

BROOKINGS DOHA CENTER
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MUGGED BY REALITY:
ARE ISLAMIST MOVEMENTS IN A STATE OF CRISIS?

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. AMR: Good evening, everyone. Thanks for coming. And sorry for starting a few minutes late. Do we have the tapes running for the recording? Great.

Sorry for running a few minutes late, but we were informed that the traffic was bad this evening, so we decided to delay it a few more minutes for everyone to get here.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, good evening. Welcome. Assalamu Alikum. Thank you for coming.

My name is Hady Amr. I'm the director of the Brookings Doha Center and a fellow at the Saban Center at Brookings.

As a reminder before we get started, it would be great if we could silence or turn off our cell phones. So I will lead by example. (inaudible) off and I'll get the other one in a second.

As you can see from the event handouts that you have, our event this evening is called "Mugged by Reality: Are Islamist Movements in a State of Crisis

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or Not?" The three speakers we have tonight are, to my left, Fares Braizat, associate professor and head of research at SESRI at Qatar University; to my far right, Shadi Hamid, the deputy director of the Brookings Doha Center and a fellow here; and Nizar Hamzeh, dean of Arts and Science at the American University of Kuwait, formerly for many years at the American University of Beirut.

As many of you regulars, but some of you are new, just to briefly introduce Brookings to you all, Brookings is one of the oldest, largest think tanks of the U.S. Certainly the oldest and largest of its kind, which is that it's an independent research organization that does a broad range of research in the United States.

The Brookings Doha Center was established in 2007 through an agreement between Brookings and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the state of Qatar, and we work on a broad range of socioeconomic and geopolitical issues facing Muslim-majority communities. Our goal is to bring together business,

government, media, academia to discuss and debate the issues of the day. And like Brookings Washington, the Brookings Doha Center is open to a broad range of views. All of those on the panel, including myself and Shadi, represent our own views. We're not speaking on behalf of the Brookings Doha Center.

It's 6:20 or so. The event will conclude in about 90 minutes. And I'll ask each of our distinguished speakers to speak for 10 minutes; I may allow them 12. And then after that we'll go to a question-and-answer session. And again, you know, the topic -- the title is "Islamic Movements in the Region: Are They in a State of Crisis?"

And, you know, after making impressive gains across the region, you know, the question is what is the future of Islamic movements from Egypt, to Jordan, to Morocco, to Lebanon, Palestine. Some movements are trying to steer a course between governance, political processes, and resistance.

Some analysts have said they're stuck. Others think they may not be. And so that's what

we're here to debate, and discuss, and explore this evening. And once the panel finishes, we'll enter into discussion.

There is translation available for those of you who need translation. There are headsets in the back. You can get them from my colleagues. And then after this we'll have a question-and-answer period where we'll seek short, concise questions and short, concise answers.

The speakers and I had a wonderful chat upstairs just before while we were waiting for the traffic, and so we decided that we'll turn to my colleague -- I'm delighted to turn to my colleague, Shadi, to kick off the discussion. Shadi has done a lot of work and research on Islamic groups, particularly in Egypt and Jordan, but as well in Morocco.

Shadi, what's next in those or other contexts?

MR. HAMID: Thanks, Hady.

The short answer to the question "Are

Islamist movements in a state of crisis?": Yes, they are. But maybe that's not a bad thing, that Islamists are not immune to some of the same pressures that other parties deal with on a regular basis. In the U.S., we would never ask is the Democratic Party in a state of crisis because it's a given that it usually is. So these are things that parties deal with, and it's a sign perhaps one might say of maturity that there is the kind of push and pull internally.

But let's just take a step back for some historical context. 2004, 2005, the so-called Arab Spring. Right? The Bush Administration's Freedom Agenda. And I think it's one of the ironies of this particular point that Bush's policies unwittingly helped bring about a series of Islamist victories across the region. Islamists were doing very well in elections from Egypt to Palestine, as we know.

So 2005 was really the high-water point of some of these groups with the Brotherhood winning 20 percent of the seats in the fall of 2005. And, of course, we know in January 2006, Hamas won. But then

these groups started to hit a wall. And if we -- let's focus on Egypt for a second -- the Muslim Brotherhood, the last two to three years, has faced the worst period of repression since the Era of Nasser, since the 1960s. And that's not an exaggeration to say. The Egyptian regime is trying to essentially erase the group politically from the political arena.

So how have Islamist groups responded? They're starting to reassess their situation a little bit. And one of the questions that I see raised quite a bit, especially in Egyptian context, is we, as Islamist groups, we decided to focus on elections -- to take elections seriously, to commit ourselves to democracy and a lot of the components of democracy. And what did we get in return? More repression. More restrictions from the government. So the question is now being asked: What's the point? If this is all we're getting in return, maybe we should focus our approach elsewhere.

And this has led to quite a bit of internal

division. In Egypt, in Jordan, and to a lesser extent in Morocco, and also within Hamas, as well. So one of the debates that we're seeing now is they're asking instead of focusing on elections, maybe we should look internally. Build our social infrastructure, focus on dawah, preaching. Focus on education and social services. And we'll take a step back from the political arena at least for the time-being so we can kind of regain and rebuild our strength.

But this itself is a very interesting debate. Politics or turn inward? In the Western context, a political party would never ask that question. And I think this points to the uniqueness of Islamist groups. And that's what I just want to touch on right now for a couple minutes. Political parties are created, in theory at least, to win elections and to govern. That is the point of political parties. But Islamists, in this respect, I would argue, are fundamentally different because they aren't parties in the traditional sense. They have a whole other set of concerns outside of politics. And

the animating force of a lot of these groups is their social service programming, educational programming, preaching, dawah, so on and so forth. This is the lifeline of Islamist groups.

So if these are the two sides of what Islamists do, we see tension between these two sides. And sometimes they move in one direction, and sometimes more to the other. So we have to distinguish between talking about Islamists as parties and Islamists as social movements. And it's interesting that in the Western context we often hear that Islamists are obsessed with seizing the levers of power. They want to gain power; they want to implement their conservative agenda. We hear a lot of this fear mongering in the Western context. Right? But what's actually interesting about these groups is that they're ambivalent about power. And sometimes they actually deliberately lose elections.

And let me just explain what I mean by that. If we take, say, the Muslim Brotherhood in 1989, when Jordan had its first free and fair parliamentary

elections for many decades, the Brotherhood won 22 seats out of 80. But how many candidates did they run? They ran 26. So they won 22 out of 26 seats, which is an 85 percent win percentage. Right? So if they had ran more candidates, they could have possibly won a majority. But the point here is that they didn't want to win a majority.

And we see this in a lot of different contexts where Islamists will never run a full slate of candidates. They'll usually operate at 50 percent strength or less. So in Egypt there's 444 seats; they've never ran more than 160.

So Islamists I think are facing a choice now. Do they want to push hard and really try to win elections? Or like I said, do they want to focus in a different direction and focus internally? And that's a decision I think Islamists will have to consider much more seriously in the coming years.

I think in some sense Islamists prefer being in the opposition. Islamism is a big tent. It has something for everyone. If you want to become a

better Muslim, you might join the Muslim Brotherhood. If you want access to social services, you might move in that direction as well. If you want to challenge the government, the Muslim Brotherhood might work for you as well. But the danger is if these groups come to govern, then they have to make compromises that might alienate one group over the other. And they may not want that.

Hady, how am I doing on time?

MR. AMR: You've got a few more minutes.

MR. HAMID: Okay. So --

MR. AMR: Eight minutes.

MR. HAMID: Great. And I think -- one example. summer of 2006, during the Israel-Hezbollah War, I spoke -- I was speaking to a few different Islamist leaders in the Brotherhood in Egypt and asking them the question of what would you do, hypothetically, the Israel issue -- if you came to power in Egypt and you were in a position to govern in some way, maybe as part of a coalition government, what would you do about the Israel question? Because

as we know, Egypt has a peace treaty with Israel.

So what would the Brotherhood do if it came to power? One or two people -- one or two leaders who I spoke to said we're willing to accept a two-state solution. Actually, one or two of them said this on the record. But I had another Brotherhood leader who told me if we ever accept Israel's existence, I'm leaving the Muslim Brotherhood. So this I think is another potential split that we may see down the road that if Islamists are ever in a position where they might have to deal with Israel, this is going to be a major issue of contention. And internally, Islamists have not resolved this question. What do we do about Israel?

So governing would force them to consider some of these questions. And Islamists also have good memories. And I was at a -- there was a conference a couple weeks ago here in Doha organized by the Al Jazeera Center and there was one kind of theme that kept coming up. Algeria was mentioned a lot, even though the conference wasn't focusing on Algeria.

What happened in Algeria that Islamists keep on bringing it up? Why is this relevant to the present discussion? In 1991, Islamists in Algeria won in free and fair elections, and they were about to be in a position of governance before the military intervened. And I think the ghost of Algeria haunts Islamists to a large degree even today -- 17, 18, or 19 years later.

