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RELIGIOUS/POLITICAL AIMS OF ISLAMIST GROUPS

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INTRODUCTION:

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PANEL PRESENTATIONS:

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## P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. GRAND: I am Steve Grand. I am the Director of the Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World here at Brookings. I hope everyone can hear me, and I hope everyone feels free to begin eating.

There has been a lot of discussion in recent years about Islamist groups, but the discussion has focused primarily on the religious/political aims of these groups. Much less attention has been paid to the broader agenda that these groups articulate or put forth publicly in their policy platforms. What we were interested in doing is looking at the full range of issues and the positions that Islamist groups take on these issues so that we broadened our understanding, broadened the discussion beyond the strictly religious, beyond the strict foreign policy lenses which we traditionally look at these groups.

For that we have a terrific panel today. We have the benefit of some very interesting, in-depth survey research that has been conducted by Hiam Nawas and Michel Zogby where they did a series of questionnaires of Islamist groups in Jordan, Egypt, and Yemen, and they are here today to present those results and give those results some context for us.

To moderate that discussion, I am pleased to introduce Professor Peter Mandaville, who is the Director of the Center of Global Studies, and Associate Professor of Government and Politics at George Mason University down the road, who has his Ph.D. at Kent University and has taught previously as well at Kent University, and who has a book coming out this spring, if I have it right, called

"Beyond Islamism: Muslim Politics and Society in a Global World," which tries to put some of these issues in the context of globalization. Thank you everyone for coming.

MR. MANDAVILLE: Thanks very much, Steve. Good afternoon. I am grateful for the opportunity to be with you today, and thanks to you all of you for joining us.

As Steve mentioned, I am really going to be moderating the panel, so I am going to keep my comments to a minimum. I wanted to just offer a few framing remarks to kick things off before turning things over to Hiam and Michel, because like you, I am really most intrigued to have to say. It takes a lot to coax academics out of the frenzy of mid-December, end-of-semester madness, but the richness and potential that is present I think analytically in the work that they are going to be presenting today is such that it was an opportunity not to be missed.

Just a few framing points to open up to gesture toward why what Hiam and Michel have investigated is so important for us today. First of all, I think there is increasing awareness within policymaking circles in Washington that in many ways Islamists are the only political force in the Middle East today with an actual social base and the capacity to organize and mobilize. There was a lot of interest and I think well-placed hope last year around images that we saw coming out of Cairo with the Kafaya movement, but at the end of the day, the Kafaya I think to me ended up resembling rather something like the Howard Dean presidential campaign of 2004, a lot of frenzy, lots of people, apparent grassroots energy, but when push

came to shove there was not really [inaudible], and likewise, with Kafaya, I think reinforced by various electoral results that we see coming out of Egypt last year and also with regard to Hamas in Palestine earlier this year. The Islamist movements have the capacity and they have the energy and they are a force to be reckoned with.

The policymaking dilemma then of course is how does one engage these movements. If one realizes that there is a critical mass of political force here, how does one engage it, where before in recent years I think the policy has tended to veer between either ignoring these movements completely or lumping them in with more radical and militant groups such as al-Qaeda and seeing them more or less as part of the same entity.

Of course, this does not work, so a growing realization of the need to engage mainstream Islamic movements, but some dilemmas and predicaments entailed in doing so. I think what is going to come out very clearly in the work that Hiam and Michel present to us is the fact that there is a lot of ambiguity in the rhetoric and the actual practical policy dimensions of these movements around a number of key issues.

The question are left with is when we look at this apparent shift in the case of certain movements some of which will be presented today toward language of democracy, moderation, inclusion, and participation, what are we actually seeing? Is this instrumentalist rhetoric or is this reflective, and a case I think can be made to some extent that this is reflective, of certain shifts, changes, and struggles going on within Islamist movements themselves.

With that by way of opening framework, I will be back, by the way, after the presentation to pose some initial questions, let me introduce our two speakers today.

Hiam Nawas is an analyst of Middle Eastern Affairs at the Rothkopf group and is also currently acting as a producer on a PBS documentary on the Muslim Brotherhood. Some of her other professional activities have included working for the International Organization for Migration involved in election organization work among Iraqi communities living abroad.

Michel Zogby is an independent researcher based outside Geneva, Switzerland, and has graduate credentials from the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University, and from the London School of Economics.

So without further ado, let me turn it over to Hiam who I think is going to kick us off this afternoon.

MS. NAWAS: Thank you, Peter, and thank you all for coming.

First, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Brookings for giving us the venue to present our findings today. Thank you, Steve, and I would like to thank Rabat Fayad for all her work making this happen. A minor correction. I was not an acting producer on "The Brotherhood," I am an associate producer for "The Brotherhood."

The issue of engaging the Islamists is a very politically charged issue for its implication for the war on terrorism, the Muslim world, and the Middle East in particular, and the United States engagement in the Middle East. Before we share

our findings with you, I would like to put the paper in context, why was this study undertaken. Michel and I felt that the debate in Washington on whether the U.S. should engage the Islamists or not was lacking a major component, and that is who are the Islamists and what is their message. As you know, one does not engage with ideas in abstract, one engages with people on ideas.

The study is broken into four broad categories. One, a contextual analysis; second, these groups' views and objectives; third, their political platform; fourth, their selected views on issues that Michel and I looked at in-depth, and Michel will be presenting shortly. I will be focusing on the contextual analysis.

The aim of the study is engaging the Islamists is a very important decision and that before doing so we should have a clear understanding of their contextual environment as well as their underlying ideology, the message behind their language and rhetoric, and the objectives that they officially set for themselves. It is true that available research on specific positions on issues for these Islamists is still lacking and is deserving of further research and analysis. This paper is not a policy paper. It is a paper intended to fill in information gaps in that regard.

Why is this research timely? The foreign policy change toward the Middle East that the Bush Administration took in 2003 is fueling the debate on whether we should engage the Islamists or not, and whether democratization efforts in the region could be sustainable without their engagement. Furthermore, considering the U.S. military engagement in the region and the important economic

ties that it has to a number of entities in the Muslim world makes it vital for policymakers to understand the message, the aims, and the messengers of Islamists.

