

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION  
The Saban Center for Middle East Policy

THE DOHA COMPACT:  
NEW DIRECTIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES  
AND THE MUSLIM WORLD

Washington, D.C.

Friday, December 12, 2008

**PARTICIPANTS:**

**Welcome:**

JACKSON DIEHL  
Deputy Editorial Page Editor  
"The Washington Post"

**Introduction:**

STEPHEN GRAND  
Fellow and Director  
Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World  
The Brookings Institution

**Panelists:**

AHMED YOUNIS  
Analyst  
Gallup Center for Muslim Studies

SAAD EDDIN IBRAHIM  
Chairman  
Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies

\* \* \* \* \*

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

MR. DIEHL: Good morning. I'm Jackson Diehl of *The Washington Post* and I'm honored to welcome all of you here on behalf of the Saban Center at Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World. We're here to discuss the 2008 Doha Compact which I hope all of you have seen. It is signed by 47 leaders from the United States and the Muslim world and the idea of it is to encapsulate the discussions and the ideas that have come out of 5 years of discussion at the Doha Forum which has been held every year and is an engagement between the U.S. and leaders from the Muslim world to talk about these political issues.

The argument of it is and the premise is that the new administration coming to office in Washington presents a new and a fresh

opportunity for the United States and the Muslim world to reengage with each other in a positive way and to overcome a lot of the damage that has been suffered in that relationship since 2001. As you see, there are a lot of specific recommendations in here that have to do with the changes in U.S. foreign policy, changes in the way the Muslim world and the United States talk to each other, changes in education both in the United States and in the Muslim world. There are a lot of interesting specific recommendations and we're going to get into those later.

We have two distinguished guests here and signatories of the compact to help us discuss them. One is Ahmed Younis who is a Senior Analyst for the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies and the Muslim-West Facts Initiative. He is a fresh young voice and the author of book called "American Muslims Speak the Truth" which is a post-September 11 look at the reality of debate surrounding American Muslims and their country.

Also with us is someone who all of you here must know, Saad Eddin Ibrahim. He is a champion of human rights and democracy in the Arab world. He is the Egyptian founder of the Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies in Cairo, probably the leading human-rights activist in the Arab world, and unfortunately at this moment living in exile because

he's been sentenced to 2 years in prison by his own government for speaking out freely about the need for democracy in Egypt.

Finally we have Stephen R. Grand, Fellow and Director of the Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World and the lead author of the compact, and I'd like to begin by asking him to come up and tell us about the report in more detail.

MR. GRAND: Thank you, Jackson, and welcome everyone. Before I make my remarks, I wanted to acknowledge two other signers of the Doha Compact who are with us here today. One is Mohammad Al Menshawy, the Editor-in-Chief of *Taqwir* which is housed next door in the Carnegie Building, and the other is my colleague and boss, Ambassador Martin Indyk, the Director of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy in which the Project for U.S. Relations with the Islamic World is housed.

My task here as I understand it is in a very compact way to describe the main points of this compact. The new president, as Jackson alluded to, will inherit a very troubled relationship with many Muslim-majority countries and communities that has deteriorated substantially since 9/11. As the recent Mumbai attacks tragically underscored, both the United States and the Muslim world have a profound interest in getting this important relationship right and setting it on a new path. And as Jackson

alluded to, we have with the inauguration of a new president a real moment to write a new chapter in this often troubled relationship.

The compact argues that the United States and the Muslim world together face a number of critical challenges that are best addressed in partnership. For example, the United States needs the support of Muslims across the globe if it is to defeat terrorist groups like al Qaeda. Many Muslim-majority states must reform if they are to address the profound socioeconomic and political challenges confronting their societies and compete effectively in a globalized world. As Jackson mentioned, the policy recommendations in this compact are grouped around four basic themes. First, adopting a new style of American foreign policy. Second, addressing together the conflicts divide us. Third, understanding the role of Islam in the Muslim world. And fourth, educating and investing in people.

With regard to the style of American foreign policy, the report points out that what the citizens of Muslim-majority states tend to resent is what they perceive to be the heavy-handed way in which America's foreign policies intrude into their lives and those of other Muslims and the perceived double-standards inherent in these policies. Many have come to view the United States as yet another imperial power that has come to impose its will upon the region. They are looking for a new style of

American leadership, one focused less on axes of evil and more on partnerships of equals to address the many shared challenges we face.