And it's interesting that at this conference, Saadeddine Othmani, who is the former head of the PJD in Morocco -- you know, I posed this question to him. And I said, you know, why aren't you pushing harder for constitutional reform in Morocco and really trying to win elections and moving in that direction? And he said -- he said, you know, we don't want to provoke a civil war in Morocco. And he was exaggerating a little bit, but I think the point holds that Islamists are worried that if they are in a position to push in that direction and win a large percentage of seats, not only will the regimes clamp down and be very aggressive, but the international community isn't ready for it either. And that's why

Islamists will often refer to what they call the American veto -- that the U.S. has a veto over Islamists coming to power. And they're referring here to Algeria, even though France played a larger role in that.

And it's not a mistake, I think, that -- I think if Hamas could take one thing back from the last several years it would be winning the 2006 election. And it was a surprise to them. They weren't planning on winning. Condoleezza Rice was certainly surprised, but also you had Hamas candidates that said, wow, you know, we won. What do we do now? That wasn't part of their calculations.

So in going forward, how do we break this stalemate where Islamists are not really sure -- do we want to move towards governance? Do we want to stay in the opposition? What can break that stalemate? And I think the U.S. role will be very important in this. And a lot of critics of the Obama Administration have said he's not very good on the democracy promotion issue; he doesn't seem to be

focusing much on that. That may very well be true. But on the positive side I do think Obama has shown more interest in engaging with nonviolent Islamist groups. That's part of the discussion that's happening now in Washington to the point where there's someone actually on Hillary Clinton's policy planning staff who is responsible primarily for the Islamists' portfolio. And he is actually someone who is in favor of engaging with some of these groups, just to give one example.

Because I think it still comes back to this -- if Islamists ever decide that they want to try to win elections in a place like Egypt, Jordan, or Morocco, it will be difficult for them to win without the U.S. giving a green light or at least a yellow light. The U.S. has to be at least somewhat, I think, on the same page. Otherwise, we might see some destabilization in the event of an Islamist victory. So I think this is a question that U.S. policymakers, I would hope, will focus more on in the coming years and really try to formulate a more coherent policy

towards the question of Islamist movements in the Middle East.

I'll end there.

MR. AMR: Thanks, Shadi. Great. Twelve and a half minutes. Perfect.

Professor Nizar Hamzeh, you've been studying these issues for years. You've been based -- many years based at AUB, so I know you have a lot of thoughts about movements in Lebanon and Hezbollah and others. Please tell us your thoughts.

MR. HAMZEH: Okay. First of all, thank you for inviting me to this interesting panel.

Let me share this with you before I start. (Don't count the minutes yet). In 1993, I was invited to give a lecture on the future of Islamic movements in Jordan at the Hamichamen Center. And we went to the lecture room and I couldn't believe my eyes. Five hundred audience -- 500 individuals attending the conference, I mean, the lecture. And I looked at the director of the Center. I said, I'm really impressed. He said, yes, those sitting on the left side are the

opposition. Those sitting on the right side are the security. So I'll let you figure out basically, you know, what would that be the actual number.

Anyhow, are Islamists stuck? The answer is no. Islamists are not stuck. But also I would add to this it really depends on which country you are looking at. And the answer might be, you know, invaluable in this case. But I would suggest at the same time that any assessment of Islamists future or Islamists question what now requires really a deeper understanding of the Islamists' modes of action or modus operandi -- political systems where they operate -- and the regional situation or their overall environment.

As much as I wanted to share my views on the Islamic spectrum of Lebanon politics, for the 12 minutes I'm given I'm going to limit myself only to Hezbollah.

So, in the case of Hezbollah, again, the answer, as I said, is no and I will provide three reasons for discussion among ourselves after we're

done with these presentations.

One reason is that Hezbollah's modes of action. And this is not only just for Hezbollah. Many times even myself, as well as I assume other researchers, have misunderstood the way Islamist movement defines themselves. Hezbollah and (inaudible) Islamist movements at large, I would basically execute maybe the philanthropic or the charity organizations. They define first and foremost themselves as a jihad movement engaged in politics. Islamists actually are not politicians engaged in a resistance; it's the opposite.

In the case of Hezbollah, Hezbollah is a jihad movement engaged in politics to achieve strategic goals. What are those strategic goals? Basically, long-term, Islamic state or short-term, their own state, as well as liberation of the land that is used interchangeably between Lebanese land as well as basically liberating the occupied land or Palestine.

What jihad means actually when they define

themselves, you know, as a jihad movement, again, in the West and for Western and non-Western jihad, the term is equal to a terrorist term. For Islamists, that is not the case. A jihad is a term for Islamists actually as a comprehensive mode of action. That is armed jihad and non-armed jihad. That is (inaudible) fighting, cultural, social, economic, political.

So really the modes of action actually is one of the leeway that allows Islamists that respect because you can see them moving from one track to the other, depending on the situation, depending on the circumstances. And in the case of Hezbollah, Hezbollah uses this efficiently by defining itself as a jihad movement engaged in social, political, economic, cultural, as well as basically engaged in the resistance.

So, the three modes, if you take a closer look at them, the jihad mode or the resistance mode, because instrumental for Hezbollah to build a strong constituency to support its strategic goals, whether that of immediate- or long-term, but definitely you're

talking about the more immediate. And in addition to this it has proved to its constituency at least that they are able to push for a doctrine terror by terror or the balance of terror, especially in the latest Israeli threats to Hezbollah and to Lebanon. This balance of terror might not necessarily prevent a war by Israel, I guess, Hezbollah, but definitely requires the Israelis or the Israeli side to recalculate. It's not simple math anymore. It's something that they have to recalculate in terms of this balance of terror.

I'm not going to get into figures of Hezbollah's weaponry -- they are available everywhere -- but foreign figures at least cited in newspapers. This party on the militant side grew from 5,000, somewhere in 1982, fighters, now to 50,000 fighters. Yes. But they operate in an untraditional way. Also, their weaponry or their power fire grew from a couple of hundreds of small-range rocket missiles into -- Israel says 50,000. (inaudible) said, okay, the Israelis said 50,000, I agree. So I don't know to

what extent.

Anyhow, the militant mode basically has made Hezbollah deliver in terms of its goal. It became even some sort of a full-time job for so many fighters. Being a member of Hezbollah's resistance means accesses. It means accesses to social welfare benefits. It means protection by the party that is led by the Lebanese government.

The second mode is, again, socioeconomic, which is basically a complex network of social organization associations, as well as to provide a wide welfare system that at some point even stronger than the Lebanese state welfare system with a budget that operates annually over \$1.5 billion for one party. That is their budget; it's not necessarily (inaudible) whatever have been invested in the economy at large locally and regionally. Again, the social welfare services built a strong community that fed into both the militancy cycle, as well as into the political cycle.

The third mode -- that is all of them are,

as I said, a jihad or comprehensive jihad by Hezbollah -- is that the political party special. Hezbollah has been basically participating in the Lebanese elections since the Taif Agreement in 1992. The question came even at that time whether the party stuck on that. The party did not basically worry at that time.

But also one has to understand something at that time. Iran, after the internal processes, after Khomeini's death in 1989, in 1992, Iran opted for pragmatic policies. Again, supported, as well as finding a foothold in the Lebanese political system. So there was no real division within the party in terms of being politically active. The party participated in a number of elections and won parliamentary seats.

Sorry. This mode of actions or the modus operandi, actually, in a nutshell it means what? It means that the party didn't (inaudible) probably now 18 years or more, the party didn't face what we're trying to assume that what we're going to do next. When they sometimes (inaudible) politics, they're

geared toward socioeconomic. When they're stuck on economics, they give towards basically resistance. And then politics.

Again, if you look from an economic point of view, the party provides basically jobs on a large scale. The constituency of the party is placed at 300,000 individual constituents, which means that the party can put on the streets easily 300,000, 300,000+, whatever. So this is a strong base. I'm looking forward to Dr. Fares to hear later on what might be the support statistically of Hezbollah, for example, as they lose support, they gain support.

The second thing that I would say Hezbollah did not strike is the Lebanese Confessional system. Lebanon's Confessional system -- I'm not going to go into details about that -- is a sectarian system. Even the argument that was put for over 25 years that Lebanon is a constituency in democracy, is a democratic system governed by confessional agreement. This (inaudible) that democratic aspect to be undermined completely by the sectarian (inaudible)

Lebanon.

Yes, Hezbollah wasn't really able to deliver (inaudible) Islamic state. This is correct. But it doesn't really mean that they're stuck, actually. What it means here is that Hezbollah realized that it is unfeasible in Lebanon to create an Islamic state because of the Lebanon Confessional system. But at the same time, the failure of Lebanon's confessional system to create a national cohesion within the country among the various (inaudible) sects allowed Hezbollah to build and what I would call Hezbollah city states.