Countries selected. We have selected three countries. They were selected for their importance strategically and/or political implications for the United States. The destabilization of some could have disastrous consequences on the balance of power in the Middle East as expressed by the ISG report, and the modernization and democratization of some could serve as models in the region. In either case, Islamists will play a significant role in the future of the region.

The first country we selected is Egypt with the largest population in the Middle East. Egypt is traditionally the recipient of the second-largest military and economic aid from the U.S. after Israel. Egypt recently tried to showcase its version of political liberalization, but the largest Islamist group, the Brotherhood, was not officially allowed to participate in the political process.

The second country we looked at is Jordan. Jordan has a privileged relationship with the West. It has a large Palestinian population. Its geographical closeness to Israel and Iraq makes the country relevant in the region. The current underlying tension between the Islamic Action Front which is the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood of Jordan, and King Abdullah II, makes it a good case study to see how the monarchy is using tribal affiliation to curb Islamist clout.

The last country we looked at is Yemen. Yemen continued, albeit slowly, a move toward democracy and its stability is important to the United States due to its strategic location both in terms of military and economic terms.

The groups that we researched were selected on particular criterion. One, their willingness to participate in the political process. Second, their influence over the political process. Third, their capacity to shape the nation's political debate, and the size of their constituency. Finally, their ability to mobilize their constituency effectively. Based on these criterion, three groups were chosen. One, the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt. The Brotherhood of Egypt is the first to raise effectively the banner of Islam after the collapse of *hilafa*. The Brotherhood is the prototype of all Muslim organizations operating in the Middle East today whether violent or not. It is a microcosm for Islamic movement in the Middle East, and the Brotherhood is present in one way or another in the majority of Muslim countries.

The Muslim Brotherhood of Jordan and its political wing, the Islamic Action Front, is an extension of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt. The Brotherhood of Jordan and its political wing is a good demonstration of a possible integration of Islamists in the political fabric of the state, albeit a nondemocratic one. By providing the Islamic Action Front with a privileged status in the political process, the Jordanian monarchy managed two things. One, that this movement will not challenge the legitimacy of the group, and then they managed to channel the most conservative elements of the society within that group, and of course the monarchy would have an ally whenever it is challenged by radical fringes.

Finally, Yemen and the Congregation for Reform, Islah, the confluence of tribal, religious, and modernist factors in Yemeni politics makes Islah

relatively pragmatic, and is a very interesting case to look at because it juxtaposed the new and old.

Finally, the methodology of the paper. Michel and I wanted to develop a comprehensive picture of the views, objectives, and the platforms of these groups, so we used primary research and secondary research. Primary research was used during our collection of data through our survey. We designed a survey on targeting generic questions and particular questions, it was translated to Arabic, sent to these groups as we were following-up with them, and they sent back questions, we translated them to Arabic and translated back to English all the other questions. All the interaction that we had with these groups we had in writing to ensure that there was no misunderstanding.

After analyzing and studying their answers, we compared them against secondary research that was produced by these groups themselves, meaning their parliamentary records when available, their press releases, and their literature. I hope that helps put the paper in perspective, and I will turn to Michel to share with you our findings.

MR. ZOGBY: Thank you, Hiam. As Hiam pointed out earlier, this paper is not a policy paper, but a reference paper, a reference paper for policymakers and for others. It does provide some analysis and recommendations, but it is essentially intended to fill an information gap we believe exists in the literature with regard to the public message put forth by Islamists. We have found this public message to often be contradictory, an expression we believe in part as the complex

set of forces currently vying for influence within Islamist groups. However, while we are aware of the influence of these forces on the public message, their study is beyond the scope of this paper. This is a study of the public message of Islamists.

I will take you on a very quick tour of 11 issues we had these groups answer in-depth in our survey. Please note that the accompanying slides are numbered in the event you would like to refer to a particular slide in the discussion session.

Before getting started I would like to draw your attention to the table of contents of the document you have been provided as it will give you an idea of the other issues we have covered in our paper that we do not have time to present today. There is a lot of more stuff than the 11 points we are going to discuss today, and I hope you will enjoy reading those when you have the time.

Before getting started I would also like to let you know that I refer to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt as MBE, the Islamic Action Front as IAF, which is the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, and the Yemeni Congregation for Reform as Islah. That will make my presentation a little bit easier.

What I am about to present might seem relatively dry to some of you. I think it is sometimes useful to focus on the details in order to get a fuller picture of the object of study. Luckily for you, I am much more interested in the discussion session that will follow than hearing myself speak, so I will make it as brief as possible. It will be about 15 minutes, and we will go from one topic to the other relatively quickly.

The first issue we looked at was democracy. There is a consensus among all three organizations that the concept of democracy is enshrined in *surah*. *Surah* is a form of consultative decision-making process. For example, MBE states, "Our understanding of democracy depends on the criteria approved by Islam, namely, values of justice, equality, and consultation, and like what Americans are trying to convince us." We found Islah's position to mirror MBE's on this issue, as it accepts the democratic process only as long as it is consistent with Islam and its rulings, while considering that freedom is absolute and cannot be constrained except by religious values. These groups' positions on this issue highlights a major finding of this study, that is, while all of the groups studied have mastered the language and symbolism used in the West and have incorporated in their rhetoric terms and concepts the West understands and is comfortable with, they are redefining them according to their own understanding and interpretation.

The second issue we focused on was the role of Islam in government. With regard to this issue, there is also the consensus among all three groups that is based on the belief that Islam permeates all aspects of Muslim society, including politics. For example, MBE states, "Islam established general guidelines for Muslim society that must be adhered to in all spheres including government and politics, provided it does not permit what is forbidden and prohibit what is allowed in Islam." That is a fascinating end of sentence, and we could talk hours on that. I hope we will, actually.

As for Islah, it considers Islam as the source of the values embodied in the political system and Islamic law, Sharia, as the source of legislation. Whatever the particular approach put forth by each group, there is a strong common desire to ensure Islam and Sharia remain at the center of government. This prerequisite seems to preclude any possibility of a separation of mosque and state, something we can also discuss I hope in the Q and A session.