The report makes five recommendations to the administration in this area. First, it calls on the United States to live up to the values for which it has long been admired around the world, to close down Guantanamo and to ban the use of torture. Second, for us to rebuild the trust that the United States has squandered with citizens of the Muslim world. The compact suggests that the next American president travel early and often to the region meeting not only with leaders but also visiting mosques and engaging in dialogue with ordinary people, in other words, listening. And for the U.S. to be more present in the region and in more effective ways. Third, it calls for the U.S. to demonstrate that it has no imperial designs on the region but signaling that it is not interested in keeping a permanent military presence in the region, that it is willing to recommit itself to international law and international institutions, and to reform these institutions to reflect the changing realities and demands of the 21st century, including along the way increasing representation of Muslim-majority countries.

Fourth, it calls in this area for the U.S. to back off its heavy-handed approach to democratization but not abandon its support for those endeavoring to expand freedoms in the Muslim world. The U.S. must

recognize that democracy has rarely ever been accomplished by force successfully, that its credibility as a champion of democracy in the region has been severely compromised in recent years, and that pressure from within for reform is always more likely to induce change than suasion from without.

Finally, in this section the compact calls for Muslim-majority governments to stop using America and Israel as an excuse to avoid addressing much needed reforms in their own societies. Too often, anti-Americanism has been used as an excuse by weak regimes to maintain their hold on power.

In the second section on addressing together the conflicts that divide us, the compact notes that both the United States and the Muslim world have a shared interest in resolving together the conflicts roiling the region. A satisfactory resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict would significantly reduce the influence of extremist groups in the region. Stability in Iraq for which the U.S. requires cooperation from groups in the region would redound to the benefit of all in the region. And like the United States, few in the region have an interest in seeing the current Iranian leadership obtain a nuclear capability.

The compact contains broad recommendations regarding each of the major conflicts in the region which I'll mention just briefly. With

regard to the Middle East peace process, the compact notes that the broad contours of an agreement to the conflict are known to all, an independent Palestinian state on contiguous territory coexisting with a secure and recognized Jewish state, a return by Israel to the 1967 borders with territorial compensation negotiated for any lands not returned, Jerusalem as the capital of both states with special arrangements for all holy sites, and an agreed resolution of the refugee issue. The compact calls for the U.S. to work actively with states in the region to achieve this final resolution of the conflict. It calls for the major powers in Muslim-majority states to provide robust international economic support to build a viable Palestinian state, and it advances several ideas as to how the security needs of each side could be addressed.

With regard to Darfur, the compact calls for tougher sanctions in the Sudanese regime, enhanced efforts to unify the rebel groups and negotiate a political agreement, for continuing to facilitate the rapid deployment of the U.N.-U.A. force, and for the contribution of specialized capabilities to support the U.N. mission, all so as to end this unspeakable tragedy which the compact describes as a critical test for U.S.-Muslim world relations.

On Iraq, the compact calls for strengthened regional dialogue and enhanced efforts by Iraqi political leaders to find political



agreement across sectarian lines. It speaks of Iran's responsibility to stem weapons flows and the training of terrorists. And the responsibility of all Iraq's neighbors as well as the international community to ensure that any American withdrawal does not leave behind a security vacuum. On Iran, it calls for the U.S. and Iran to engage in dialogue on the full range of security issues in which they both have a stake. Diplomacy should be the vehicle for addressing concerns about Iran's nuclear program. Further, multilateral sanctions should be considered if Iran does not make progress on IAEA requirements. It calls on Iran to play a constructive role in enhancing security in the region, noting that support for violent extremists does not advance Iran's long-term interest in living in peace with its neighbors. On Pakistan the compact notes that Pakistan is central to our struggle against al Qaeda and to building a stable and free Afghanistan. It emphasizes the importance of return to the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, and a free press. It calls for the U.S. to assist Pakistan in rebuilding its educational system in order to stem growing radicalization particularly among youth, and to assist India and Pakistan in their bilateral efforts to resolve their differences. It observes that Kashmir should not be another conflict that divides the world from Islam.

Finally, the compact cautions that Afghanistan cannot be allowed to become the forgotten war again, that demands urgent

international attention, and that the next U.S. president working with NATO allies needs to find the resources, diplomatic, economic, and military to aid Afghanistan.