If somebody is familiar with the concept of the Greek state, that is basically a state. It's a city. But actually it's a state. Hezbollah strongholds as they refer to them in newspapers; I call them basically Hezbollah city states connected ideologically by an Islamic order, not by an Islamic state. But connected at the same time on the national level by the Lebanese state of apparatus due to the fact that the various parts of Hezbollah's only

national level have representation in Lebanon's Parliament, basically as well as have ministerial position, as well as they are part of the national dialogue (inaudible).

So, the Lebanese political system actually did not challenge or its mechanics were not being able really to challenge Hezbollah from delivery. Some would argue that Hezbollah has created its own de facto state, something to think about, but Hezbollah realized that the Islamic state as a state and Lebanon is not feasible in the meantime and maybe for some time to come so they have to form, as I said, strongholds, decentralization, pushing for administrative decentralization so local governments here actually would gain more power.

The last reason that I would put forward that Hezbollah is not stuck and I would conclude with at least three remarks after this point is that the regional instability, the persistence of crisis conditions in the region. And I don't want to go through remote history, but at least if you go back

all the way to 2000, I want to go even to 1978 and before. But to 2000, when the hopes were so high for the peace process in the Middle East, that didn't really take place and that resistance or the Arab-Israeli Conflict and the Syrian Palestinians and also the Iran-U.S. tension, also the increasing tension between Iran and Israel, and also the new frontier in the region that I would like to call the new frontier -- Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen. All of these places have accorded Hezbollah's, again, continuity of its resistance and to hold on its resistance.

It's beyond any doubt that the two external factors or regional factors -- that they have greater force on Hezbollah as Iran and Syria. This is not a secret. There's a big alliance there. And the alliance was formed 30 years ago. And all the pushes actually lately for Syria to disassociate itself from the alliance, it doesn't seem to work. And a show of unity on February 27, 2010, when President Ahmadinejad visited Damascus. There was a big meeting between President Assad -- President Bashar Assad and

(inaudible) Halid Mashal and all basically those who are considered to be members of the resistance belt around Israel. The resistance belt again is not something new for me, and this is something that has given Hezbollah another continuity.

So in a nutshell, for these three reasons, as well as really not worried when asking the question what now as we are asking it? Or are we stuck or not? At least I would say it is not at all certain that Hezbollah is stuck and worries about this question. It is certain, however, that Hezbollah know that the Lebanese Confessional system has not been able to prevent the party from creating its stronghold or de facto city states and the Lebanese state. Clearly, you know, a different formula, which I'm not going to address as a substitute to Lebanese Confessional system, might actually contribute to the weakening of Hezbollah something like proportional presentation elections, majoritarian, secular state, whatsoever.

However, the long-term fate of Hezbollah has at least to do with two external factors. One is the

head of Israeli conflict and the other one is the relationship between -- or the increasing tension between Iran and the United States. Clearly an Arab-Israeli peace process, which (inaudible) two-state solution, which (inaudible) the negotiation between Syria and Israel, clearly, a settlement of these would contribute to weakening Hezbollah's de facto power in Lebanon. And definitely, it would weaken -- it would contribute to weaken its resistance.

However, if this is not accompanied at the same time by some sort of reproachment or, again, discussion or whatever you'd like to call it -- negotiations -- between Iran and the United States, this is -- would go nowhere. So a supplement would lead into, you know, declining of the resistance. Conversely, a protracted conflict or increasing tension between Syria and Israel and continuation of the deadlock of the peace process between the two, it's going to turn the region into basically another war. There are books about war somewhere in May or June, I'm not sure. (inaudible) newspapers. On the

Iranian-U.S. side, and also I would say slash Israel. again, a confrontation between Iran and Israel or between Iran and the United States is going to lead to turmoil in the region and to a possible large-scale war. Conversely, an approachment between the two would lead to a gradual decline of Hezbollah local power in Lebanon, and perhaps bringing an end to its resistance.

Thank you so much.

MR. AMR: Thank you, Professor Hamzeh.

Fares, we've heard a lot. I know you've done some work on public opinion polling. But please both react and share any thoughts that you have.

MR. BRAIZAT: Thank you very much for inviting me to this panel. And basically I share the points that both Shadi and Nizar raised in terms of whether Islamist movements are stuck or not. I think they are stuck in ways, but that is not only due to what they do themselves. Also they are part of a larger context. And that larger context must be held accountable for what is happening to the Islamist

party, as well as other political parties in our countries.

Now, one thing that is asked about Hezbollah is not really stuck and it has potential in the next 10 years or so. I think that is rooted in external, rather than internal -- or more than internal Lebanese politics. The Arab-Israeli conflict; the United States-Iran; and they also refer to that towards the end as conditionalities determining whether Hezbollah is going to proceed or make good policies or better political conduct in the near future.

Now, for the Islamist movements, especially when Shadi referred to the Islamic -- the Brotherhood movement in Jordan in 1989 in the first parliamentary -- free parliamentary elections. They gained 22 seats and that is around 80 percent win of the (inaudible) elections. That actually decreased significantly, not because they lost support as much as because the political design in which they operated has changed significantly introducing a new electoral system and then heavy-handed (inaudible) stage by the state,

state oppression, and other factors. And they have become less wanted, less desirable by strategic partners of Jordan. That is the United States and Israel. And therefore, you have to -- and there's a lot that can be said about that.

But let me go back to where it's all -- where it all begins and ends -- with the people. We have -- we have been always -- we've been talking about Islamist movements and states and really ignoring the people. And I will attempt to bring the people back into the picture. And when I refer to people, I refer to public opinion in particular.

Now, within that framework, the Islamist movement has exhibited an obvious inability to translate popular support that they enjoy into concrete political programs and concrete political actions on the ground. They are not guilty -- they are not alone, guilty, in this process. The larger context is important in this. But what I want to begin just to talk about is how Arabs -- how do Arabs perceive and understand the larger context within

which the extremist movement operates.

One thing in our surveys that we have conducted in the region, we asked about what kind of political system you think is good for your country. And in order to be as neutral as possible we did not use the word democracy; we used vignettes in order to describe democracy, but not necessarily saying it's a democratic political system. And we used four types of political systems. A parliamentary system in which nationalists, left wing, and Islamic political parties all compete in elections.

Now, the question was is this very suitable, somewhat suitable, not suitable, not suitable at all for your own country. This question was posed in seven countries -- Morocco, Algeria, Georgia, Yemen, Kuwait, Lebanon, and Palestine. In total, you've got 64 percent of Arabs, and that is over 8,000 respondents in this survey saying the parliamentary system is very suitable. Very suitable for this country.

SPEAKER: Fares, can I interrupt? What

countries was the survey conducted in?

MR. BRAIZAT: Morocco, Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Yemen, Palestine, Kuwait. Seven countries. I can give you the list.

Now, the second system was a parliamentary system in which only Islamist political parties and factions compete in elections. This is a description -- without saying Iran, this is Iran. Only 26 percent said that is suitable for their countries.

And the third one was a system with a stronger president and military in which elections and competition among political parties are not important. Only 10 percent accepted that. Just to approximate it, it's something similar to the Syrian regime.

Now, the fourth one, a system governed by Islamic law in which there are no political parties or elections. Approximation, Saudi Arabia. Only now in this one, 39 percent said it's suitable -- very suitable.

Now, this is not the interesting bit of the story. The interesting bit of the story is when you

cross tabulate that with the rest of the political systems, how many people reconfirm their preference for that political system? And what we found is that actually for the last one governed by Islamic law in which there are no political parties, 47 percent -- that was the highest Egyptian rate in the four systems saying it is not suitable at all to run this country. And this is a total of all these countries. The breakdown is available and it will be published soon.

Now, in order to evaluate whether people understand democracy in a different way we asked on a scale from 1 to 10 where one means complete dictatorship, 10 means complete democracy -- where would you rate these countries, including Iran and Saudi Arabia. Both they get the bottom of the scale while the United States and Japan were at the top of that scale.

Now, that brings us to the larger picture whether we are talking about those people -- are they secular democrats or religious democrats? What we found actually, a very interesting thing, almost there

is a split. There are people who account maybe around 47 percent of the population in these countries who would prefer to have an Islamically-informed political democracy and another 43 percent or so, they would like to have a secular democracy. And this is done through specific techniques in order to isolate variations.

Now, the other bigger picture is people say usually Islamist political parties are popular simply because they appeal to an identity issue -- how much of an Islamic person are you or what does Islam mean to you. Now, in many countries, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Algeria, Turkey, Morocco, Iran, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Yemen, Lebanon, Kuwait, and Palestine, we asked the question which of the following best describes you. Above Muslim, above Arab, above the nationality of the country. What we found was really interesting in the sense that people in non-Arab Muslim countries, especially East, like Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Indonesia, they identified more with their nationality rather than with their

religion.

Across the Arab world, the highest percentages of people who identified with Islam were the Arabs, starting in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, then Jordan. Turkey and Iran were somewhere in the middle where almost there is sort of an equivalent number of people identifying with religion, Islamic identity, and their national identity. The identity translates into political action.