Third, we asked these groups about their relations to non-Muslims, the West, Israel, and the United States. We discussed each of these issues individually in our paper, but due to the limited time we have today, I will focus on the United States.

Both MBE and IAF are in tune with their message regarding the United States. The following statement by MBE provides a good example of that common position: "The Bush Administration's military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as its support of totalitarian regimes in a number of Muslim countries, points to the United States as the principal enemy of the Muslim world and the major obstacle to its aspirations." Islah, on the other hand, is the only group prepared to engage the United States directly. However, it is only willing to do so under certain conditions, one of which is to ensure it has access to religious scholars in order to guarantee that Islamic values and principles are preserved throughout the negotiating process. Hiam and I found this requirement revealing in that it highlights Islah's genuine fear of failing in its responsibility as the upholder of Islamic doctrine in Yemen.

Next we have asked these groups about *jihad*, a fascinating topic. On this very important topic, MBE has what Hiam and I consider a radical point of view, as it subscribes to al-Mawdudi, the belief that *jihad* is the second-most important pillar of Islam after *tawhid*. *Tawhid* is the declaration of faith that there is God but God, and Muhammad is his Prophet. This is a radical interpretation of the place of *jihad* in Islam because the *hadith*, the narrative record of the sayings or customs of Muhammad and his companions, clearly defined the five pillars of Islam as *tawhid*, prayer, fasting, *zakat*, which is almsgiving, and Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca. *Jihad* has historically not been considered one of Islam's five pillars. But for IAF, it considers *jihad* to be an obligation when Islamic land is being occupied not only for the citizens of that country, but all its Muslim neighbors. However, IAF believes that very specific conditions have to be met in order to engage in *jihad*, conditions that it perceives are currently being met in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Chechnya, and Kashmir.

Again on this issue, Islah is a lot more nuanced than the other two, as it acknowledges both the internal as well as the external aspects of *jihad*, another fascinating topic. Regarding its external interpretation, Islah specified that it rejects the interpretation of *jihad* which portrays relations between Muslims and non-Muslims as essentially antagonistic and peace between them to be at best only temporary. However, Islah signed a 2004 joint declaration with a number of other Islamist groups asking Arab and Islamic nations across the globe to resist occupation in Iraq and Palestine by providing material and moral support for resistance until

victory is claimed and Muslim territories, what is called dar al-Islam, are cleansed from occupation. This is especially revealing as Islah specifically states in its survey answers that it considers the use by some of the term dar al-Islam, or the -- of peace or Muslim territories in dar al-Harb, the House of War or non-Muslim territories, as specific to a certain period in history and no longer relevant, a significant contradiction in message.

Next we asked about the reopening of the door to *ijtihad*, *ijtihad* is extrapolation, as opposed to *taqlid* which is imitation and which is followed by many groups in the Muslim world today, and allows for making a legal decision by independent interpretation of the legal sources, the Koran and the Sunnah. There is a serious debate in contemporary Muslim society as to who has the right to perform *ijtihad*. Some believe that it is reserved for qualified and credentialed interpreters of the sacred text, while more liberal voices believe it should be a right granted to all Muslims. The importance of this debate is unfortunately overlooked as *ijtihad* is considered by many to be the most important tool available to facilitate Islam's evolution in the 21st century.

MBE is extremely vague on how it proposes to use *ijtihad* to deal with contemporary issues faced by the Muslim community, while IAF and Islah on the other hand propose the institutionalization of *ijtihad*, potentially following the model regulating the West's legal profession, a much more modernist approach to this issue.

Next we have asked the Islamic groups that we surveyed the source, role, and implementation of *fatwas*. *Fatwas* are religious pronouncements. MBE

states that the source of *fatwas* are interpreters of the sacred text who determine what is permitted and what is forbidden by God, again, the same comment as we saw earlier and something we can discuss I hope in the discussion session. However, MBE leaders never condemned Osama bin Laden and Zarqawi for not having the necessary qualifications for issuing fatwas, therefore, in condoning them, while IAF members of parliament called Zarqawi a martyr while attending his funeral in Jordan, an act that led, by the way, to their arrest by the Jordanian government. These contradictions raise the thorny matter of who has the appropriate qualifications and credentials to be considered an interpreter of the sacred text, an issue hotly debated in the Islamic world today as it is fundamentally one of power. IAF and Islah both recognize the importance of fatwas as a political tool. IAF's statement that fatwas should be put through an institutionalized referral system modeled on the concept of nongovernmental organizations in order to remain independent from the powers to be, i.e., the government, is representative of this common position.

Next we ask about groups' views regarding women's empowerment, a really fascinating topic that Hiam and I enjoyed a great deal. All three groups, while agreeing that women are equal to men, have self-contradicting positions on this issue.

MBE states on one hand that women are honored in Islam and that the Koran is addressed to them as much as it is addressed to men, that women have the right to participate in parliamentary elections as voters and candidates, as well as serve in public office. On the other hand, MBE states that women cannot be the

head of state because God did not give women guardianship and authority in the house, so how could it give them authority as head of the state, a task which is more dangerous than that as head of the house. A difficult contradiction to reconcile.

IAF for its part is a lot more subtle in its approach to this issue than MBE. While it refuses all attempts to change the fundamentals of life by erasing all differences between males and females, it states that women according to the Islam vision are full and complete human beings, completely equal to men in terms of human dignity, they have the hold any job for which they are qualified in terms of health and social position and capacity to assume such a position, kind of a loaded statement. This qualified equality needs to be acknowledged, and its consequences on the lives of Jordanian women deserves to be fairly and honestly laid out. Our paper provides concrete evidence of the damage that such qualified equality has had on the lives of women in Jordan, and you will find that in the section relating to this issue. Islah also seems to have in words a progressive view of women, stating that it is a movement advocating justice for women who suffered deceit, injustice, and injury, and for the right of women to participate in politics and all other aspects of society on the same footing as men.