In the third section of "Understanding Islam and the Muslim World" the compact notes that since 9/11, Americans have come to know a lot about the extremist groups that endanger us, but far less about the true faith of Islam. Americans need to do a better job of differentiating the faithful from the fanatical, as well as to recognize that Islam provides an important and often very positive sense of identity in the Muslim world. In this regard, it makes the following specific recommendations. First, that policymakers be better informed about the diverse mosaic of beliefs and practices that make up Islam, to understand the different schools of thought within mainstream Islam as well as the more radical and heterodox offshoots that have emerged outside this mainstream in response to the experience of colonialism and the challenges of modernization. Second, that U.S. policymakers need to demonstrate more respect for Islam as a religion by visiting mosques and meeting with religious leaders on an ongoing basis. Third, that U.S. policymakers need to be more careful in the language that they use not to lump the faithful along with the fanatical with ill-considered terms like Islamofascism and Islamic terrorism. Fourth, greater effort needs to be made to educate

Americans about Muslims, Islam, and the complex dynamics now underway in the Muslim world. Here arts and culture including television and film have tremendous potential to help eliminate stereotypes and build bridges across societies. Fifth, the U.S. should be more willing to reach out to Islamist parties who generally demonstrate the readiness to embrace the democratic rules of the game and reject violence. Finally, Islamist parties need to demonstrate through their actions and not just their rhetoric that they are committed to the democratic nonviolent rules of the game, willing to respect the political rights of religious minorities, and prepare to allow women an equal role in governing their societies.

In the final section on education and investing in people, the compact observes that if the many conflicts roiling the region were satisfactorily resolved, the Muslim world would still face the fundamental challenge of governance in a globalizing world. Poverty, lack of education, and gender inequality are some of the central problems confronting many parts of the Muslim world. To meet fully the needs of their citizens, these countries need to move from being government-dominated, often resource-based societies, to more knowledge-based societies. Building a knowledge society is not a simple task. It requires not only a change in governance, but also a change in the habits of a citizenry long accustomed to being told what to do. It requires taking

individuals accustomed to working within an hierarchical system, and helping them develop the skills, patterns, and behavior necessary for operating in a more horizontal, globalized world. A citizenry capable of thinking critically and acting independently is fundamental to success both in the global economy and toward establishing effective, accountable governance. Both Muslim-majority governments and the U.S. have a fundamental interest in seeing such advances in human development in the region. In this spirit, the compact calls first for strengthening educational institutions in the region. It points in particular to the local in the region of liberal arts curricula and pedagogy focused on active learning that promotes critical thinking, teamwork, and creativity. It notes in this effort that the U.S. and Europe can assist greatly by providing their best universities' expertise, their best teachers, and educational opportunities for the region's best students. Second, the compact calls for greater science and technology engagement as a tool for helping to build these knowledge societies. To revive the culture of scientific inquiry and innovation for which the Muslim world was long renown requires enhancing scientific research, strengthening links between universities and the technology sector, and greater emphasis on commercializing scientific innovations. The compact calls for the development of

innovative technology partnerships by the American private sector and diaspora communities as well as the U.S. government.

Finally, the compact calls for greater societal exchange between the United States and the Muslim world. It notes that the U.S. and Muslim-majority countries have a profound interest in engaging with each other at all levels of society rather than hiding behind fences.

The compact concludes by declaring that U.S. Islamic Forum or Doha Forum that Jackson mentioned should be but the tip of a much larger iceberg. Much as the United States and Europe did after the Second World War, we need to create a dense network of young leader's programs, citizen dialogues, policy conferences, and leader's exchanges that help ensure the next generation of policymakers and opinion leaders from the U.S. and the Muslim world know and understand one another better. I encourage you to read the compact in its full depth. To discuss these issues further, I would now like to invite Dr. Saad Ibrahim and Ahmed Younis to join Jackson Diehl and myself up on stage.

MR. DIEHL: We're going to have I hope what is a lively discussion about this report. I'm going to start by asking each of our panelists a question or two in hopes of provoking things, and then I'll open it up to questions. The only thing I ask is that when we do have questions

that if you'd like to say something, please identify yourself and keep it short so as many people can talk as possible.

Stephen, I'd like to start with you. I wonder if you could talk a little bit. I gather that you've briefed the transition team of the Obama administration about this report. I'd be interested in knowing what you think both the incoming administration and governments in the Muslim world, what specific things they might take out of this. In particular I'd like to ask you about one thing that really caught my eye. The report talks about the need for the United States not only to withdraw bases from Iraq, but to express its intention to withdraw all military bases from the Middle East. I'm curious, do you think that it's foreseeable that at any time in a 4-year or even 8-year Obama administration that it would be appropriate to withdraw all military bases from the Middle East? And do you think that governments in the Middle East particularly in the Persian Gulf would actually welcome something like that?

MR. GRAND: I think there are two levels to the challenge and one is the level of atmospherics. I think one of the messages that we've gotten out of Doha, our continuing discussions at Doha, is that style very much matters and the way that the U.S. presents itself in the world very much matters, so symbolism is important. Issues of respect as Ahmed will probably address because it's come up in Gallup's polling is a

very key factor in how Muslims perceive the United States. Issues of respect, issues of how one feels one is being treated by the other side and how one perceives the other side perceiving you, these become very critical and are important to the relationship. They're not everything in the relationship, but they're important. So getting at the outset of a new administration those signals right, getting the language right, is very, very important.