I'll just give you one example of Jordan. In the 2003 elections, I cannot simply use the figures for 2007 because of the rigging that took place in the (inaudible) elections. But in 2003 elections, you have around 72 percent of Jordanians saying above all I'm a Muslim. Now, if identity translates automatically and it is the only factor people consider in their voting presence or their voting behavior, you would expect the Islamists to get 72 percent of the adult population vote. That is not the case. The all-Islamists got only 8.4 percent of the actual vote.

Now, this is from actual results. From polling data, the 14 percent that said -- that voted for Islamist (inaudible), including the Islamic Action Front Party, and this brings us to the social support and the social basis of support for Islamists. It looks something like this where you have the younger the people are, the more likely they would vote for an Islamist political party; and the older they grow the less likely they will continue to do the same. And this is quite obvious among those who actually said they voted for Islamists. And I think this is an interesting thing about it.

Now, let me just go a bit regional on active political movements or non-state actors. In 2004, you know, the debate was raging about what constitutes terrorism and what constitutes resistance. And in that year I conducted a regional survey project in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Egypt, and we asked questions about three -- about six different organizations. I'm going to just tell you the results of four of them.

One is Hamas. In Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Egypt, no less than 85 percent said Hamas is a resistance organization rather than a terrorist organization. Those who identified Hamas as a terrorist organization were one or two percent. Only in Lebanon we found 62 percent who defined Hamas as a legitimate resistance organization, which is the lowest. But when you break it down into different sections and religions, you find significant differences among the groups.

The same for Hezbollah, even Al-Qaeda. In 2004, it was defined by 67 percent of Jordanians as legitimate resistance organization. That dramatically changed after Amman bombings. And actually that contributed to a change in public opinion towards Al-Qaeda, but that change unfortunately did not hold for a long time. And that was very similar to what we found in Palestine and similar to what we found in Egypt -- a very high percentage of people define Al-Qaeda as a resistance group rather than terrorist organization.

Now, I was able to take this into further testing in Jordan over six points in time. What happened to that in Jordan in regular surveys, we started in 2004 with 84 percent of Jordanians defining Hamas -- Hezbollah as a legitimate resistance organization. That declined to 64 percent in December '05, one month after Amman attacks; then to 64 again in 2006; 54 percent, the lowest point registered in March '08; then again 54 in June '08; and then 67 percent in August '08.

Now, these changes are interesting when you look at the number of people who said "don't know." I don't know how to classify Hezbollah, whether a terrorist organization or a legitimate resistance organization. In that sense you have the number of people who are saying "don't know" are dramatically increasing or there is a significant difference between those who started saying I don't know in 2004 and then in 2008.

The same pattern holds true for Hezbollah -- for Hamas -- that from 87 percent who said that

legitimate resistance organization in 2004, we ended up with 71 percent towards the end of 2008. And the last thing about Al-Qaeda, Bin Laden, which is the dramatic change or the significant change that took place, from 67 percent in 2004 decreased into around 20 percent in 2005. But that, again, in 2008, increased to 32 percent who defined Al-Qaeda as a legitimate resistance organization. That is a third of the population.

Now, more data reveals that actually still, even in a country like Jordan which was hit by a terrorist attack, still even among the majority -- among the elites -- and when we talk about the elites, it's specific samples that we have selected from professional associations -- university professors, high state ranking officials and others, political parties -- we found that actually there is a reason -- even at 5 percent, say, Al-Qaeda, Iraq, Zarqawi, is a legitimate resistance organization. That translates into tens of thousands of people on the ground. And I think what holds it true in Jordan, a country that's

very close to what's going on in Palestine and Iraq, would hold true for other Arab societies.

Sorry that I have no more time, I guess.

Thank you very much.

MR. AMR: Thanks, Fares. I had some -- actually, a lot of questions came up for me, but you guys have all been patient so I will turn it over to the audience and I will request strongly that comments be limited to 90 seconds. I'd ask you all to state your name and your affiliation. And also ask for equally, you know, succinct responses from the panel in responding.

So, can I see a show of hands of people who have questions off the bat? One, two, here. Okay, where else? Three, four. Let's start over here and work our way -- work our way around for these first four that have come up.

Sir?

SPEAKER: Hello? Okay. My name is Muhammad Abdullah. I'm a Fulbright Scholar at Qatar University.

The topic was Islamic movements -- Islamic movements in a state of crisis. I suppose that it would apply to all the Islamic movements in general, but you're main focus was the Middle East, which is fine. But I think in order to have a more comprehensive analysis I think in some of the cases if you could pick from other (inaudible). We have two models of modified models in power: one in Turkey, one in Iran, definitely. And there are many other organizations, in Bangladesh, for example, there's a huge political party. They have substantial power, but they're always trading power. They cannot go to power or they opt not to go to power for different reasons.

In Pakistan they have been crushed to -- for different reasons. So I would like to see how this, like, your -- in the neighborhood, for example, in Sudan, in Somalia, even though it is in chaos. So how this, like, the groups that you see -- like Hamas' rise and fall. And on the other hand you have the modified versions of the military takeovers in the

Sudan. And in Pakistan, the crushing of the Islamists -- (inaudible) for political crushing. Basically they're losing power not because of -- they do not have an option for democracy -- democratic option. They have democratic option, but they are not being picked up by the people. They are not being voted. They have basically two or three seats they get and they get kicked out of the country.

So, I would say that again I'm not sure -- do they really opt to stay out of power or are they -- they do not have -- actually, when it comes to the actual engagement, they are actually not successful.

MR. AMR: Thank you. Let's take two more questions here in the front and then we'll move on.

SPEAKER: (inaudible) I'm a fan of Brookings and (inaudible).

Actually, the title of your meeting tonight by reality I think should be changed to marked by the governments. Okay? Because when they win -- when Islamists win free elections, like in Algeria, they've been taken out, you know, and they cancel it. And the

government of Algeria has never been punished for that. And when Hamas won, and I disagree with you, Shadi, on this, that you regret that, that you'll take it back. Why did he run in the first place? He knows he can win. Nobody runs or goes to a game and he knows he can lose. So he knows he can win or at least hoping they can win, and they did win.

And when they won, even their own president of Hamas really disowned them. Okay? And the West refused to accept them. Okay? So in Egypt we know -- and the Brotherhood in Egypt, I think they are mistaken when they run (inaudible) or enter election at all, because they should not. They know it is being rigged and they're being, you know, fraud elections, so you should not run at all.

But having said that, there is no Islamist party had a chance to rule under normal conditions other than Turkey, which nobody talks about it. The government of Turkey right now is known to be an Islamic -- very successful. Very, very successful and a role model for even non-Islamic movement. And I

think if Hamas or Brotherhood had their own chance to rule, you would see much different than that. So it's being marked by the governments.

Thank you.

MR. AMR: Thank you. I'll take a third question.

SPEAKER: To the whole panel, sorry, assisting the significance --

MR. AMR: Please identify yourself so the panel knows who you are. Your name and affiliation, please.

SPEAKER: You know (inaudible).

MR. AMR: But the panel might not know you.

SPEAKER: Okay. This is Dr. Zakari Amata (phonetic), ex-university professor in Pakistan, Algeria, and Iraq, and in Qatar. Okay?

Assessing the correct significance of Islamic movements is not possible in Arab area because of rigged and fixed elections. So you can't assist at all. When there is a very free election so we can assist, I don't trust polls, I don't trust governments

in this. But I want to ask Fares, (inaudible) the opponent of Islamic movements rule totalitarian and corrupted regimes, no free media, no free information of parties, no dominance of law, no distribution of wealth. So people are stuck and supporting Islamic movements not because of Islam, but because of the disadvantages of these regimes. So we have to take this into consideration.

We have to mention that Islamic movements suffer too much in their own area of Islamic Brotherhood in Egypt when it was in 1928. Suffer too much. This is not the first time. They took 88 seats only because the government want like this, but if there was free elections I assure you they would pick all the seats.

Also in Jordan, because of the one individual, one vote system, so they took only 20 this time. So the system which was created by this corrupt totalitarian regimes are constricting them. Thank you.

MR. AMR: Thank you, Doctor. We've had

interesting questions about Islamist movements in other parts of the world; about Turkey; about Hamas; about systems. Why doesn't the panel respond to our - - why don't you start since you spoke first.

MR. HAMID: Okay. On the issue of the title, maybe it should have been called "Mugged by Governments." I mean, that's certainly a big part of the story. However, I think it's also the case that Islamists have failed to respond effectively because there's other regions of the world where there was severe repression against the opposition. But the opposition parties were able to adapt and come up with creative ways of responding, such as in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and so on.

And as Fares said, Islamic groups are popular. I don't think there's any doubt about that, but they've had trouble translating that into concrete action on the ground. And I think it's probably for some of the reasons I've eluded to -- because they're very cautious. They're very careful. They don't put tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of people on

the street, with the exception of Hezbollah. But the Muslim Brotherhood doesn't do that because they're worried that if they do that the regime will crush them. And they don't want to be put in a situation of excessive confrontation with the regime.