However, when in 2005 Islah was given the opportunity to rectify "past injustice and injury," it fell short as it blocked the proposal by Yemen's Ruling General People's Congress and Islah's own women's wing to introduce a quota of 10 percent of seats for women in parliament, and 15 to 20 percent in local councils.

Modernism and Islam is the next topic we are going to look at. We are almost done, three-quarters through the presentation. Again, on this issue Islamists are faced with the difficulties of integrating their interpretation of Islam with the requirement of 21st century contemporary Muslim society.

For the Muslim Brothers, the concept of modernist is mostly restricted to scientific and technological advancement. Modernism in terms of social development is extremely limited and bound by the Brotherhood's interpretation of Islamic values. MED does state, "Modernism cannot be equated with the acceptance of deviant sexual practices, same-sex marriage, pregnancy and birth outside of marriage, as well as the erroneous definition of gender." Interestingly enough, MBE's position on this issue mirrors in many ways that of evangelical Christians here in our country.

As for Islah, it has not developed a position on this issue, something that is worrisome considering the importance of modernism in the Islamic debate. Islah on a number of points actually did not have a position, and we somehow think that it might simply have to do with the fact that they really have not developed a position on the issue. It was not that they did not want to answer the question, it is that they do not have a position on the issue.

Next is globalization. While Islah again has not developed a position on this important issue, MBE and IAF's emphasis on the universality of Islam suggests that their concept of globalization is linked to the spreading of Islam across the world. MBE's statement that it has complete faith that Islam will invade Europe

and America because Islam has logic and a message seems to support this hypothesis.

As for IAF, it considers globalization in its present form a type of colonization, a means to control the values, culture, and curriculum of the Islamic community. The United States ideals of peace and openness which accompany globalization are ideologies used to counter the culture of *jihad* and resistance IAF says are currently flourishing in the hearts and minds of Islam's youth. Again, a fascinating topic and an interesting trend that I hope we can discuss.

Finally, an issue that while seeming justifiably unimportant in a geopolitical sense was nevertheless interesting to look at, and that is the environment. MBE approaches the environment from a creationist perspective, stating that God created and fashioned the earth for the settlement of human beings, he provided all the necessary resources including a suitable climate for humans to thrive. Again, interestingly, Islamists join the evangelical Christian perspective on this issue, and on others, as a matter of fact.

Islah's and IAF's position on this issue are relatively generic except for an interesting comment from IAF I will conclude with. IAF states that it is concerned with noise pollution as well as visual pollution, calling for appropriate legislation to ban ungainly sights which violate decency and good taste, as well as calling for the appreciation for its beauty and its diffusion and adoption as values. Beyond Prophet Muhammad's words "God is beautiful and loves beauty," it is unclear how IAF proposes to define, legislate, and regulate beauty.

I am going to now continue with a couple of concluding remarks, and then we will open it up for the Q and A. First, the results of this study clearly points to one overriding theme, and that is while there are divergences between these groups, there is also an underlying unity of thought based on the assumption by all groups surveyed that their version of Islam and their understanding of Islamic law supersedes all other ideologies, encompasses all other forms of political systems including democracy, and embraces and has solutions to the infinite multitude of issues faced by human beings and humanity. This concept, being intrinsically all-inclusive, cannot preclude the possibility of a separation of mosque and state.

Second, all groups surveyed call for Islam to be at the center of the political sphere through the installation of Islamic law as the law of the land. Only under this overarching structure are Islamists willing and able to engage in discussions regarding self-defined concepts of democracy, justice, equality, as well as economic growth, political reform, and independence from the West.

Third, I have mentioned above while all of the groups studied have mastered the language and symbolism of democracy and have incorporated in their rhetoric terms the West understands and is comfortable with, they are redefining them according to their own understanding and interpretation, something Peter mentioned at the beginning and I think will be fascinating to discuss as well in the Q and A session.

Fourth and last, the Islamist message is tuned to the particular circumstances they must operate under. To a degree, the more participation,

involvement, and political freedom, the less idealistic and flamboyant the message. However, the realities of political life seem to have a moderating effect on rhetoric, but not necessarily on substance. I think I have done it, I hope I have not bored you too much, and I am really looking forward to the Q and A because we have been working months and months on this, and I can't wait to hear what all of you have to say. Thank you very much.

MR. MANDAVILLE: Thank you very much, Hiam and Michel.

Like the two of them, I am eager to open this up and make it as much a discussion as quickly as possible, but I wanted to offer a few remarks by way of further contextualization of some of their findings, and also a few responses and questions that I would like to work before opening things up.

First of all, in terms of understanding the wide ecology or world of Islamists and the Islamist movement that we are talking about, I think it is important to make something of a distinction between groups that are actually either formerly or historically associated directly with the Muslim Brotherhood or MBE, and those groups that are more evocative of something that I generally term Muslim Brotherhood nets. That is, those groups that actually were offshoots of the Muslim Brotherhood such as Hamas in Palestine, the National Islamic Congress in Sudan, and Nadha in Tunisia. And then other movements in places such as Pakistan and the Jamaat-e-Islami, PAS in Malaysia, the Raza Party in Turkey, that were founded very much in the mold of the Muslim Brotherhood, a basic ideological orientation and a model of political organization. The question then of the extent to which

there are actual meaningful linkages in terms of coordination and multilateral activism across these movements. The research that does exist shows that in many cases it is actually national priorities or often quite local priorities that tend to guide the political agendas of these movements, even though there are linkages between them across transnational boundaries, but that the realities of nation-state politics tend to predominate.

Also in hearing their description of some of the positions of these groups on key social issues, it strikes me that in many regards they sound exactly like socially conservative groups and political movements in Europe and North America, particularly with regard to issues related to the family and women. Of course, the question and concern generally associated with this is what happens if these groups were to actually come into political power and what would then happen in terms of them being in a position to legally enshrine and embed these positions as legal statutes.

