AD-A283 035

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden gathering and maintaini collection of informatior Davis Highway, Suite 12C

onse, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing da a sources, mation. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this arters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson jet, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.

1. AGENCY USE C	2. REPORT DATE	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED
		FINAL

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE
ISLAMIC RESURGENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

5. FUNDING NUMBERS

6. AUTHOR(S)
JON R. BALL
LT COL

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
AIR WAR COLLEGE
325 CHENNAULT CIRCLE
MAXWELL AFB AL 36112-6427

8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
Unnumbered AWC research paper

DTIC ELECTE AUG 11 1994 S D G

9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
N/A

10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER
N/A

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES
PAPER IS WRITTEN TO FULFILL ACADEMIC RESEARCH REQUIREMNTS FOR AN IN-RESIDENCE SENIOR SERVICE PROFESSIONAL MILITARY SCHOOL.

12a. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE; DISTRIBUTION IS UNLIMITED

12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE

13. ABSTRACT *(Maximum 200 words)*

14. SUBJECT TERMS
Islamic, Resurgence, East

15. NUMBER OF PAGES
26

16. PRICE CODE

17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT
UNCLAS	UNCLAS	UNCLAS	UL

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 1

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39-18
298-102

Air War College
Air University

Islamic Resurgence in the Middle East

by

Lt Col Jon R. Ball

Accesion For
NTIS CRA&I
DTIC TAB
Unannounced
Justification
By
Distribution /
Availability Codes
Dist | Avail and / or Special
A-1

A Research Report Submitted To The Faculty

in

Fulfillment Of The Curriculum

Requirement

94 8 10 030

94-25242

Islamic Resurgence in the Middle East

Islamic resurgence is a growing source of conflict throughout the Middle East. American response to this expanding phenomenon has been largely overshadowed by its ideological struggle against communism and the need to keep oil flowing to the major industrial nations around the world. With the end of the cold war and the overwhelming victory over Iraq in the second Gulf War, America has shifted its attention toward progress on the Arab-Israeli conflict and slowing the Middle East Arms race. These are valid interests, but long after the last barrel of oil is pumped from the ground or the last shot is fired there will always be Islam. With Islam comes conflict not only in religious matters, but in the attempt to use it as a political force. The threat to stability in the Middle East is increasingly from Islamic forces within individual states, rather than from traditional disputes between regional actors.

This paper provides a regional assessment of Islamic resurgence as a source of conflict in the Middle East by exploring the following questions:

1. What exactly is Islamic resurgence and what are its origins?
2. What are some of the current Islamic movements in the Middle East?
3. Is Islamic resurgence inherently anti-American?
4. What are the implications for United States national security strategy in the region?

Islamic resurgence, particularly the militant variety, has received increasing worldwide attention. Without thorough analysis of this phenomenon the U.S. is at risk of making fatally flawed and self-fulfilling strategy decisions concerning the Middle East. In the future, America will need to analyze the Middle East through the Islamic "frame" as it seeks ways to maintain regional stability and promote American national interests.

What is Islamic Resurgence and what are its origins?

The notion of Islamic resurgence is an umbrella term that applies to conservative monarchies, army dictatorships, and modern republics. (1:160) To understand the concept, it is first necessary to sort out the subtleties in the terminology. Common descriptions for Islamic resurgence include

fundamentalism, revivalism, activism, and Islamism. The most popular term in Western literature is also the most inaccurate and stereotypical--that of fundamentalism.

Fundamentalism is not an accurate description of Islamic resurgence. In the first place, all Muslims are fundamentalists in that they believe in the foundation of Islam based on the flawless word of God in the Koran. (2:23) The term fundamentalism originates with the American Protestant movement of the early 20th century stressing the literal interpretation of the Bible. The term is generally used in a derogatory manner and implies a resistance to change and modernization. This is not necessarily true of the Islamic movement. Furthermore, fundamentalism has generally been connected to terrorism and extremism, when in reality many of the resurgence movements are within mainstream Middle Eastern society. (3:7) Therefore, a less prejudiced term to describe the resurgence movement is Islamic revivalism or activism.

What is Islamic activism or revivalism all about? Contrary to Western conventional wisdom, Islamism is not simply a right-wing religious movement. Instead, it is a highly political phenomenon which seeks to create an ideal Islamic society based on the Koran and the way of life in the early Islamic community of the Prophet. (4:2) The goal is an Islamic society that encourages an upright, Islamic life at home and also protects the political, cultural, and religious integrity of the Islamic state within the international community. (5:2) For Americans this is a difficult concept to grasp due to the secular evolution of the relationship between Christianity and government among Western nations. Any attempt to turn the clock back to the 7th century implies something backward, utopian, and undesirable to most Americans. Without going into great religious detail, suffice it to say that Islam is a faith and way of life where political and religious authorities are inseparable. The current activist movements are attempting to revitalize the 20th century (not return to the 7th century) by using Islamic law as a blue print for a socially just society. This has led to a higher profile of Islam in politics, society, and personal life through religious observances, dress, and values. (3:12)

Modern Islamic resurgence gained international attention in the 1970s, but its origins are centuries old. Modern Islamic activism originates from a combination of Islam's revivalist tradition

and a response to Western domination. (3:48) Conflict between Europe and the Middle East goes back to the Crusades; however, the most significant impact has been the legacy of colonialism left by Western powers. This legacy brought about an awareness, during the first half of this century, that something was wrong between the religion which God gave to Muslims and the historical development of the world in which they were living. (3:51) Colonialism may now be a thing of the past, but its memory lives on, especially through the state of Israel. After all, Israel was created in large part as a result of Western colonial domination. The recurring theme behind Islamic activism is a disenchantment with the West (based on colonialism) and a continued failure of existing Middle Eastern political, economic, and social systems. In response, there have been a number of attempts to regain greater regional identity and authority. Most of these movements, though, failed to restore the preeminence which existed in the early days of Islamic society.