In terms of Turkey, I think the Justice and Development Party in Turkey would be better described as a ruling party that happens to be Islamist, rather than an Islamist party that happens to be ruling. So I think we're comparing apples and oranges a little bit there. I don't think it's comparable. And if the Brotherhood came to power in Egypt, they would not govern like the AKP party in Turkey. The context is completely different.

And if we look at polls -- Fares didn't really delve into this as much -- but if we look at the percentage of the population that supports -- let's say Jordan, for example, in Fares' form or organization they did some polls on this, and Fares, correct me if I'm wrong. But in 2004, 63 percent in Jordan believed that Sharia should be the only source

of law. And another around 30 percent believed it should be the principal source of law. What does that come out to? More than 90 percent of Jordanians believe that Islamic law should be a major part of the system of government. So there's a demand in Arab societies for Islam to play a larger role. That's not the same thing in Turkey where Islamic law isn't even really discussed.

The last comment I'll make in regards to the last question -- that it's not possible to assess Islamist strength. That's true. But I think we can get a good sense. Let's take Egypt, for example. Like you said, they won 88 seats out of 150 or so that they contested. Eighty-eight out of 150. That's a pretty impressive percentage, and that was even with the elections being rigged. So can you imagine if it was a free election and they ran 444 candidates instead of 150? They would have won a large number of seats.

Does that mean that everyone who votes for an Islamist group is Islamist or likes Islamism? No,

Islamists are good at getting protest votes. Why? Because they're seen as not corrupt; as honest and clean; and as -- and I think we have to look at the sources of their popularity. Just because people vote Islamist doesn't mean they're voting for them because they're Islamists.

MR. AMR: Professor Hamzeh.

MR. HAMZEH: I have one comment only on the three. In the beginning of my talk I did mention that one has to understand nature of the political system, meaning that the question of assessing these movements also depends on the political environment. So political systems, whether they're basically in Turkey or Iran or Egypt or Jordan or Lebanon, they have to be looked at fully in order to say to what extent basically those have presented their power and they failed or they have not been given the chance to present their power. And accordingly, we cannot really judge whether they failed or succeeded. So it really goes both ways.

The comment from our colleague -- you are a

(inaudible) Fulbright Scholar? I was myself. I'm an old timer. So at some point --

Yes. Of course, I mean, all the questions you brought, I think this would be a good invitation to the director here to call for more panels and organize more panels to address this set of countries. It's worth it.

I don't think that one person would really be an expert on all of these countries, including myself.

Thank you.

MR. AMR: Fares, please share your reactions to the questions.

MR. BRAIZAT: I would like just to start from a bigger, larger point on rational choices -- do people make rational choices or just they happen to act in ways that are inconsistent with their interests?

I'll just give you one example on that issue and why attitudes do not translate into action or real behavior. Shadi was referring to my question that we

asked in our surveys on the role of Sharia. And I have the chart, but I didn't talk about it a little bit.

I want to tell you one thing about the difference between stating an attitude and traveling the distance between that attitude and the action that it requires. Or translating that attitude or value from an attitude and value to actual concrete action on the ground.

Now, if you take one example of the Sharia. Now, in this chart you have four countries, three samples: national sample, business elite, and media elite. And in all of them you find, with the exception of Lebanon -- in Jordan, Palestine, and Egypt, almost everyone has a very similar position. Sharia should be the sole source of legislation in your country. That was a choice given among two other choices. One was Sharia should be "a" source or legislation, "the" source of legislation, or "shall not be" or "should not be" a source of legislation. Those who said "the" source of legislation, the sole

source or legislation in these countries, around 70 percent in each of Jordan, Lebanon -- sorry -- Jordan, Palestine, and Egypt.

Now, it goes down among the business elites and then to a lower level, a third nearly, among the media elite. So there is a link that higher levels of exposure and education and income display an impact in attitudes towards the role of Sharia.

But also on another interesting contrast, when I looked at income question and support for Hezbollah, Hamas, and Al-Qaeda and Al-Qaeda International, Al-Qaeda Iraq, I found a fascinating thing, which is the higher the income -- the monthly income of a respondent is, the more likely that respondent would define Hamas and Hezbollah as legitimate resistance organizations. And it's linear, upward linear.

Now, about Al-Qaeda. Iraq and Al-Qaeda International, the higher the income, the more likelihood the person would define these movements as terrorist movements rather than legitimate resistance

organizations. Again, this is a very rational political calculation that people are making in this region and they judge it from a politically sophisticated perspective.

The second point I would like to make on where does the Islamist movement go and reference to your question about Turkey and others. Now, Turkey is a very interesting example. And again, we will repeat the question in our next wave asking as many Arabs as we can how do they rate Turkey as a democracy because this is a very -- in the last survey we did -- it was rated around 5 out of 10 and that was conducted in 2006 and 2007. So we don't know after all these changes what happened. Especially after because there is a political connection somehow after the (inaudible) the Turkish opposition and that.

My last point is on (inaudible) choice, why attitude does not translate into action. I'll give you one example from Jordan. If you have 550,000 people who are directly dependent on the government -- either they are salary recipients from the government

or they are retirees from government and dependent on Social Security from government -- multiply by 6, which is the average size of the family, you end up with 3 million people that have direct dependence on the system.

Now, for those people it is very irrational from a very practical perspective to challenge the very system that provides them with their livelihood. Maybe that applies to and that is out of 6 million people, which also another 500,000 people living in (inaudible) and other places sending their remittances back home. So there is a system in which there is a great deal of rationality in whether we behave in ways consistent with our interests as we see them right now or challenge that system and then jump into the unknown. And that I think is uncertainty is not wanted by people.

The last point I want to make here is that if there is focus (phonetic), in my view, at least, based on the research I have done so far, if given the opportunity to compete in free and fair elections,

and, I mean, elections are not rigged at all at any level, they will end up with a practice as Christian, democratic political parties in Western Europe. Socially conservative, politically democratic. Don't expect them to be liberal, but expect them to behave democratically.

MR. AMR: Thank you, Fares. Show of hands. Questions? There was a gentleman -- oh, wow. Okay, why don't we go one, two, three, four in this round.

MR. MILLS: Thanks. I'm Andrew Mills. I'm a journalist and I'm on faculty at Qatar University.

Shadi, you argued that yes, indeed -- the sort of short answer was yes, indeed, Islamist groups have -- Islamist political groups have been mugged by reality.

You spoke about a number of different groups operating in a number of different sort of political contexts. I wonder if you would argue that there is a more sort of regional or global reality that all these various different groups have been mugged by -- that is affecting them all in a similar way or if you are

sort of arguing that these are all sort of separate groups affected by separate political realities.

Thanks.

SPEAKER: Okay. Bill (inaudible) from Qatar University.

It seems that there's an agreement here that the Justice and Development Party is not in a state of crisis. I mean, who can claim that, right? But the 50 percent of the Turkish population voted for the party the last election. And today (inaudible) actually was ordered by King Abdullah for serving Islam. What happened to the other (inaudible). But if we give a different meaning to the word crisis, I mean, Justice and Development Party is in a deep crisis. In the sense of -- I mean, you are talking about how you turn your preferences into action; how you turn your Islamic views into concrete policies. What changed in Turkey really? I mean, economics? The Justice and Development Party is a very classical, liberalist economic party in the sense that just implementing whatever the IMF says; in social issues,

whatever World Bank says; and in politics, whatever EU says. Where is Islam here?

The only issue that really a lot of the conservative people (inaudible) from the Justice and Development Party head scarf issue is not solved in the last seven years. So what it means that an Islamic movement comes to power? What really means that? I mean, in that sense in turning into their values which are formed by Islam, turning into policies, the Justice and Development Party is the greatest failure of all. I mean, they have all, like, the help of the Parliament vote, but still no change at all in terms of -- I mean, only the foreign affairs is sort of formed by their sort of conservative identity. But other than that it's complete failure in my opinion.

MR. AMR: Thank you. And now let's do the other two in the front row here.

SPEAKER: My name is (inaudible) from Afghanistan.

I was going to ask Shadi about American veto

on Islamic movements. And regarding the White House engagement with Islamists in Iraq and Afghanistan, they are bidding with Islamic parties -- both Shiite and Sunni, (inaudible), Iraqi, and also Hezbollah Dawa and (inaudible). And also in Afghanistan there are Islamic parties which are part of the government in Afghanistan, like Jamaat-e-Islami and (inaudible). They are both from -- considered Islamic movements. So, in these cases, how do you see that this veto, it's based on understanding or it's based on interests?

MR. AMR: (inaudible)

SPEAKER: My name is Hashlid (inaudible). I work for Al Jazeera and I'm also from Afghanistan.

A question and a few comments which would also have questions to it. To what degree -- I would like, first of all, I found your talk absolutely fascinating the way you broke down the whole three panels -- panelists.

The issue of fatalism in Islamic parties, that was really a main problem in Afghanistan during

the Soviet jihad -- jihad against the Soviets where people were not really willing or they did not organize themselves together. They just fought a war saying then God will fix things later. It was really -- they were not preparing themselves as a government in shadow. As a government in shadow they were not preparing themselves. So I would like to know (inaudible) comments on the fatalism within the Islamic movements. Give their strength and also give their weakness.