I also wanted to ask a little bit about some of the methodological limitations that are present in this what I think is a very valuable study, and that what we have here is essentially a study of public messaging, of political discourse, of rhetoric of things that these groups say when posed certain questions. Obviously, in order to understand, and this is a point that Michel and Hiam I think acknowledged quite openly up front, what this actually means, we would need to look at it in the context of actual political behaviors. Obviously, all of us living in the city that we live in know that there is often a major distinction between what political actors say

and what political actors actually do. Which leads me to an emphasis on the need to not simply engage these movements from the outside, but to in a sense pare them open, not treat them as black boxes, but to open them up and see what is going on inside. If you do that, I think you find today within most mainstream Islamist movements in the Middle East quite a lot of upheaval and intergenerational struggle between an old guard that seeks to do things in the mold of the old school Muslim Brotherhood, and the vanguard of a new approach that realizes that political realities have changed, that in some cases their constituencies within society are developing more quickly and running away from the movements more quickly than they can actually keep up, with a shift from Islamist movements being the vanguard of political activism in the Middle East, to Islamist movements to some extent having to adjust themselves to new realities, the question then being to what extent are elements of the rhetoric and public messaging that we hear actually reflective of these struggles going on within the movements themselves.

Some of you may be aware that there are certain groups that have broken away from the MBE in Egypt, the Hisb al-Wafd Party, for example, which is indicative of exactly this kind of shift. Other analysts point to this as well. Carrie Wickham at Emory University writes today about what she calls Islamist auto-reform which is a description of exactly this process whereby these movements through a generation of learning have actually begun to shift elements of their agenda and to some extent the political discourse. Jillian Schwedler, right nearby here at the University of Maryland, writes a lot about linkages between inclusion in political

systems, and Islamist movements that enter politics have to contest and respect the results of elections and the linkage between that kind of participation and moderation of their political behavior, which I think is important to put on the table.

That said, all in all I think it is important to acknowledge what a tremendous resource we are being provided here by Michel and Hiam, and I only wish that I had access to it while I was drafting that book which is coming out next spring because having read through some of their material, there is some absolutely tremendously valuable stuff there and they have done a signal service I think to both policy makers and researchers in terms of providing us with a comprehensive, synthesized, and unprecedented and rich repository of this kind of public messaging.

With that said, I think we are going to go ahead and open up the discussion now. When you are recognized, if you would like to identify yourself to the audience and then proceed with your question.

MR. SUFURI: My name is Khalid Sufuri (?). I am with -- Strategies. I think it is important to note that the Muslim Brotherhood is not one organization and agreement, and there is an example of the Muslim Brotherhood organization in Iraq, the Hizb al-Islami, the Islamic Party, is participating in the coalition government in Iraq, they participated in the elections, and they were also victims of many assassinations by radicals in Iraq. During the international meeting of the Muslim Brotherhood in Istanbul in 2004 there was a big disagreement over the participation of the Islamic Party of Iraq in the election.

Hamas in Algeria which is the Muslim Brotherhood in Algeria and -- the Constitutional Movement in Kuwait, they both supported that participation, while the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas and Palestine, they both objected to it, and there was a big disagreement over it. This is just an example of how different all the organizations of the Muslim Brotherhood are. Especially in Kuwait and Algeria they are very different from the rest of the organization, and that is very important to note. It is not one stand they take on one issue and there are major disagreements in the organization.

The second issue that brought my attention is the issue of *ijtihad*. I think among Sunnis there is an agreement that *ijtihad* was closed in the 10th century. There is no argument over that. This is what protected the Sunnis from having more sects, unlike the Shia where there are so many subsets from the Shia that came as offshoots of the Ishmaelis and so on, so these are my two comments.

MR. SULEMA: -- Sulema with "Al Mustaqbal al Arabi" magazine is published for the Center for Arab Unity Studies in Beirut. It is an independent think tank. Probably the only one in the Arab world. This is not a promotion.

Probably I am going to be the first maybe to criticize the study -- of course, the shortcoming that I have here that I did not really study it enough to criticize it, but I am going to venture and do it based on the presentation and just flipping.

I think there is a question that needs to be answered and was not answered completely here. Why the Islamist movements are popular, why they are

full of energy, why they have such visibility. We are talking about Islamic countries. For 1,400 years Islam is there and it is going to be for the next 1,400 years, and probably forever. We do not know. The issue why the other secular nationalist movements are not visible enough, and I think here is the issue that we need to go to, the causes that resulted in at one point probably during the 1950s, 1960s, and even 1970s, the secular movements in the Arab world were very prominent.

So why is this phenomenon of having those movements now dominant and whether this is going to be a trend that is not going to change. I think we should not take away the factor that there is a transformation in the Arab world particularly since you took about the issue that has not been settled, the issue of the national liberation movement, national Arab identity. And the Islamists, at least some of them, the active ones and the most popular ones, are the ones who are taking upon themselves to fill that void, to give that identity.

One major issue is the issue of foreign intervention and the Arab-Israeli issue, so you cannot really analyze the Islamist movement in isolation of the dynamics of those issues. I try just to redirect your analysis to take into consideration these factors because at some point maybe those outside forces were encouraging the Islamist movement like most of the Palestinian liberation movements were secular and there was the encouragement of those Islamists by the people who they now are saying that or at least this phenomenon or think that this is some strange phenomenon is happening.

I do not want to take too much from others, so I am going to limit my comments to this one. Thank you.

MS. NAWAS: I am going to start with -- comments and then go back to Khalid. Thank you so much for your comments. They were very valuable.

One, the paper is not an analysis paper. It is meant to focus on a particular issue, and that is public messaging of Islamist groups. I understand your concerns, they are valid, but what you mentioned is beyond the scope of this paper.

Second, to answer your question anyway as to why these Islamists are popular in the Middle East, one, they are filling a void that the state failed to fill. They have social services that is carried by these Islamists in rural areas where the state is not delivering. Second, Islamists succeeded in hijacking national causes, the resistance, if you wish, the relationship to the West. Because of the regimes are crashing on the secular movement, the Islamists flourish. Why? Because if an Islamic group of the government crashing their offices cannot go to the mosque, a secular group cannot go anywhere. Third is I must say that this administration in particular succeeded in reading the secular and Islamists in the Middle East in terms of their objection to U.S. foreign policy. I hope that addresses your concern generally speaking.