Secularism, nationalism, and socialism have all proved unsuccessful in providing social justice in the Middle East. In fact, it can be argued that the two most politically successful states are based on religion. It is not uncommon for young Arabs to question their own failing secular systems while looking at the political success in Israel and Iran. (6:34) Arab nationalism and socialism were dealt a major blow during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. They are now all but discredited as a result of the 1991 Persian Gulf war and the simultaneous demise of the Soviet Union. Further, the rift between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' continues to grow despite the oil wealth that exists within the Middle East. Thus, it is clear why there is a continued search for a new paradigm to bring justice and prosperity to the region. Islamic activism is growing in popularity as that new paradigm.

The bottom line on Islamic resurgence, from a historical context, is that it is seen as a cure for the decline in the Muslim world. Returning to the straight path of Islam has been a standard response to the cyclical rise and fall of Middle Eastern preeminence. The difference today is that alternative solutions such as secularism and nationalism have proved to be generally unsuccessful. Islamic activism, once a minority view, is gaining populist support. It is gaining mainstream acceptance against the backdrop of poverty, social injustice, and political repression.

Although mainstream Islamic resurgence seeks to use peaceful pressure to achieve its aims, there is still a radical part of the movement that uses violence and revolution as its means to an end. This violence is based on a centuries old struggle between the West and Islam, manifesting itself today in Western support for Israel. The other facet of the radical movement uses the theological imperative of *jihad* or holy war to be carried out against anyone who resists the Islamic cause. (3:19) This radical element exists and must be dealt with, but it should not necessarily taint the entire Western view of the resurgence movement. Unfortunately, from the tone of many American news articles, the connection has already been made that equates all Islamic activism to extremism and violence.

Another important point to remember about Islamic activism is that it is not necessarily against modernization. On the contrary, Islamic resurgence is very much in favor of improving society through modern technology and science. What is objectionable to Islamists are the Western and secular by-products that automatically come with the process of modernization. Islamic groups and governments have found it difficult to filter-out modern technology and convenience without retaining some of the Western culture. This is a significant distinction often overlooked by Americans who see such efforts as backward and threatening.

A final and crucial point about Islamic activism is that it is not a monolithic force ready to sweep across the Middle East. It is not going to unite Islam against the West, nor should it be equated with the Pan-Islamic fears of the 19th century. There is sufficient diversity among the region, its people, and its governments, not to mention the diversity in the religion itself, to prevent a unifying trans-national movement. This last point will become clearer with a brief regional analysis of resurgent activities in North Africa and the Persian Gulf.

What are the current Islamic movements in the Middle East?

North Africa

North Africa is a wide and diverse region. It includes areas of political, ethnic, and religious diversity. From the Maghreb countries of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia to the eastern Sahara countries of Libya and Egypt, each has its own unique history and culture. Despite the wide

diversity, this area of the Middle East has experienced a growing resurgence of Islamic activism. Contrary to popular opinion this resurgence was encouraged not created by the Iranian revolution. Specifically, the countries of Tunisia, Algeria, and Egypt all have expanding legitimate Islamic political organizations. Libya also has revivalist movements, but they have been effectively suppressed by Qaddafi and his own use of Islam as put forward in his 'Green Book'. (7:170) And of course, Sudan is also embroiled in a near civil war over the fate of its Islamic government. While Libya and Sudan represent interesting areas of study, this brief look at Islamic resurgence in North Africa will concentrate on the activities in Tunisia, Algeria, and Egypt. These countries share a pattern of Islamic resurgence that for the first time involves the use of legitimate democratic processes.

The trend of resurgence in North Africa starts with a common foundation in economic desperation. Debt, low productivity, poverty, and hunger are common denominators in the growing rift between rich and poor in each of these countries. The Algerian economy was hit particularly hard by declining oil prices in the late 1980s. Burdened by heavy debt to pay for expanding state infrastructure, Algeria was forced to accept economic austerity measures to meet International Monetary Fund (IMF) requirements. This further alienated the population as it created a class of influential Algerians who became even richer by manipulating economic reforms. (8:3) Algerian unemployment reached 20-percent during the 1980s and more than 50-percent of the population now lives in poverty. (9:6) With greater migration to the cities in search of improved living standards, Algeria experienced food riots, strikes, and a crippling losss of social services during the late 1980s. The result is a growing feeling of hostility toward government that is viewed as both inept and corrupt. (8:4)

Tunisia experienced similar economic problems in the 1980s. Both drought and locusts severely impacted agriculture production which employs one-quarter of the working population. Rising costs of imports and government debt forced Tunisia into economic restructuring financed by the World Bank and IMF. The Tunisian economy once considered to be prosperous by regional standards has deteriorated over recent years. It has few natural resources and oil

production accounts for only 12-percent of export earnings. (10:2700) Difficult economic times during the 1980s exacerbated other social and political problems within Tunisia.

Tunisian and Algerian economic problems pale in comparison to Egyptian economic woes. Egypt is a historically agrarian society subsisting off the narrow ribbon of arable land along the Nile river. Agriculture employs more than 40-percent of the work force while producing only 19-percent of the gross domestic product. (10:977) Egypt's fundamental economic problem is the pressure on resources which stems from having one of the world's highest ratios of population to habitable and cultivatable land. (10:978) Egypt remains heavily dependent on American aid and is burdened with debt, despite the write-off allowed as a result of Egyptian support during Desert Storm. Egypt shows little hope of creating an economic miracle to alter the fate of 15 million Egyptians crowded into the teeming streets of Cairo. Egypt is burdened with a large public sector economy, rising prices, and an inability to fulfill the promise of guaranteed jobs for its young university graduates. These unfulfilled aspirations and economic malaise are the types of conditions that are attracting more people, out of economic desperation, to the call of Islamic resurgence.