The issue is that (inaudible) system, a serious system in practice. The Islamic parties have a theory that the system that they are trying to capture -- the parliamentary system or the Western style governments that came as a result of colonialism -- are entrenched in a Western mentality and a Western way of governing a society. I find that in a way the Islamist movements are not really honest to the system; they're just buying time to get into the system and then change it. So therefore, there's a problem between theory system practices and some

degree of discrepancy between real intention and action. And how that also affects when they come to power, (inaudible) causes of power, the ins and outs of the government, and the way that things work.

If you could comment on those two please.

Thank you.

MR. AMR: Thanks very much. We had -- just to summarize the questions because there were so many. We had a question about the specific realities versus the general realities; we had a question about Turkey and the Justice Development Party; we had a question about U.S. engagement with Islamist parties in Iraq and Afghanistan; and this question, theory system in practice.

SPEAKER: I would like to take on the theory system practice. Again, I'll see what I can do for the rest of the questions.

Fatalism. Let me start with this one. This is a very important issue, and you did mention actually that for the Taliban or for the (inaudible), but the Taliban is specific because we need somehow to

differentiate as well.

Okay, this is an endless war. It's God's war; God will fix it. The issue of fatalism ideologically-speaking or research-wise speaking, it's not the same for all movements. It really varies. There are both fatalists basically who would think that whether they have done something -- they prepared themselves or they did not -- God will fix them.

But this is not necessarily the majority of active Islamist movements. It really was (inaudible) mainly as you reported basically in the Afghans case mainly and the Taliban. Some (inaudible) actually, you see, was not necessarily fatalist. They knew as they believed in fatalism, but at the same time they have to prepare. And they have been preparing and they will continue preparing.

For Hezbollah, just to jump to give you an example of the opposite spectrum of the thing, fatalism is not -- doesn't sit really right in the ideology. In other words, yes, there is the spiritual religious, if you want, kind of choice or kind of an

end for one's life that people have to work for the other life, not really for this. But for this life basically it really undermines all of this. And the thing for any war, for any jihad, whatever armed or unarmed, preparations are required. If you were to depend on God for whatever to fix the stuff, but if you don't do it yourself then you don't go anywhere. It's so different from (inaudible) mentality actually. Of the 1700 or 1600, 1700, you know, centuries, this was all the (inaudible) actually. It started with the Catholic Church also on this question of one's role in deciding of things and only just get (inaudible) on deciding on things.

Theory and practice, I agree with you. I, myself, actually think, despite the fact that I did not elaborate on this in the presentation. I think Islamists at large, despite the youth, concepts of democracy, concepts of freedom, human rights, the Sharia stands about all of these, whether basically it is implied in full or in partial. In other words, parliamentary elections -- democracy has a system at

last. It is a great opportunity for many Islamists to seek power and to capture power. The theory doesn't change. Their tactics change, you see? In other words, the theory (inaudible) stay the same. Above all concepts of non-Islamic basically, the Islamic Sharia law is prevalent. And, yes, they do manipulate and they do push. I have seen so many speeches. Left and right, for the last 15 years, since the (inaudible) elections all the way up to the present. About enforcing lobbying for open elections for human rights.

But what kind of human rights they are really talking about? It's a double standard for me. The human rights that are basically known to everybody that those should benefit every people, including themselves. And the human rights basically that would later on be differentiated according to their ideology and according to their reading of human rights.

So in a nutshell it goes like this. There is a big play of parliamentary game. It is one man, one vote, one place. And I mean actually just to

backtrack -- one man, one woman. Okay? Because Islamists are pushing women all the way now to the voting booth in elections. So it's one person, one vote, one place. What you're telling me is that if you cannot conquer the states from the top, conquer the states from the bottom up. As simple as this.

SPEAKER: Thank you. When you say one place, do you mean one time?

SPEAKER: Yes. One place, one time, one vote. Yes.

MR. HAMID: Okay, I'll just take them in order.

First question, whether it's a regional reality or specific to certain groups. A lot of the groups, at least in the Arab world, are either affiliates of the Brotherhood or are directly inspired by the Brotherhood. So in that sense they share a lot of similarities.

They also share similarities because what you often have is a social movement, which we can call the parent movement. And then the parent movement

will have a political wing, which is what we have in Jordan and Morocco. So I think what we can say about the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt is often applicable to some of its counterparts elsewhere.

Moving to the question of the U.S. veto, which I think is a really interesting one, there are two democratically-elected Islamist groups in the Middle East now -- in Iraq and Turkey. And I don't think it's a mistake that they have a very close relationship with the U.S. And let's also talk about the Iraq War for a second. On January 30, 2005, the first post-war national elections, that was the first time an Islamist party has ever come to power through democratic elections in the Arab world. And who made it happen? Whatever we want to say about the war, the U.S. facilitated that. So that's just an irony of recent history let's say.

So in the end the reason why the U.S. fears Islamist groups isn't because they're Islamist, per se, but because of their foreign policy orientation. So, it's not about a clash of cultures; it's about a

clash of interests. And it happens to be that Turkish Islamists and Iraqi Islamists have been able to find common ground with the U.S. on regional security issues. And that's why they're able to have that cooperative relationship.

And this goes to an interesting point. And Brotherhood leaders will often ask me this -- Shadi, we've committed to democracy, protection of minority rights, the whole list. But why is the U.S. still afraid of us? And my answer is usually, well, yes, the U.S. cares about some of these things, but what do they really care about? What's the big issue here? The big issue here is about regional interests, primarily Israel's security. Also, access to oil. Also, counterterrorism cooperation. But I think what Islamists have to understand is that the U.S. is genuinely concerned about their position on the Israel issue and they have to clarify that.

On the last couple of issues of fatalism and also buying time, I wouldn't call it fatalism. I would say that Islamist groups are very, very patient.

They have a very long-term planning horizon. Why? Because they believe history is on their side. They just think it's a matter of time and it will eventually happen. So they're more than comfortable with taking a very slow, gradual approach because they believe the people are with them.

On the last issue of, you know, are they buying time? Do they really buy into the western paradigm? I'm going to have to disagree with Dr. Hamzeh on this particular issue for a couple of reasons. Okay. Let's take an example. This is the Islamic Action Front's electoral platform from 2007. This is their 2005 perform initiative. What's really interesting about the post-9/11 approach that a lot of these groups have -- this is the political wing of the Brotherhood in Jordan, by the way -- there's very little explicit discussion of Sharia here. And actually, the IAF and the Brotherhood in Egypt have stopped using the phrase "(inaudible) Sharia," which means application of Islamic law. They'll use it in conversation, but they won't use it in their programs

for the most part anymore.

So there's not a lot of Islamist content here. Actually, when you read this and you don't look at the cover you might say, wait, is this a liberal party? Is this a secular party? And there is the question of, well, are they sincere about their commitment to democracy? And this is a very difficult question to answer. But in the end there's no way to prove it one way or the other. There's only one way to really find out, and that's by giving these groups a chance to govern. And I don't think it's fair for us to prejudge them because they've never -- they've never seized power and canceled democracy. I mean, that's what we hear a lot in the U.S. Well, if we give them the chance they'll win, and that will be the end of the story. That has actually never happened. That's a purely speculative possibility. It's never actually happened.

So I think it's a little bit unfair for us to say that's -- let's look at the reality. What we do know is that the parties that are currently in

power refuse to give up power. That is the true example of one person -- actually, no person, no vote, no time. There aren't legitimate elections where people have a chance to choose. So I think we should take them at their word and say, well, listen, we'll give you guys a chance. And we're going to keep a very close eye on you, and the U.S. will keep a very close eye. And they obviously want to maintain a good relationship with the U.S., otherwise they might not last in power that long. So I think let's give them a chance and see what happens.

MR. AMR: Fares.

MR. BRAIZAT: I would like to second what Shadi ended up his answers with. And I will just reemphasize again the fact that I think it is unfair to give ourselves the right to judge Islamists before they are given the chance to compete in free and fair elections and then govern.

We all know as students of politics and the students of democratic studies that democracy is a self-correcting process. Once you get into that

process, you have -- you have to go through a moderation process in which your extreme views would have to relinquish -- would have to be compromised. And by the end result, whether you are an extreme left wing or an extreme right wing, you will end up in the mainstream at least in order to be accepted by the mainstream, by the public, by those who will vote for you in the election.

And then, if you look at the recent history in established democracies, you will find the extreme right and the extreme left are always on the fringes of politics. They might have a very loud voice and they might charge public debate and they intensify attitudes and maybe they even drag people into the streets to demonstrations and to protest movements, but still that does not gain them enough votes because people, I think, they act in ways that are consistent with their interests. And they are rational in their political calculations. And I think, again, it is unfair to prejudge the extremist views (inaudible) since those who are actually judging the extremists

are not giving room to anyone, either extremists or otherwise.