Back to Khalid's comments, yes, I totally agree with you that the Brotherhood is a different franchisee, but it is one ideology. It might have a different manifestation, and it is intended to have different franchisees in each country. Al-Banna when he founded it did not say I want to have the headquarters

of the Brotherhood of Egypt and people report to me. He said, no, we are starting from here and we are spreading. You are espousing the values and the ideology of the Brotherhood and then you are on your own. It will be great if stay in touch, but if not, that is fine, too.

The other thing I want to add is about *ijtihad*, and I would strongly want to disagree with you on it. I know Michel has a comment on it and so he will comment on that regard, but very quickly, it is to say that the *ijtihad* has to be closed so that we do not have more sects in the Sunni world. I am not sure that is the correct answer. *Ijtihad* is one of the Islamic law sources to legislate, and to close that, that means that you are not offering the Muslim world the opportunity to enter the 21st century and deal with issues that were not present at Muhammad's time. Thank you.

MR. ZOGBY: As far as *ijtihad* is concerned, I would just like to say that the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan both agree that the door was closed, while Islah disagreed on that. So that is part of what we found in our study.

As far as the issue of the popularity of Islamist movements as opposed to secular movements, I think one of the main reasons for that happening is that they do not have room to participate. The government cannot repress MBE to the extent that they can repress some of the other secular parties, and I think that that is one of the main reasons. I think in terms of policy, the United States should really try to push governments to allow a multiparty system and having an

opportunity for a secular group to participate in the political process. And I think that in the Middle East that a lot of governments are afraid of the potential of secular groups in the political discourse. So I think that that is something else that is important.

In terms of the issue of self-determination, I completely agree with you, and I think that in our paper that is reflected in the issue of *jihad*, because *jihad* is fought mainly when you have a foreign force on your soil, so the definition of a foreign force on your soil depends on your position, and we found that to be recurring throughout our research, there is a foreign force, but maybe in my country I do not want to intervene, but in the next guy's country I will want to intervene. So the issue of when is *jihad* permissible is something that really needs to be fleshed out and discussed further, but I think it is a really, really important point.

MR. MANDAVILLE: Just one further small point on the topic of *ijtihad* before turning it over to a question from Ali Alyami, you are absolutely right that formerly the doors to *ijtihad* were closed in the 10th century, but this takes place in the context of an assumption that the custodians of *ijtihad* are the *alama*, the religious scholars who are in the position to engage in *ijtihad*. The central thrust of modern Islamist reformist thought from Jamal al-Din Al Afghani Muhammad Abdu forward, culminating particularly in Abu A'la Maududi and Sayyid Qutb is the idea that the *alama* had abandoned their responsibility to engage with the realities of the day and, therefore, it is imperative that lay Muslims, Muslims who are engaged in the world, take up that responsibility to directly interpret Islam. This is the basis of the

entire *Salafi* tradition itself. So you are absolutely right in terms of jurisprudential discourse with regard to *ijtihad*, but the entire modernist Islamist movement has itself ripped the question of *ijtihad* out of that entire tradition and done something entirely different with it.

MR. ALYAMI: Ali Alyami from the Center for Democracy and Human Rights in Saudi Arabia. This is the only center in the world that is promoting any sectarian constitution for Saudi Arabia, not in the Arab world, the whole world, because that is the only thing that can work. Anything based on the Koran and sharia has not worked for last 14 centuries. What makes in this room think it is going to work from here on?

You said the goal of your research is measuring what these people are saying in their messages. If that is the case, why didn't you go to Saudi Arabia, the heart of Islam and the oil and the money and absolute dictatorship? Why didn't you go and find what these Saudi religious people are saying and what their message is because they have influence all over the Arab and Muslim countries.

Another comment is just to comment on Dr. Sulema's comment, the reason Islamists are popular in the Middle East is because the Arab dictators and the Muslim dictators have failed the Arab people, and actually the Arab dictators and the Arabs in the Muslim world would not survive without these people. So why would they be interested, for example, in weakening or overriding these Islamist ideologies? What is the difference between these Islamists' messages in ideology and any of the Arab and Muslim dictators who are ruling at this time? It is the same. So why don't

we concentrate maybe in promoting things that have worked, constitutions, bill of rights, women's rights, minority rights, each person has one vote and each person is responsible for his or her actions. That is what we should be concentrating on instead of going to find out what these Islamists are thinking. Why cares what they think? We know what they think.

MR. AMR: Hady Amr from the Saban Center for Middle East Policy. I want to ask a question that is outside the scope of your paper, and I would love for you to answer it, if you would. This is the Saban Center for Middle East Policy, this is the Brookings Institution, that looks at policy. We are in Washington. You did the paper and the paper is done, so you are sitting down with a senior policymaker like the Secretary of State or like the President, maybe not this Secretary of State or this President, maybe the next one.

(Laughter)

MR. AMR: Or this one if you like. I am not questioning the relevance, but what are we supposed to take out of this? You are sitting down and you have your 5 minutes with the President, or the Secretary of State or the secretary of something, what do we need to know from what you have just said? What is relevant to the decisions that we are making on a day-to-day basis vis-à-vis the war in Iraq, vis-à-vis the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, vis-à-vis the sectarian conflict in Lebanon, nuclear proliferation in Iran or the GCC? Great information. What do we make of it?

MR. BERI: Hasan Beri from USIP. My question is about the prominence of *jihad*. As you mentioned in your presentation, it is the second-most important pillar for these groups. But I have been following the "Sabil" newspaper, for example, which is a weekly for the Jordanians, and I have never seen this word. And even in Hamas, for example, they are fighting the Israelis and they are resisting occupation, as they say, and they use the word which is the secular word which is resistance, and they do not use the word *jihad* which is unlike the *jibadi* movement that they really think that *jihad* is the second-most important thing for Jamaat-e-Islami putting this into practice. But the Muslim Brotherhood, whether in Egypt or Jordan, they will never engage in jihad. This is another thing that I am not able to grab, so can you clarify this a little bit? Thank you.

MS. NAWAS: I will start with the last question and I will end up with Hady.