Another common denominator in the trend toward resurgence is the demand for greater Islamic practices in government and daily life. Here again there is a wide difference in objectives among the various Islamic groups. Some groups will stop short of nothing less than an Islamic government and acceptance of *Sharia* law. Others want simply to see a return to traditional values in public and private life through dress, prayer, separation of sexes in schools, and other religious observances.

Tunisia evolved into one of the most secular states in North Africa where elitist governments tried to dismantle the institution of Islam. (7:164) Habib Bourguiba, the one party ruler for more than 30 years, closed Islamic centers of learning, ignored religious scholars, and banned the wearing of head scarves by women. He even drank a glass of orange juice on television during Ramadan in order to support his claim that fasting detracted from productivity and development. (7:153) Later under popular pressure to reform, the government tried to realign itself closer to

Islam; however, this did not stop the rising tide of dissatisfaction with the government's secular and elitist attitude.

The next common step in the pattern of resurgence is the development of strong organizations with populist support. Islamic organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood attract highly motivated and disciplined individuals. Its members are not just radical extremists, but include professional lawyers, doctors, and educators. The Muslim Brotherhood is making progress not only in attracting professionals, but in gaining control of professional organizations themselves. Most recently in Egypt, Islamic activists won control of the Egyptian Lawyers Syndicate, Egypt's oldest and most powerful professional organization. (11:16)

These movements also gain popular support as they respond to the growing needs of the people. In contrast to violent extremists who wage war against governments, the strategy of moderate activists is to build a broad economic, social, and political base. In Jordan, the Muslim Brotherhood has had a long history of charitable work. As far back as 1965, the Brotherhood has organized medical, educational, and social services. They currently run 20 medical clinics, 40 Islamic schools, and one of Amman's largest hospitals. (12:5) Support throughout Jordan extends well into the middle class, not just the poor and discontent as evidenced by the Brotherhood's success in national political elections. Islamic activists in Egypt are also creating parallel infrastructure to supply basic social services, hospitals, and schools. In doing so they challenge government legitimacy and threaten the policy of Western secular support as a means to prosperity. (13:13)

Islamic organizations are so well organized that they are often the first groups to respond to natural disasters. In Algeria, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was first on the scene to provide tents, clothing, food, and other supplies after a 1989 earthquake. Official government relief efforts were slow to respond. (9:9) Egypt had a similar experience after an earthquake late last year. As in Algeria, Islamic organizations were the first at the scene to provide disaster relief. Seen as a threat to government legitimacy, the Egyptian authorities sought to restrict Islamic organizations from providing aid. (14) This created considerable government criticism and debate

within the Egyptian news media. It was not until the government was able to organize its own relief efforts that it lifted the restriction on Islamic organizations. This is an excellent example of how Islamic groups are able to gain increasing popular support.

While these groups can be highly organized, it does not mean that they are centrally controlled in a worldwide movement. Some organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood have spread throughout the Middle East. But most groups, even the militant ones, pragmatically accept the existence of nation-states. They tend to adapt their Islamic organizations based on the country's unique problems and political experiences. Such was the development and evolution of the Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI) in Tunisia. What was good for the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt did not necessarily work the same way for Tunisians. (3:159)

The next step in the evolution of Islamic resurgence has been to gain recognition as a legal political party. This occurred in Tunisia in 1989 and a year later in Algeria. Both governments allowed the formation of Islamic political parties in attempts to reform under the threat of economic and social upheaval. At the same time these parties were allowed to participate in democratic elections. In the 1989 general election in Tunisia, the MTI won up to 30-percent of the vote in some districts. (15:44) A year later in Algeria, the FIS won 55-percent of the popular vote in municipal elections. (9:9) This unexpected popularity immediately caused both governments to nullify election results and outlaw the Islamic parties. The governments were unwilling to accept the prospect of a 'fundamentalist' victory even in a democratic election. Since then there has been increasing repression and arrests of Islamic activists in both Tunisia and Algeria.

The situation in Egypt is proceeding more slowly, characterized by a quiet rather than a violent revolution. Islamic activism has created an increased awareness among the general population for a desire to lead "a more Islamically informed way of life." (3:139) Religious programming and literature is more prevalent not only in the government controlled media and newspapers but among the local street vendors as well. Perhaps the difference between the experiences in Algeria and Tunisia is the ability of the Egyptian government to control the major Islamic institutions and

religious centers such as the one-thousand year old al-Azhar university. (14) The government's ability to co-opt the Islamic establishment has tended to limit the influence of activists groups.

Nevertheless, moderate extremist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood have shown the ability to gain political power. Although Islamic political parties are still illegal in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood has effectively taken control of the Socialist Labor Party, giving it the largest opposition voice in government. They have also made progress toward controlling the professional organizations and even scored well in some local city elections in late 1992. (14) While the Islamic Brotherhood is making inroads into mainstream Egyptian politics, the government is still well in control. The Brotherhood, although well organized and vocal, is still a minority movement in Egypt.

Along with the non-violent extremists such as the Muslim Brotherhood, the Egyptian government is also faced with numerous militant Islamic groups. These groups challenge government authority and legitimacy through violence and terrorism. Most recently, Coptic Christians and tourists have been the subject of terrorist attacks. These violent groups have no foundation in Islam and have no popular support among the Egyptian people. These fragmented groups also do not seriously threaten the existing government. Egyptian public opinion flatly rejects the extremists call for an Islamic state. (14) Popular opinion does not believe that such a government is viable, nor could it improve economic conditions. On the other hand, public opinion increasingly views the status quo government as inept and equally unable to alter the dismal economic problems. Such a dilemma is fertile ground for continued unrest and leaves the door open for greater political gains by more moderate Islamic activists.