My other point -- I think there is an overarching wider framework and I think it's a problematic one which is legitimacy - the age of legitimacy. And that actually trickles down into the extremists and how they reflect on their actual political behavior. If you come to Jordan or Egypt or Morocco or one of these countries and ask the extremists about the concept of Oma (phonetic), divine sovereignty versus popular sovereignty. These are issues that are still unresolved and they are not only issues of the Islamist movements themselves; they are issues of the state in which they exist today.

They would not recognize, or some of them at least, the current state as a legitimate entity that deserves their allegiance in one way or another. And therefore, no matter what they try they will still have a difficulty managing in public space.

Thank you very much.

MR. AMR: Thanks, Fares. Let me see a show

of hands of who's got questions. Okay. Okay. Let's start with -- well, there's a lot of questions. Let's start with this gentleman right here. He's had his hand up for a while.

What I'd like to do is take a bunch of maybe five questions this time. Ask the questions to be really succinct and again a reminder, to identify yourself.

SPEAKER: Yeah. My name is (inaudible). I'm from Qatar University.

I have a question about the (inaudible) -- or what the West calls the Islamists -- do not recognize the current nation state system, therefore they want to change the borders the colonialists left them. Do you have any data that you have collected about the attitudes of the Islamist leadership, particularly the current ones at this time? Forget about the idealists who established a difference in the first place.

Second, Somalia now has a government of Islamists and also opposition of Islamists, yet the

West has accepted it. And the current parliament has a powerful legislation that says Sharia is the source of legislation, yet the West is okay with it because there are common grounds that it can work with. So obviously the West is selective in many ways. And Sharia is now in London meeting with Gordon Brown, the most well-known Somali Islamist (inaudible).

My final question is we seem to be focusing only Qatar-based Islamist political parties which are largely (inaudible) orientation. What about the grassroots, Salafi groups that seem to be actually raising a number of issues about alteration of power, about Sharia, about all kinds of things. What I -- do you have any studies available?

Thank you.

MR. AMR: Thank you. Let's got the gentleman here and I'll ask because time is short, for the questioners in the front row to be succinct.

SPEAKER: Actually, mine is not a question, but it's -- (inaudible), first of all, from Qatar University.

We're talking here about Islamism, but I think the meaning of Islamism differs from country to country, especially when we talk about Turkey, for example. I don't think Islamism means the same thing as it means to someone in Egypt or in Jordan. In Jordan, for example, you shared some books, election books. Before they used to talk about the application of Syria. But this is something unspeakable in Turkey.

Even an Islamist party is not going to talk about Sharia or even, you know, making laws that are based on Sharia. But in Turkey what Islamism would mean is a girl wearing headscarf in a university freely. I don't know, civil servant praying freely in his office would be something that an Islamist (inaudible). I don't know if that could be Islamist. So I think when we talk about Islamism we should also look at the different shades and colors of that, you know, meaning in different countries.

MR. AMR: Thank you. There were a couple of hands up in the middle. The ladies in the middle row,

please.

SPEAKER: Hi. My name is Malad Gad (phonetic)). I'm a visitor from Canada. Maybe it's like a comment.

I just want to elaborate on one point to Shadi. You just mentioned at the very beginning that USA should give a green light to the Islamist movement to go into the election. I just disagree with you on that point because if you look back in 2005 by Hamas, USA did actually give a green light to Hamas to go into the election, and Abu Mazin is the one who refused to put them in the election. And they surprised whether they actually won.

So my question is do you actually propose that the Islamist movement should separate religion from politics and their view? That's my question.

And for Mr. Fares, in regards to your statistics, I do think that Arabs, like most Arabs do, actually want Islam to rule or govern their countries. But the question is what did the number of the statistics of the population who actually got out to

vote? I lived in Jordan for six years, but I don't see actually people go out to vote. Like me and my family, we didn't actually go to vote. We don't even care about the elections over there. Right? But we do want Islam to rule though. Like, we want an Islamic country, but we don't care to go to vote. So I think there's actually a problem with the people themselves as well, not just the politicians.

That's it. Thank you.

MR. AMR: Thank you. And I believe the woman next to you had her hand up. Thank you.

SPEAKER: (inaudible), Al Jazeera. Thank you for all the panelists.

I just want to say, maybe if we want to study the Islamic movement, we need to study it on the grass roots of the education and women because if we look only on elections and number of people who got in the election seats, it's not enough. If we want to know after 20 years or 50 years what would happen, maybe now we should more study the education, the schools of the Islamic movements, which are really

strong in a number of countries you've mentioned. And there are women who raise those kids. And I want to hear if there is any really significant studies on this.

MR. AMR: Thank you. Let's still take a few more questions in the front row here.

SPEAKER: (inaudible). I'm a communication expert.

Just a comment. You know, we are studying the Islamic movement across the Arab world and Islamic countries, but they are the political side of the Islamic political action or reaction. I mean, all these movements, I can see them -- my reaction to the current situation and every different country. I mean, before the '60s and before we have the kudetas and the systems in the Arab world, and even in Asia, we see totals. Nobody talked about Islam because it was an accepted tract. If you look into the constitution of most other countries, if not all of them, you find Koran or Sharia is the principal source. And nobody contests that.

Why now, I mean, in the third millennium, we are raising the question of Islam, its role, political? It is there, has been, and will stay. And I can, you know, as a student, all esthetic movement that came from the 19th century, 20th century were a reaction to the Westernization process that came to this part of the world. And the political side of it, it was in Egypt; it was in Iran; it was in Pakistan. Even the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, it was a reaction. If we see the early literatures, the reaction of the whole civilization process that took place. But tolerance was predominant. Nobody talked about Islam should be the ruler because it's an accepted fact.

MR. AMR: Thank you.

SPEAKER: And now we are looking into these political systems and vetos and what-not. And I think, you know, this is because of the current situation in every country.

MR. AMR: Thank you. There's a couple more hands up so I want to just give everyone a chance to

ask questions.

So in the back row there was one and I think maybe one --

SPEAKER: (inaudible). I'm a student at Qatar University. I have a question for Mr. Faros -- Fares, sorry. That's about what you mentioned about the significant support for Al-Qaeda. I'm wondering about the significance support for Al-Qaeda. I'm wondering if there are any surveys that ask people who they believe to be behind various terrorist attacks. What I'm saying is are people actually supporting Al-Qaeda terrorism or is it because they believe that there might be -- or that these attacks are falsely being attributed to Al-Qaeda?

MR. AMR: Thank you. Was there a hand up over here? Great. Let's do -- Noha, I think you have your own microphone.

SPEAKER: Noha Aboueldahab from Brookings, Doha.

To what extent do you think that the fact that Hamas and his brother -- the fact that they have

a military wing -- how has that impacted, do you think, their success in terms of meeting popularity? For instance, how different would things be if the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt had a military wing right now?

MR. AMR: Thank you. I'd like to ask all of the panelists to respond and also offer any concluding remarks since we'll have to wrap up after this round. Shadi, I don't know if you want to go first. Or who would like to go first? We'll take nominations.

MR. HAMZEH: Okay. (inaudible) take a break. Okay. I'm sorry. Just bear with me for a second because I'm looking out where I placed something for me to say this is my box.

Okay. The gentleman from Qatar University, I think you're right about the point of the Salafi. I cannot give you a specific answer for authorities, but I did study the phenomenon of the Salafi groups in Lebanon. None of this matters so far with democracy. Parliamentary elections. All of these mean anything. They stayed out of the political process; they stayed

out of the parliamentary game; they stayed out basically on the grassroots level in the form of being an underground movement most of the time. Something like this you might find, of course, in other countries at the same time.

Research at least has shown on record that we know almost of 600 Islamist organizations across the Arab-Muslim world known to research people, policy analysts whatsoever. But also there are maybe double of these are not known. This is not to include also Islamic philanthropic societies. So it's really worth focusing on the Salafis regardless of the country where they operate. But somehow all of the Salafis are connected ideologically, politically in terms of their agendas, and even you would see manifestations that when a movement somehow is struck up a little bit hard by the government or by the authorities, such as the Salafi group of Lebanon, (inaudible), the supporters leak (phonetic), which is (inaudible), but the Salafi extensions go all the way to Syria, to Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and so forth.

This is something what definitely I would say -- last point on this - will change the picture actually in terms of -- we're addresses, bigger movements. What about these -- that have not been given, not just a chance. They, themselves, have prevented themselves from being active in the process. What would happen when they become active in the processes. And so forth.

The other thing I want to address on -- there was something gross roots also. Education? That's right. Thank you for asking that question. I did address basically education for Muslim Lebanon Islamic movements. Just Google me on the system. You will see my publications. Choose whatever you want to choose.

But in a nutshell, actually, yes, education is something extremely important because this is the stage that the socialization process starts on a way that it takes ages. And I have to break it down for you. It takes ages, basically, from almost 7 to the 12th. They would learn the ideology and the various

schools of Islamists and the various basically networks and associations. And then they take it from there, ages 13 and above basically, all the way to the whatever. But maybe all the way to the teens to the 18, the 19. They take it there. Now they translate what happened there into practice or they apply -- they make them apply what they have learned in practice. Whether that being basically being active members of the party from scouting -- all the way.