There are answers about jihad being the second pillar is an answer that they vote on the survey. There is the question that we ask them, What is your position on jihad? so that was their answer. The answer was troubling to me as a graduate of Islamic law from the University of Jordan I did not understand exactly, as we said, where is that coming from? So I had to get out of my way and do some research and realized that Abu A'la Maudidi who is the intellectual founder of the State of Pakistan is the one who advocated it jihad to be the second pillar of Islam. This thesis is mentioned in Karen Armstrong's book "The Battle for God." So, yes, I am troubled as well, and I am sorry that is their answer.

As far as Saudi Arabia, we have done research on Saudi Arabia and we have interviewed people, and the paper is yet to come. It did not make sense to mix the Brotherhood with the Islamists and the Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia, but your point is well taken and we will make sure you are invited for the next paper.

Hady, yes, you are absolutely correct and our take will be that we tell the Secretary of State that the recognition of any Islam group should be contingent upon their, one, renouncing all violence, second, willingness to participate in the democratic process, and unconditional respect and recognition for minority rights, including women's rights.

MR. AMR: I just want to mention that I was not paid to ask this question since I see that you have the slide there.

MS. NAWAS: Thank you anyway.

MR. BROWN: My name is Nathan Brown. I am with the Carnegie Endowment and we can't even claim to be the only think tank on our block because of the Brookings Institution, but we are who we are, I guess.

(Laughter)

MR. BROWN: I have a question that is connected slightly to your methodology. If you are studying political messaging, the interesting thing is that the set of issues that you selected are ones that are debated between these movements and the West, but they are also debated within the societies, that is where they get press domestically, and they are debated within these movements, but still it is an agenda that you have set. All three of these movements have recently gone through

elections and they have issued their own detailed platforms, you referred to their platforms, and I am wondering if you can talk a little bit about not simply the issues that you put forward, but what they decided to put forward and if there is any kind of gap between those.

A second and probably more difficult and impressionistic question about political messaging as well, as you are focusing on political programs and political statements, and I am going to give you a vague personal impression that I have about nonverbal or at least nonprogrammatic messaging about the Islamist groups, and that is one of the things that they do extremely effectively partly through nonverbal methods and partly simply by the choice of words that they use is communicate a sense of public spiritedness through quite communication, austerity in personal behavior and so on, that will not be reflected in any kind of program so that when people look at it and receive these messages, this is an integral part of their message that will not necessarily be picked up in any statement of their political programs.

I am not asking you to go back and spend much, much more time analyzing tapes of all their speeches, but I am wondering if you could speculate and perhaps either confirm or not confirm that kind of vague impression that I have. Thank you.

The vague impression is that an important part of their political messaging is not programmatic, but has to do with a public spiritedness, that these are people who are interested above all in the welfare of the community as a whole

as opposed to current leaders who are primarily self-interested, and that that is one thing that they are trying to communicate.

MR. ZOGBY: That is what they are riding on, yes. I think that part of the public message does not have much substance behind it, it is tailored to reach to their constituency and they are very, very savvy about doing that. I think one of the things that we found in our survey is that over time the level of depth that we were expecting to find just was not there. Does that answer your question?

I want to go to another point about their records. If see that it starts, "The AIAF track record in Parliament on these issues shows that it defines them on its own interpretation of Islamic law and sometimes also using the Constitution when convenient. For example, an attempt to change Law 340 which usually is used to honor killings has been repeatedly defeated in Parliament, the IAF contributing heavily to defeat by issuing a fatwa stating that Muslims in this country were surprised by a witty and misleading campaign which aimed at scrapping Article 340 to destroy Islamic social and family values by stripping men of their humanity when they surprise their wives or female relatives committing adultery, a right that was valued by the Islamic Sharia." I think here what we see is that again their message not only is tailored to their constituency, but also their actions, when they have actions are tailored to their constituents because I think that somewhere in Jordan it is true that the majority of men probably resonate with that, and maybe this is not a politically correct thing for me to say, I do not know, and I think Hiam is probably better able to answer that question, but I think that generally speaking they do tailor

their message and they also tailor their actions when they do have actions in Parliament and other places to their constituencies. Does that help?

MR. BROWN: I had the second part of the question about the electoral program, but again there are plenty of other hands up, so I will not insist on a response.

MR. TURBI: My name is Omar Turbi (?). I have a particular interest in U.S.-Libya relations. I do come to town almost once every 2 months. I only come here for 2 days, so I am very pleased and delighted in the opportunity to participate here.

I took note of Munzar's comment about Islamist movements in the Arab Muslim world. Something that is absent in our discussion here is that in that part of the world, because there is a lack of institutions or established institutions as we define them in our world, you will automatically have other institutions that have succeeded in that part of the world over the past 50 years, I would say the military institutions and the organized religions. So it is not a surprise to us to see that Islamic movements are much more prominent in this day and age than secular movements.

Every time I come to Washington I see a tremendous amount of interest in Islam, Islamic movements, and Islamic organizations. I would very much like to see like to see a study of secular movements in that part of the world and how we could support them, how we make them thrive and succeed and develop, to not necessarily upset Islamic movements, but at least how to work with them and how to

emerge as an alternative source of governments in that part of the world. Thank you.

QUESTION: I just want to do one thing. If you had conducted the same research 10 years ago, do you expect that you would have different answers? Did anything change because of whatever happened since then?

MS. HIAM: I want to start with the last question, and I want to go back to the gentleman from Carnegie's comments. Yes, it would have been different in terms of the language transformation. If you look at the Brotherhood of Egypt 10 years ago, they had difficulties using the word democracy. Initially they wanted to use the word *surah*, and they still use it, but in their language and in their literature they are comfortable now using the word democracy, and using the words women empowerment. It seems to me that the Brotherhood is a very flexible and pragmatic organization, that they will do whatever it takes to get them to their political goals. Would they change the essence of the message? Not necessarily. Did the essence of the message change? In my view it did not. Did the language change and become more polished, more sophisticated, and more appealing to the West? Sure. Did it become more appealing to the youth? Sure.