The final step in the evolution of Islamic resurgence in North Africa has yet to be written. The aspirations of Islamic activists are still unfulfilled. Many leaders have been arrested and economic conditions remain unchanged. A common argument used by existing governments to justify the the continued repression is that Islamic groups lack a specific plan on how to govern and solve problems should they gain control of government. A similar complaint is that once Islamists use the democratic process to gain power, the same forces will simply eliminate democracy and

establish a revolutionary state similar to Iran. These arguments seem more like justification to maintain inept, corrupt, or even illegitimate governments, than valid criticisms. The world will be unable to judge the validity of such arguments until Islamic groups have the opportunity to follow through with the results of legitimate democratic elections. In the meantime, Islamic resurgence continues to grow as a major source of internal conflict in North Africa.

The Persian Gulf

Islamic resurgence in the Persian Gulf seems to be a non sequitur since Iran and Saudi Arabia are both already Islamic states. However, there is a resurgence movement among the Gulf states stemming from the 1979 Iranian revolution. Many believed, at the time, that the Arab Gulf states would be swept away in a tide of Iranian style Islamic revolution. This obviously did not happen. The question is--why?

The excesses of the Iranian government toward its own people after the revolution is the first and foremost reason the revolution did not spread to the Arab Gulf states. Iran's treatment of its own citizens was far worse than the treatment of Shias in neighboring Sunni Arab states. (7:106) Furthermore, the Iran-Iraq war sacrificed a generation of young men and induced near economic ruin. It is not difficult to see why the majority of Shias and Sunnis living in the Arab Gulf Kingdoms wanted none of what Iran was offering.

Another reason that the Iranian revolution did not spill into other Gulf states is that the monarchies in these states were already sensitive to the grievances of Shia minorities. (7:107) The government in Saudi Arabia listened to Shia concerns and attempted to increase spending in the Shia areas of the eastern peninsula. The oil wealth of Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf States went a long way toward stabilizing their form of conservative Islamic society. Even religious and minority opposition elements shared in the prosperity. Saudi Arabia's Wahhabi tradition, its acceptance of Sharia law, and its oil wealth were enough to ensure the political stability of itself and its neighbors, despite the revolutionary fervor on the other side of the Persian Gulf. That is not to say, however, that the Iranian revolution did not have a significant impact on the Persian Gulf states.

The Iranian revolution represents a serious challenge to Saudi Arabia as the guardian of Islam and its two holiest sites, Mecca and Medina. (7:108) Iran has tried repeatedly to discredit Saudi Arabia in the Islamic world. Although the attempts have largely failed, there has been a shift in the political and religious spectrum. The Saudi government once considered to be ultra-right, now faces opposition from a more conservative Islamic revivalism. It is interesting that many of the new conservative voices are the young people in Saudi Arabia. These young people see a conflict between their parents Westernized life style and the attempt to live according to Islamic law and precepts. (16) Iranian rhetoric continually challenges Saudi Arabia's practice of 'American Islam'. This is a challenge that may become increasingly serious following Saudi Arabia's deepening reliance on the United States in the aftermath of the second Gulf War.

As a result of the latest Gulf war, there will be a continuing Western military presence within the area for the foreseeable future. Many of the Gulf states, particularly Kuwait, see this involvement as the lesser of two evils. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states are willing to accept the risk of exposure to Western culture and preeminence in the face of the greater threat from Iraqi and Iranian expansion. The question is how long will Western presence be tolerated. In the short term, the already conservative Gulf States do not face an immediate threat from the destabilizing effects of right-wing Islamic activism. But in the long term, America's continued presence in the Gulf is poisoning the very thing it is trying to preserve--stability. Criticism is already mounting over American willingness to act against Iraq in the Persian Gulf and its unwillingness to aid Muslims in Bosnia or Palestinians in Israel. Such events are likely to fan the flames of Islamic activism and instability. In the near term, however, the Gulf states appear well insulated against political instability from any type of Islamic activism.

Israel and Jordan

Wedged in the fertile crescent between North Africa and the Persian Gulf, Israel and Jordan are also very concerned with Islamic activism. The situations in each country manifest themselves quite differently. On the one hand, Israel is confronted with violent Islamic extremist groups that

reject the existence of Israel. Jordan, on the other hand, is concerned with the non-violent, but radical Muslim Brotherhood.

In the case of Jordan, Islamic resurgence has made political inroads through the democratic process. Similar to the North African countries, food riots in 1989 put pressure on the government to share power with other political parties. As a result, the Muslim Brotherhood won 22 out of 80 seats in recent elections and has taken a legitimate place in the government. (8:20) What is unique about Jordan's political process is King Hussein. Thus far he has been able to maintain wide political popularity including support from the Muslim Brotherhood. In light of his declining health, however, Jordan may be the country to watch in the evolution of Islamic resurgence. With the potential change in leadership it will be interesting to see if the Islamic Brotherhood maintains its political legitimacy, particularly within a democratic framework.

In the case of Israel, Islamic extremism has complicated the Arab-Israeli conflict. There are two main factors that have brought an Islamic dimension into a traditionally Arab-Israeli dispute over the occupied territories. The first factor is the inability of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) to resolve the conflict over the disputed territories. In addition, the PLO's decision to support Iraq in the latest Gulf war further eroded the credibility of PLO leaders. As a result the militant Islamic groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad have become more vocal and violent in trying to further the Palestinian cause and compete for leadership within the Palestinian community. Hamas, whose goal is to replace the state of Israel with an Islamic state, is a militant Islamic group that has carried out attacks in Israel and the occupied territories.

Israel's mass deportation of 415 Palestinians is the second factor that has added to the increased Islamic dimension. Prior to the recent deportation, Hamas was one of several relatively unknown militant terrorist groups. After the deportation, this group is nearly a household word across America. It raised the group and the Palestinian cause into the public relations arena of the international news media. The Israeli government took a group who in reality posed no serious threat to the existence of Israel and instantly gave them international attention. According to Ali Jarbawi, a political science professor at Bir Zeit University, the effect was to give political stature

to a group who most Palestinians still believe has far less support than the PLO in representing the Palestinian cause. (17:4b)

Terrorism and violence are rejected by the international community and should be dealt with as criminal activities. The recent situation in Israel has merely fanned the flames of anti-Islamic fears in the Western news media, something Israel seems all too willing to support. Recently, the Israeli Foreign Minister stated that fundamentalism is "the greatest danger in the Middle East. It is fanatical. It is ideological. It is religious and it claims, like communism, that the goal justifies the means." (18:9A) These statements, in this author's opinion, are expressly for Western consumption. Such announcements play on Western fear and ignorance. They also raise a serious question that is worth further discussion.

