option against Iraq. I think probably you were wrong then and you are wrong now.

DR. PIPES: I alluded earlier to working with Stalin against Hitler. That was the right decision, even though we later had terrible problems with Stalin. Similarly, the U.S. government worked with Iraq against Iran, again the right decision even though we later had problems with Iraq. In both cases, the mistake lay not in the war-time alliance but in the fact that once we entered into an alliance we got too involved. We forgot that the alliance was purely tactical and very temporary. American cooperation with Stalin should have ended in May 1945, that with Saddam Hussein in August 1988. In neither case was there any reason to work with the dictators afterwards. I favored cooperating with Iraq before August 1988, seeing it as the lesser evil. I stand by that choice. I favored ending the cooperation as soon as the Iraq-Iran war ended. And when Saddam Hussein two years later went on to invade Kuwait, I supported the use of force to oust him. Where's the inconsistency? Circumstances changed in the Middle East, so my views had to change with them.

About Iran: To me the reason for the Iranian regime's ambitions lies not in the way it came to power but in its utopian

drive to remake the Iranian people into perfect Muslims. By the way, Iran has more democracy than many Middle Eastern countries. The parliament has interesting debates and real power. But democracy in Iran has two debilitating limitations: the supreme power, *velayat-e-faqih*, is not elected; and candidates for public office are vetted to make sure they accept the principles of the Islamic Revolution. Accordingly, the parliament reflects an extremely limited spectrum of thought. Within that spectrum a quite lively debate takes place, but that's just not enough. I suspect other fundamentalist regimes will similarly incorporate an active but very limited process of democracy in which only those who accept the precepts of fundamentalist Islam are enfranchised.

About Islam not being monolithic: Everybody knows by now that Islam is not of a piece. Everyone here knows that Muslims are varied. If you insist, I can before every talk repeat that Muslims are many and diverse. We all know that. Let's not get stuck on this issue.

Finally, on the question of oil wealth: Yes, I did publish a book in 1983, *In the Path of God*, suggesting that the resurgence of Islam in the 1970s resulted from the boom in oil wealth. At this point I don't know what causes fundamentalism. It's an extremely complicated subject which baffles me; and I don't see that anyone else has solved it. What causes fundamentalist Islam to prosper may be too complicated for us to figure out.

I second what John Esposito said about not reducing political Islam to political economy. Note that Iran and Saudi Arabia have active fundamentalist movements despite the relative wealth of their populations, while Bangladesh and Yemen, which are extremely poor, have not. There's no clear correlation between wealth or economic growth and Islam. That has a very

important implication, by the way: You can't solve this problem via money.

Q: *Mr. Pipes, by your definition I am an Islamic fundamentalist. My name is irrelevant, but I work for a think tank, an Islamically oriented one. I listen to Mozart; I read Shakespeare; I watch the comedy channel; and I also believe in the implementation of Sharia, the Islamic law, in the state structure of a Muslim country. I find it offensive that you would lump me and someone from Taqfir wal Hijra or Islamic Jihad together.*

For Ambassador Pelletreau, two questions: First, the State Department and the U.S. government have been at pains to define what terrorism is in order not to put wrong on anyone. However, I haven't seen any definition of what they perceive to be legitimate resistance groups or any legitimate resistance action. Is it U.S. policy to prefer pacifists? We Muslims are not obliged to turn the other cheek, and there needs to be some commentary on what we can do that you believe is legitimate.

Second, George Kennan's belief that morality hasn't played a major role in foreign policy has had a large role for the past several decades, and I was wondering if there's any change in this perspective for now or for the future.

AMB. PELLETREAU: Let me address the second question first because I think it's very basic that U.S. foreign policy is based on the values of the American people. When at times in the past it has separated from those values, we find that the policy is not long sustainable. And our history is rife with examples like that. So, maybe unlike the world of pure *Realpolitik*, the United States does act on the basis of morality, and I think that is the correct and, in fact, the only proper way for us to act.

As for trying to define more precisely what we would expect Islamic groups to do in countries where they are repressed or are prohibited by strong state action from participation, I would have to stay with the view that we do not expect them or others to resort to violence or internal terrorism as a way of coming to political power. We see this in many examples around the world—I saw it in my last post in Egypt. We can't endorse the activities of the Islamic Gamaa, setting off explosions in downtown Cairo that kill innocent civilians along the track, or occasionally shooting at tourist targets as an indirect way of bringing pressure on the government. That is not, in our view, a path to legitimate political participation. I don't know that it's up to the United States to try to spell out in detail exactly what is permissible and not permissible in this or that situation, but I feel very comfortable in saying that violence and terrorism and those who espouse them should be basically off our scope, as far as their own political participation goes.

Q: I would like to ask Professor Pipes, what is his objection to Islamists coming to power in Muslim countries? For example, in Iran they started a democratic process in 1953, and the CIA overthrew them, put in a monarch who tortured them and we supported him up to the hilt. Do you think there is some reason behind this?

DR. PIPES: You are rehearsing some awfully old ground. The U.S. government has, to be sure, made mistakes in Iran. But those have nothing to do with the situation since the Islamic Revolution of 1979. We have repeatedly tried to improve relations with Tehran and, indeed, we're still trying to. American officials keep saying that they want to work with Iranians—just please stop making trouble for us, stop attacking individual Americans, and we can start up a new relationship. The Iranian government rejects this offer, repeatedly and even insultingly. Decisions in Tehran now, not actions by the U.S. government years ago, explain the terrible state of relations between the two states.