QUESTION: (Off mike)

MS. HIAM: There is no way for me to speculate what will happen in 10 years, but based on what I know of the Brotherhood is that these people are ideologues, they are ideology driven, and I do not think that they want to get political

power for the sake of "getting political power." I think they want to get political power so the law of Allah might prevail on the land. That is my view on it.

I am going to go back to the comment from the gentleman from Carnegie. We did ask them about their political, social, and religious views, and that should be in the paper in a section by itself. I do not want to go into detail for each group, but if you try to dig in in the political programs that these groups have, it is literally based on ideology. I was shocked, I was surprised. I thought I would get more meat, if you will. There is nothing.

There are views that, yes, they talked to economists, they talked to analysts, they come up with ideas, and they are the ideas that you will get from the secular person, but they would Islamize it. On the social level, these people want to establish Islamic law on the social and political order.

The last point from the person who made the comment about secular groups, I agree, but we could do this and that paper. But, yes, I agree with you, of course we do need work on secular groups. That may be something we can tell the Secretary of State, Hady.

(Laughter)

QUESTION: I am Jacob -- just an intern at the Saban Center. I had a question about these Islamic groups have been for a while now, since the 1930s, and they always seem to be very popular, but they have not really gained much political power. I was wondering if you could speculate on why and whether you see that changing in the future. Thank you.

QUESTION: I just want to comment, and I want everyone to have the chance. I do not want to take everybody's time. Just a comment to be objective to the study, to say that Islamists, one, because they provide social services, I do not think that is very accurate. There are many examples to give. That could be a factor in Egypt or in some countries, but in Kuwait, for example, it is a rich country and they cannot provide social services because everyone has money, still the Islamic bloc in Parliament gained more seats, there was no oppression of secular and left-wing groups in Kuwait and they retreated and every election they are losing seats and Islamists are advancing. So there must be other reasons why they are popular and that you have to look closer at that rather than always find the claim, and I hear frequently, that the reason Hamas won is because they provide social services, everyone knows that Fatah controls so much money, hundreds of millions of dollars that they wasted because they are corrupt and people voted for who they perceived as clean people. So we have to look deeper than just to say that they provide social services and so that is why they are popular. Thank you.

QUESTION: I had a question on something that was mentioned earlier, intergenerational struggles. The youth is the majority in these reforming nations, so what is the message that is so fascinating to the youth that they are being recruited, if they are? And pointing to what the gentleman here said, what are the implications of this kind of social messaging that is going to the youth, and if they are being recruited, then how is that going to affect the message?

MR. ZOGBY: Interestingly enough, the four last questions are on the same topic. For me, there is a movement, there is a wave that is moving, and I have not yet put my finger on what that wave really has at its foundation. It is a fascinating issue for me because I have not yet solved that problem in my own mind, and I do not know what it is that makes the Muslim Brothers or Islamist groups so popular today. I do not know in 10 years where it is going to go. But I know that there is a movement. There is a very clear movement forward. Some people might debate whether it is forward, backwards, or whatever, but there is a dynamic process going on, and that is really what I am interested in continuing to look at and maybe clarify that for myself through further research.

I cannot answer the question, I will let Hiam answer it on her own how she feels about it, but as far as I am concerned, there is something definitely moving, and I think it is going to continue to grow. Where it is going to go, in which direction and how I am not sure. And I think the issue of the intergenerational issue is going to have to be resolved within the groups themselves, within society, within the Islamic society. There is going to have to be an understanding and a compromise as to where they want to move forward, together or are they going to fight each other for a direction? I do not know. But I think there is a dynamic movement forward and I think it is a fascinating topic, and I think a lot of ink is going to be used discussing this issue in a few years to come.

MS. NAWAS: I would like to answer first Jacob. When these groups are presented with the opportunity to assume political power, they do, and when

they are offered to participate in the political process, they take the opportunity. As we have seen in Egypt, they were not allowed to participate as a group, but they were allowed to participate as independents, and they jumped on it. You had 88 seats that were won by the Brotherhood, versus 17 in 2000. The same thing for Hamas, the same thing for IAF in Jordan.

To answer about Muslim identity, the youth in the Middle East are lacking empowerment and looking for identity and the fact that the states are failing them, because these people are educated. Remember, you get educated youth that they go to school and they learn and they do everything that they are supposed to do to have a good life, but it turns out that there is no good life. And these groups offer them a shelter, a place where you are embraced, you are loved, you are given something and you are empowered, you are part of something. A sense of loss I have noticed in the young generation in the Middle East, not necessarily who are disadvantaged. As a matter of fact, it is these people who are going to college and who are acquiring educations and who are aspiring to be part of something than bigger than them, and that the state is failing them.

The last thing about what you said Halid is fair. It is absolutely fair to say it is not only the social services. My concern is that you are trying to put Islamists in one camp. You cannot. In the case of Hamas, in the case of IAF, in the case of the Brotherhood of Jordan, yes, social services networks contributed to their popularity. Is that the only thing that contributed to their popularity? Of course not. But was it a major factor of their popularity? Sure. To look at the Brotherhood

Islamists in Kuwait and Iraq and to put them in the same camp with Hamas is not fair to them, to tell the truth.

I followed the election in Kuwait, and, yes there was the secular and there were women trying to actually run, and the Islamists made it hard on them. They played on the gender sense. Why the Islamists are popular in Kuwait I do not know. I did not study Kuwait, and I would not claim to be an expert on Kuwait. Do we need to study it to understand why? Sure. But just be careful not to put every Islamist group, even the Brotherhood as you just said earlier in your comments, that do not put them in one jungle.

QUESTION: (Off mike)

MS. NAWAS: Correct. I agree. I totally agree.

MR. MANDAVILLE: I think we could keep going all afternoon given the richness of this space, but time wears short. I want to thank all of you for being here and for your excellent and provocative questions, and of course particularly to Hiam and Michel for sharing their research with us. Over to Steve for any final concluding comments.

MR. GRAND: Just to say thank you to you, Peter, and thank you to Hiam and thank you to Michel for what I think was a very interesting discussion. This is an area where there is not a lot of data, so it is good to get some preliminary data to look at, to debate, and to discuss. Thank you.

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