Is Islamic Resurgence inherently anti-American?

On the surface, it appears that Islamic resurgence is anti-American in nature. American newspapers are full of vivid examples: kidnapping of American citizens, bombing of tourists in Egypt in the name of fundamentalism, burning of the American flag by Iranian revolutionaries, and burning of the American Embassy in Pakistan. But beneath the surface and grisly headlines, the reality is that Islamic resurgence is not inherently anti-American.

As mentioned previously, Islamic activism is in part a reaction to Western colonialism and the search for a way to restore preeminence to the Middle East. There is nothing specifically anti-American in that concept. American leadership must look beyond the rhetoric that comes with Middle Eastern culture. The U.S. as the most powerful representative of the Western world is naturally going to be subject to many Islamic grievances. (5:25) Even though the U.S. does not have a history of colonialism, as the world leader it will still bear the brunt of criticism brought on by years of frustrating colonial subjugation. The ill feelings expressed by militant and other Islamic groups are a result of American policy, not American society per se. (7:327)

America's involvement with Iran during the height of the cold war is perhaps the most significant reason for the perception that Islamic "fundamentalism" is anti-American. Starting with the 1953 Central Intelligence Agency sponsored coup in Iran, there has been a long history

of American heavy-handed involvement in the Persian Gulf. America's overwhelming concern with the Soviet Union and subsequent support of the Shah left deep emotional scars with the Iranians. Add to this America's continued one-sided support of Israel and it is not hard to see, from a Muslim perspective, how American policy has been consistently anti-Islamic. Hence, the rhetoric that continues today from Islamic activists is largely a result of past political practices more than an inherent or inevitable clash between America and Islam.

The result is a "mutual satanization" between America and the more radical Islamic movements. (3:172) It is difficult for either side to see past misconceptions and stereotypes. It only takes a glance through American newspapers to see the evil many Americans attach to the thought of Islamic "fundamentalism". Images of the Ayatollah Khomeini proclaiming the U.S. as the "great Satan" are forever etched on the minds of most adult Americans. Certainly the bombings and kidnappings in the supposed name of Islam have polarized the attitudes of many Americans against the notion of Islamic revivalism. Even the religion of Islam itself is considered by many Americans to be extremist in nature. (19:134) This condition of 'mutual satanization' is becoming imbedded in some political circles as evidenced by Patrick Buchanan's implication that there is an impending conflict between Islam and the West. (3:177)

The recent World Trade Center bombing is a good example of how this 'mutual satanization' may continue to hinder constructive political relationships. Not long after the bombing, Associated Press headlines appeared questioning Iranian ties to the Trade Center bombing, both from possible financing and the use of similar bombing methods to other Iranian-backed groups. Interestingly, Tehran Radio responded by claiming the U.S. is "laying the groundwork to blame Iran" for the bombing. (20:7a) It seems that even before the facts unfold, the innuendos are beginning on both sides based on past experiences and 'mutual satanization'.

The supposed anti-American nature of Islam is something that can easily be exploited to manipulate American support from both sides. As mentioned previously, Israel is certainly able to enlist the threat of Islamic fundamentalism to deflect attention from the deportation issue. Likewise, Egyptian officials are quick to exploit fears of Iranian exported revolution to the Sudan

to garner American sympathy and deflect attention away from its own internal economic and political problems. The question is where do we go from here? What conclusions can be made about Islamic resurgence and what are the implications for national security strategy?

What are the Implications for national security strategy?

National security strategy for the Middle East, like any other area of the world, should be based on U.S. interests and objectives. The traditional interests for the States and its allies have been unrestricted access to the region's oil supply and trade routes, the promotion of regional stability, and the promotion of economic trade and development. These will remain the principle U.S. interests for the foreseeable future. Islamic resurgence has the potential to affect all of these interests because of its impact on government legitimacy and subsequent regional instability.

Government legitimacy is a serious underlying source of instability. Unlike Western democracies that are founded on historical constitutional documents, the Middle East does not have a similar heritage. The religion of Islam does not specify a particular form of government and the legacy of colonialism certainly has added to regional identity problems. Consequently, founding and maintaining governments that are recognized by their citizens as legitimate is no simple matter. Forms of governmental authority in the Middle East cover a wide spectrum as do the methods for succession of power. Ironically, Islamic resurgence, which was once viewed as an extremist and peripheral movement with little serious impact, is now gaining political legitimacy. The political changes described earlier in Tunisia, Algeria, Jordan, and Egypt make Islamic activism a potential threat to existing governments because of unexpected victories in local and national elections. The implication for U.S. national strategy is the need to <u>educate</u> senior leadership and the need to develop <u>new thinking</u> regarding Islamic "fundamentalism" in order to promote long term U.S. interests in the Middle East.

The first step--Education

All Americans including civil and military leaders, journalists, and the general population require an increased awareness of the facts on Islamic activism. A lack of knowledge inevitably

leads to stereotyping and poor or dangerous policy decisions. America does not need to look far into its own history to see the effects on policy of ethnic or religious stereotyping. American leaders have shown themselves to be less than astute in regards to Islam. President Reagan linked Qaddafi and Libyan terrorism with a worldwide Muslim fundamentalist movement following the U.S. bombing of Libya. And Vice President Quayle made a public reference linking Nazism, communism, and radical fundamentalism. (3:208) Such statements are ill-informed and only reinforce the perceived double standard of American policy in the Middle East.