Budgetwise, lots of spending. And again, I would cite Hezbollah's figure, they spent basically on education of all kinds: from high schools, financial assistance, scholarship, to all universities in Lebanon, private and public. More than what the Ministry of Education of Lebanon spent for the whole entire population.

Women. I did not really tackle basically this, but I'm sure I'm not recalling anybody to refer you. But some did. Definitely women is extremely important and the role of a women in the Islamist

movement has increased. And even increased in a way that the center of gravity, if you want -- and again, within the lines and regulations (inaudible) of Islamists -- the center of gravity and the new Islamist process, meaning in the last 20 years or so, is the woman. I'm not going to get them to the role. Whether that's seen democratically, not democratically. But they have played an important role from basically providing logistics to sitting on associations and running associations, not to mention the educated ones among them, that they have been put at least in proper places. Hezbollah and Hamas have the best examples; (inaudible) to some extent, especially (inaudible) outside of Egypt, I would say, more than the ones in Egypt.

This is where I would -- there's also one comment -- last comment -- on one of the green lights given. I disagree again and it's natural that we disagree in the research community. And also the point raised by our colleague here from Canada. Again, it's like there is a selection processes here

meaning that if I'm given a chance by the state, basically I win elections. If I'm not given the chance, I do not win elections. And more problematic in this actually is what would happen when the states' role is neutralized in these elections? A question that we will (inaudible).

Thank you.

MR. AMR: Thank you, Professor Nazir Hamzeh. Left or right? Who wants to go next?

MR. HAMID: Okay. So quite a few things here. Start with the issue of celophy groups. That's a very interesting point because at least we know anecdotally that Salafi groups on the ground are becoming considerably stronger. So critics of mainstream Islamist groups, like the Muslim Brotherhood, they'll say, well, it's good that these groups are losing popularity. They're having internal divisions. But here's the thing. It's not as if liberals are waiting in the wings. The ones who are waiting in the wings are actually more conservative than the Muslim Brotherhood. And these are the Salafi

groups that our colleague here is pointing to.

So be careful what you wish for. And I think that's the message that people in Washington should really take to heart. You don't want the Muslim Brotherhood, but the alternative might be worse.

As for the issue of the green light, I'm talking more about a green light for Islamists to come to power, not a green light for Islamists to participate in elections. The U.S. doesn't really stop Islamists from participating, but what they sometimes block is Islamists rising to the level of government. I don't think the U.S. should give a green light to anyone in particular. What I would really like to see President Obama or a future president if we have to await that long, say in clear, unequivocal terms that we will respect democratic outcomes regardless. Secularate (phonetic), liberal, social Islamists, whoever the people want, we should respect their voice. Whether that will happen or not is another story.

The education issue is a really interesting one because Islamist groups have tended to focus on the Ministry of Education. They always want to have influence in the Ministry of Education. And actually, one of the first instances of Islamists in government in the Arab world -- was in 1972 when it -- Ishaq al-Farhan of the Jordanian Brotherhood was Minister of Education.

And since the '70s in Jordan, Islamists have -- I don't want to say control of the ministry, but they've played a very influential role. And I think it's a mistake that 30 years after 1972 or 20 years after 1972, Islamists started to become more popular and started to have more gains in election. They were laying the groundwork into the educational system and future generations tended to be more pro-Islamists than their predecessors.

And last point on the very interesting question of why is the Islamist issue such an issue now when it may not have been an issue 40 or 50 years ago. I think the key date there is 1967. And I don't

think -- it's partially a reaction to Westernization, but I think it's more a reaction to the failure of secular nationalism because that's what 1967 was about. People believed in Abdel Nasser. They thought that here is someone that really has something to offer to the Arab world. But then the failure of 1967 cast that into doubt, so people started to ask the question of what went wrong.

And this is a problem. Whenever you have very high expectations and then you have failure and you have that gap, that's when people start to really reassess their situation. And I think that's what we saw. So Arabs are saying we tried nationalism; we tried secularism; we tried Western -- we tried all the ideologies. We've just got one left. Let's give that a shot. Thanks.

MR. AMR: Thank you Shadi. Fares.

MR. BRAIZAT: Very briefly and quickly on the issue of attitudes of Islamists towards the nation state and other things.

No, I have not collected information from

Islamists or leaders of Islamist parties in particular, but we hope to do so. Now, by proxy I can tell you quickly those who are religiously committed observing Muslims, they tend to vote and prefer an Islamic form of government, whatever that means. And also they tend to vote for organized Islamist groups.

From their perspective I think those people are -- I would call them more political citizens than average others because they are more critical of the state and the ability of institutions to deliver services, especially on the issues of poverty and unemployment and corruption. And this has been done through my research in Jordan, but I don't know whether that applies as valid to other countries.

But I think there is also one important issue here that we should not confuse Islamists with Islamic-oriented or Islamic. When I think -- at least when I use Islamist I refer to a group or an individual who seeks to implement Sharia as he or she understands it as a governing political system. And Islamic or Islamically-informed political system, that

can be any form of political system, but yet has these -- the content of Islamic values, whatever that means, to those in power.

On the last issue of whether Islamists are a reaction to a reality or not, I think it is both. There are proactive groups that are generating their own base of support in one way. And in the other, they are reacting to realities that they do not see as functioning, and therefore, that is a major recruiting ground for those movements.

On the Al-Qaeda question, whether people believe that Al-Qaeda committed terrorist acts or not, I think there is plenty of data out there on this. And I have not personally included this in my questions and our surveys, but definitely there is another data that I know if. And it shows that a significant plurality of Arabs and Muslims in general, they do not believe that Arabs (inaudible) behind 9/11, but that does not mean that it is exclusively not believed.

And whether -- on the issue of whether Hamas

and Hezbollah -- they have the fact that they have political wings to give them success, I think this is a very particular context in which you have resistance against occupation. And this defines largely the way these two moments were perceived. I don't think that would be the case in Egypt or Jordan or Morocco. And when that turned out to be the case in Algeria at a later stage in 1989, we saw bloodshed. And I don't think that would give legitimacy to a political group.

Now, given the wider regional context in which those -- the policies that Hamas and Hezbollah stand for, they are very popular policies, whether you like Hamas or Hezbollah or not; whether you like Israel or not; the policies they stand for are very popular policies and, therefore, their base of support will continue -- they will continue to draw on that support unless they malfunction significantly, such as a Hamas intervention. If Hamas remained outside, the Palestinian politics would have remained more popular than it is right now actually.

MR. AMR: Thank you.

SPEAKER: On the question of Hamas and Hezbollah, Professor Braizat, maybe you have some thoughts.

MR. BRAIZAT: The lady from the Center here, correct me if I'm wrong, you raised the issue of the military wing. Right? I think this is a very interesting issue. Yes, Hamas, as well as (inaudible) love the formations of military wings that some other Islamic movements, such as (inaudible) in Egypt, does not have the same consequences. They had it before Camp David, yes. It could have been formed at that time. But they did not.

But they have military wings during mandate or during colonialism basically. And the MBs (phonetic), Shadi here can help to what I know, at least in Egypt they were so very active and they were so militancy-oriented. All the way until Nasser captured power. But when they approached Nasser actually and Nasser rejected basically, you know, they tend to be militant. They approached Nasser on the basis of nonmilitancy. With about, again, they want

to be nonmilitant. They want (inaudible) arrested in one day, 4,000 MBs plus Islamic jihad. Again, after the Camp David (inaudible) several times, so it led actually again them to form.

But to what extent they form a military wing, I'm not sure. I would be basically (inaudible) in Egypt. But I will use (inaudible) in Lebanon. (inaudible) Lebanon branch, they have a military wing. It's not as strong as Hezbollah's and Hamas'. They did actually take part of whatever resistance and reputation -- national resistance before Hezbollah -- that's your full control of the resistance in the 80s, and they pushed basically fighters to the fronts and some of them basically were, you know, before them were martyrs.

So the formation of the military wing in a nutshell, comes as a result of circumstances presence. One of the circumstances is occupation, you see. There should be a reason for the party to have a military rank. Or if the party is crushed and being pushed to be an underground movement, okay, and it has

armed itself as underground and it comes to the surface, it gives them power for Hamas and Hezbollah. Of course. Here they are operating on territories captured by them -- each one or separate, whatever, relative to the territory.

Government representation, local government representation, plus you see (inaudible). This is absent it seems to me and some other places.

Thank you.

MR. AMR: Thank you, Professor Braizat. Thank you, Professor Hamzeh. Thanks to my colleague, Shadi Hamid. I'd also like to thank all of the staff members -- all of my colleagues at the Brookings Doha Center, the audience, the translators. And I'd like to -- we'd like to invite you all to enjoy refreshments in the next room before you go. So thank you very much for this very valuable discussion.

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