When it comes to making national policy and strategy, it is important to remember that not all Islamic activists are violent extremists. All Islamists are not raving fanatics who automatically seek to overthrow governments and commit terrorist acts. Islamic resurgence covers a wide spectrum from those who seek greater religious observances, solutions to social problems, and greater political power, to the more radical and rejectionist. However, the small extremist groups seem to get most of the media attention, as evidenced by the recent attacks on tourism in Egypt, bombing of the World Trade Center, and Hamas related incidents in Israel. There appears to be an attempt to use the Western news media, on both sides, to combine Egyptian, Tunisian, Israeli, and Algerian experiences into a common threat of "fundamentalism". This notion has even infiltrated the Professional Military Education system of the United States. Scenarios used in Air War College seminar exercises are embellished with the use of Islamic references and threats of "fundamentalism". (21:11) The U.S. public and leadership need to recognize attempts to manipulate American perceptions, either intentionally or inadvertently.

Muslims in the U.S. also suffer from a severe image problem. Part of the education process should be to inform Americans on the facts of Islam, which is one of fastest growing religions in the United States. One of the inevitable lessons from such a process would reinforce that violent acts in the name of Islam have no more religious legitimacy than do violent acts in the name of Christianity (the shoot-out in Waco, Texas between Christian cult followers and police is a good example). With a growing Muslim population in America, accurate coverage of Islamic practices

would go a long way toward dispelling stereotypes in this country and improving America's image in Islamic countries.

One of the critical goals of the education process is to avoid substituting Islamic "fundamentalism" for the disappearing communist threat. The dissolution of the Soviet Union has made formulating national security strategy and resource allocation extremely difficult. Islamic resurgence in the Middle East and Central Asia is a convenient surrogate for those who seek the comfort of an ideological struggle. Islamic activism clearly presents a challenge to existing governments in the region, especially those who are seen as increasingly elitist and illegitimate. It also presents a threat from terrorist actions of radical fringe elements. However, this does not directly translate to a threat against U.S. interests. If U.S. policy makers see Islamism as a universal threat, they will continue to alienate a large part of the Middle East and create a self-fulfilling national strategy. American interests are best served by being able to discern rhetoric from reality and extremism from moderate activism. This is the first step toward developing new thinking that will guide American national security policy in the Middle East.

An opportunity for new thinking

The suggestion that there is an opportunity for new thinking implies that there is something wrong with the old strategy. Until recently, America's overriding imperative in the Middle East centered on the containment of communism. America made decisions in the region (supporting the Shah of Iran for example) that it might not have, had it not been for the overwhelming concern over the struggle against communism. With the end of the cold war there is a need and opportunity to reevaluate Middle East policy. The opportunity to make real progress on the Arab-Israeli peace process is certainly of great concern to the United States. But there is also an opportunity to better understand and work within the Islamic "frame" in order to deal with the growing tide of Islamic resurgence. The essence of a new national strategy rests on encouraging greater internal political participation within the countries of the Middle East. Democratization is the best means in the long run to thwart the assault against existing governments in the region by

Islamic political forces. Political pluralism and democracy are rapidly becoming the most important issues in the Middle East. (22:427)

This new vision for U.S. strategy is not a utopian effort centered on human rights. It is also not an attempt to promote liberal Western democracy at all costs. It is, however, an investment in the long term interest of the United States--access to oil and regional stability. It represents an opportunity to establish relations with the people of the region, not just individual governments for short term gain. It is an opportunity to break away from the old east-west mentality that drove American policy for years.

Democracy remains the best hope to co-opt the energy of Islamic resurgence. Interestingly, the word 'democracy' is not found in Islam. It was only added to the Arabic language in the late 19th century. (23:96) The concept of democracy has been slow to develop in the Middle East, but it is not inconsistent with the religion of Islam. The notion of democracy has a legitimate basis in the traditional Islamic concepts of consultation (*shura*), consensus (*ijma*), and personal interpretation (*ijtihad*). (3:186) There are various schools of thought about the compatibility of Islam and democracy. A full discussion on this subject is beyond the scope of this paper. But it is reasonable to assume that "democracy has become an integral part of modern Islamic political thought and practice." (3:187) Islamic organizations in Egypt, Jordan, Pakistan, Algeria, Tunisia, and Malaysia have advocated the principle of democracy and participated in democratic elections. A recent survey of the Arab world indicates that Arabs "would like the chance to remove unpopular leaders through the ballot box instead of uprisings or coups." (24:163) Therefore, the issue is no longer if democracy is compatible, but how it can be implemented.

The practical application of democratic principles in the Middle East is a function of the nature and degree of popular participation. On the one hand, the conservative Gulf monarchies have made some attempts to introduce popular sovereignty through consultation in politics. On the other hand, countries such as Tunisia and Algeria have introduced local and national elections. The specific application and rate of growth of democratic principles will certainly evolve differently within each country. Americans, however, should not expect the end result to be a

mirror image of a liberal Western democracy. This will not happen in an Islamic state where there is a need to balance popular and divine sovereignty. The application of democratic principles will have a unique evolution in Islamic countries. It will also be a difficult process to carry out. But encouraging political participation will have a tremendous payoff in the long run. Democracy is a powerful tool to ease nagging legitimacy problems in the Middle East.

Although the potential payoff is high, there are also many risks. To begin with, Islamic groups may simply use the democratic process to solidify political power, win election victories, and then replace democracy with a radical, authoritarian government. So far, there is no evidence to support this concern since election results in Tunisia and Algeria were overturned before the Islamic parties had the opportunity to demonstrate their intentions. In general though, evidence of toleration to diversity by Islamic groups is mixed at best. In Jordan, for example, the Muslim Brotherhood gained five cabinet posts, including the Ministry of Education, following election victories in 1991. They proceeded to cause a national controversy by banning fathers from watching their daughters play at sports and by introducing prayers in school that condemn the U.S. and Israel. (25:201) Events in Pakistan also question the ability to respect rights of minorities and women. These are not encouraging signs; however, Islamic activists deserve the opportunity to follow through on the results of legitimate elections. Only time will tell how well they continue to support the democratic process that elects them.

There are also obvious significant risks to existing governments that allow greater political participation. Election victories by Islamic parties can directly threaten the legitimacy of governments. One approach to minimize this problem has been to create "risk-free" democracy where only the government is allowed to win. (3:187) This outlook ignores the possibility that democratic elections could actually insulate existing governments against radical Islamic movements. Islamic groups may find it difficult to offer real solutions to the hard social and economic problems that bring them election victory. Many of these groups are still only in the "slogan" stage when it comes to constructive alternatives. Greater use of political pluralism could, in some cases, diffuse the undercurrent of dissatisfaction. However, governments will have

to wean themselves from the current attitude of "risk-free" democracy in order to reap potential benefits. Continued attempts to block electoral progress will likely lead to greater social unrest for existing governments.

There is also a risk to the U.S. in accepting a strategy that encourages greater political participation. Countries such as Egypt represent tremendous strategic importance in the Middle East. Encouraging democracy may allow anti-Western Islamic regimes to emerge in place of friendly governments. On the other hand, the policy of supporting existing governments could equally fail through coup or popular uprising, resulting in a replay of the American-Iranian experience of the 1970s. This is clearly a difficult task for the United States to manage. America also does not have the option to simply withdraw from this apparent no-win situation. It must remain engaged in the region. In doing so, the best strategy to achieve its long term interest is through the quiet support of greater political participation. The U.S. needs to have realistic expectations and accept the fact that it may face criticism from newly emerging Islamic governments. It should also avoid the self-fulfilling action of condemning these regimes as threats to and enemies of the West. (24:194)

Encouraging democracy is only part of the strategy to deal with Islamic activism. Dismal economic and social conditions remain the basic catalyst for the resurgence of Islamic movements. The Middle East is only one of many areas in the world that is struggling through economic, political, and social change. Middle Eastern countries will be lucky to continue receiving current levels of economic aid considering America's own economic problems. Economic development is extremely important and complex, but it is something that will have to be done largely through regional cooperation. One thing the U.S. can do to have an immediate impact on economic development, however, is to slow the accelerating Middle East arms race.

Security assistance and foreign military sales have been an important part of U.S. military strategy in the Middle East. But after years of arms sales involving billions of dollars, the question still remains whether the region is more stable and secure as a result of the continuing arms buildup. The mere fact that there have been major wars in every decade for the last forty

years raises a question about U.S. policy in the region. Despite the recent victory in the Gulf War, the region is more unstable and the U.S. is more committed unilaterally to guaranteeing regional stability than any time in recent history. Desert Storm also served as a high-technology arms demonstration that has customers lined-up to place new orders. The region continues to spend precious resources on military weapons to promote individual security concerns. Quite frankly, the current state of affairs is nearly void of logic.

The Arab Gulf states, particularly Saudi Arabia, are a prime example. Based on a recent visit to the region, it is clear that Saudi Arabian leadership is concerned about the expanding Iranian influence in the region. Saudi Arabia continues to buy more and newer weapons systems for its armed forces. In fact, Saudi Arabia purchased 20-billion dollars worth of U.S. foreign military sales (FMS) from 1990 through 1992. This was more than the total Saudi purchase for all of the 1980s. (16) However, no matter how many weapons Saudi Arabia buys, it will not be able to adequately defend itself (without significant outside assistance) against serious Iranian military expansion. The mismatch between the countries in population and resources is just too great. The same conclusion can be made of a resurgent Iraq. This then leads to the question of why Saudi Arabia continues to buy high-technology and often "gold-plated" weapon systems? By their own projection the Saudi military does not have enough manpower to operate or maintain the new aircraft that they currently have on order (16).

Like all good businessmen, though, Western arms suppliers do not want to lose to the competition. Americans balked in the 1980s to sell F-15s to Saudi Arabia who instead made a deal to buy British Tornado fighter-bombers. When it comes right down to it, 20-billion dollars in contracts to American companies buys a lot of U.S. strategic national interest. But even Saudi Arabia has finite fiscal reserves. Extravagant spending on military hardware that does not add real security value to the region seems to be sacrificing long term interests for short term gain.

Egypt's situation is a little different. It has more than sufficient military capability to deter or defeat a threat from Sudan or Libya. Egypt also has a peace treaty with Israel. However, it continues modernizing its forces largely, it seems, out of a latent distrust for Israel. Unlike the

Saudis, the Egyptians have plenty of manpower, but little money to spend on defense. The real threat to Egypt remains internal economic and social unrest.

A discussion on the Middle East arms race would not be complete without including Israel. Israel receives the largest amount of U.S. aid in the Middle East. The U.S. subsidizes approximately twenty-five percent of the Israeli defense budget. (26) Israel also has the best trained and most respected combat force in the Middle East. This stems largely from unique security problems that dominate their national consciousness. In addition, Israel has one of the highest Ph.d. per capita rates in the world giving them tremendous human capital. However, the drain from years of high defense spending and the lack of other natural resources has also left Israel with severe economic problems.

What does this somewhat idealistic discussion on military spending have to with American foreign policy and Islamic resurgence? The connection is straight forward. The U.S. needs to find ways of encouraging countries to realign excessive defense expenditures into more productive economic purposes. Economic development and related social problems are the issues used to coalesce Islamic resurgent movements. All elements of American national security strategy (political, economic, and military) should focus on investment opportunities that promote long term development and relationships with the people of the region. The alternative of maintaining the status quo retards economic growth and reinforces the appeal of Islamic resurgence.

Conclusion

Islamic resurgence is indigenous and rooted throughout the Middle East rather than being created in the Iranian revolution. The movement combines a revivalist desire to return to the straight path of Islam and a political desire to reject Western domination and the legacy of colonialism. Resurgence is genuine to Sunni Islam and not just a Shiite phenomenon. It is also a paradigm to return preeminence to the Middle East where secularism, nationalism, and socialism have failed.

The Islamic paradigm, however, is not well developed. The existing Islamic states of Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan are further along in their own Islamic experiments, but the indigenous movements in other countries do not necessarily have a well developed agenda. Islamic activists do well at organizing popular support; but once and if they assume power, there is little consensus on how to structure government, develop multi-party systems, or solve economic problems. This fact in itself dispels the monolithic fears of Islam. There is no one correct Islamic government. The Prophet never specified a particular political organization in 7th century Islamic society. Consequently, the political legitimacy problems that have besieged the Middle East throughout its history are not going to disappear with Islamic resurgence. Each organization will develop an agenda based on its own national historical experience.

Islamic resurgence is moving into mainstream Middle Eastern society. Organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan, the Renaissance Movement (formerly MTI) in Tunisia, and the FIS in Algeria have shown the ability to support non-violent democratic principles. (3:187) These organizations attract well educated leaders, professionals, and students, who work within the political system to solve social, religious, and economic problems. Americans have not done a good job at distinguishing between these moderate Islamic forces and the numerous *Jihad* extremist organizations. Americans do not give credibility to violent Western or Christian extremist organizations; consequently, it is appropriate the same distinction be applied to the forces at work in the Middle East.

It is also important to remember that Islamic activists have an impact disproportionate to their size. The organizations in Egypt, Algeria, and Tunisia are minorities; however, they are well organized, disciplined, and motivated. Working within the system they have been able to coalesce support for their cause based on a wider populist disenchantment with existing social, religious, and economic injustices. These movements pose a serious challenge to the status quo governments within the Middle East.

The challenge for Americans policy makers will be to create a long term strategy regarding the Middle East. The first step is to dispel the so-called 'Islamic threat' as a myth based on

extremist violence and America's bad political experiences in dealing with Iran. A new world order in the Middle East means Americans must overcome the 'mutual satanization' that has influenced its judgment and policy in the past. America's most powerful leadership tool will continue to be its support of democracy and self-determination. This has the best potential to help regional governments blunt the impact of Islamic activism and ease the continuing problems of establishing government legitimacy. It also means that America must come to terms with the entire Islamic movement and be prepared to offer support to an emerging Islamic government when appropriate. Likewise, the challenge for Islamic activists is to accept diversity and the legitimacy of human rights issues as Islamic groups gain support through the democratic process. Understanding and dealing with the Islamic "frame" will increasingly become one of the principle levers to successful Middle East policy in the 21st century.

List of References

1. Anthony Hyman, "Middle East II: Islamic Bogeyman." The World Today, August/September 1990, pp. 160-161.

2. Chandra Muzaffar, "Fundamentalist Fallacy." The Far Eastern Economic Review, 23 April 1992, p. 23.

3. John L. Esposito, Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality? New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992.

4. Great Britain, Foreign and Common Wealth Office, Islamic Resurgence. London, England: April 1990.

5. Graham E. Fuller, Islamic Fundamentalism in the Northern Tier Countries. Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1991.

6. Christine M. Helms, Arabism and Islam: Stateless Nations and Nationless States. Washington, D.C.: Institute for National Strategic Studies, July 1990.

7. John L. Esposito, editor. The Iranian Revolution. Miami, FL: Florida International University Press, 1990.

8. Stephen C. Pelletiere, Mass Action and Islamic Fundamentalism: The Revolt of the Brooms. Carlisle Barrack, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, March 1992.

9. Carol Migdalovitz, Algeria in Crisis. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 5 August 1991.

10. The Europa World Year Book 1992, Vol 1 and 2. London, England: Europa Publication Limited, 1992.

11. Scott Mattoon, "Islam By Profession." Current Affairs, December 1992, pp. 16-18.

12. Youssef M. Ibrahim, "Jordan Feels Change Within As Muslims Pursue Agenda." New York Times, 26 December, 1992.

13. H.J. Skutel, "Fundamentalists in Egypt." International Perspectives, May/June 1989. pp. 11-14.

14. U.S. Embassy Egypt, Cairo, briefing and discussion with staff, 15 February ,1993.

15. Tunis Correspondent, "Fear of Beardies." The Economist. 12-18 September, 1992, p. 44.

16. U.S. Embassy Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, briefing and discussion with staff, 7 February, 1993.

17. G.G. LaBelle, "Many Questions Lingering About Exiles and Hamas." Montgomery Advertiser, Associated Press Report. 8 February. 1993.

18. Jack Kelly, "Fundamentalist Radicals Pose Growing Threat." USA Today, 15 February, 1993.

19. Robin Wright, "Islam, Democracy and the West." Foreign Affairs. Summer 1992, pp. 132-145.

20. Donna Abu-Nasr, "Iranian-Bombing Ties Under Suspicion." Montgomery Advertiser, Associated Press Report, 29 March, 1993.

21. Regional Capabilities Exercise Book, RECEX 2/3. Air War College, 1993.

22. John L. Esposito and James P. Piscatori, "Democratization and Islam." Middle East Journal, Vol. 45, No.3, Summer 1991. pp. 427-440.

23. Amin Hewedy, Militarization and Security in the Middle East. New York, NY: St Martins Press, 1989.

24. Leon T. Hadar, Quagmire: America in the Middle East. Washington, D.C.: Cato Institue, 1992.

25. Daniel Brumberg, "Islamic Fundamentalism, Democracy, and the Gulf War." Islamic Fundamentalisms and the Gulf Crisis, edited by James Piscatori. Chicago, IL: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1991. pp. 186-206.

26. U.S. Embassy Israel, Tel Aviv, briefing and discussions with Ambassador. 10 February, 1993.