I can't speak for the 47 signers of the compact, but I think in talking about signaling that the United States does not intend to have a permanent military presence in the region, we think that signal is very, very important. It doesn't mean that on day one of the United States needs to be retreating home. I think many in the region would think that would be a serious mistake. But to send the opposite signal of what people in the region have often heard before, that America is not bent on being an imperial power and being in the region forever and controlling the region, America is trying to help this region move into a globalized world.

The second level of this challenge is a much longer-term challenge and that's the issue of governance that I talked about. Long after we get these stylistic issues right, if we can get them right, long after we've resolved the conflicts in the region, if we can resolve the conflicts in the region, there is going to be this fundamental issue of governance in

the region, this problem of creating sufficient human development that democracy has a chance in the region and that these economies have a chance to prosper in the global economy. I think that really hinges on investments that people in the region make and investments that we make and there's real room for partnership there.

MR. DIEHL: Thanks. Dr. Saad Ibrahim, I'd like you to help us understand the part in this report about democratization. It begins by saying America should back off its heavy-handed approach to democratization. It says in lieu of emphasizing democracy and elections, the United States may have greater success if it focuses its efforts more narrowly on the pragmatic promotion of human needs and rights. I was wondering, how do we apply that to Egypt, for example? Do you think that American approach to democratization in Egypt has been too heavy-handed and do you think it would be a good idea if we backed off calling for democratic elections in 2011 to replace President Mubarak and instead emphasize human needs?

MR. IBRAHIM: First of all let me just address the question of symbolism if I may and then I'll get to the question. I fully agree with the report and with what Steve said about the importance of symbolism very early on with the new administration and they have suggested elsewhere that one of these symbolic acts should be to establish a nonpartisan



commission on the highest level of eminent American figures (inaudible) a Commission for Truth and Reconciliation to investigate grievances of the different parts of the world and especially the Muslim world may have had over the last few years if now few decades. I think that action in itself gives a signal that here is America, strong, powerful America, acting humbly, modestly, to reexamine its own behavior and to address some of these global grievances. I think that will go a long way.

As to your question has America been heavy-handed with the Mubarak regime, no, not heavy-handed at all, not heavy-handed enough. Otherwise he wouldn't have been in power for the twenty-eighth year outliving five American presidents including the two or three who had served two terms. So, no, not at all. Actually it was a slap on the wrist, very light and backing off very quickly, not staying the course in terms of -- so the charge that somehow heavy-handed American promotion of democracy is responsible for bringing in Hamas or the Muslim Brotherhood is completely, completely unfounded. There are other things that have done that. But I would say I fully agree with the report and I wouldn't call that light-handed, I think that's really the thing that we should go after, what I call the infrastructure of democracy, rule of law, free media, education, economic development. If you can accomplish that, these are four big agenda items. If the U.S. can focus on that, we would

have created the necessary conditions for true democratization. This is not elections. Elections are a first part of democratization. But it is what is needed. The rule of law, that is number one. And again when I mentioned the symbolism of America reconciling with the world globally, it is basically rule of law to say if we have done something wrong, we are willing to take the effort to investigate it and we will do whatever it takes to correct it.

So I would say I fully agree with the report that we should go to for I wouldn't call it pragmatic, I think this is really the perquisites, anyone who's studied (inaudible) about the prerequisites of democracy would know that, A, B, C. So if they do that, that that will be a great help.

The last thing that they broadly should do besides nurturing the infrastructure of democracy is to use imaginative conditionality and here I prevail on all of you who may have an interest in the subject to go to the (inaudible) conditionality. Back in 1975 when the Eastern Bloc, the Soviet Union, needed help, that was the marvelous thing that America and the Western democracies. They said, yes, we will grant you that in return for expanding the political space for human rights, rule of law, and will therefore sign on the dotted line. Within 5 years the Eastern Bloc began to unravel starting with Poland and then Czechoslovakia and on and on until the Soviet Union itself got dismantled. So I say imaginative

conditionality along with this infrastructure. I hope that answers the question. I fully endorse what the report said. I was one of the signers.

MR. DIEHL: If I could just follow-up on one thing though. Egypt has a presidential election as you know scheduled in 2011, 2-1/2 years into this new administration. There is at least some expectation that President Mubarak will not stand again. How much effort and focus do you think it would make sense for this new American administration to place on trying to cause that election to be actually a democratic election?

MR. IBRAHIM: Again I would say rule of law, judiciary, supervisory of this election, international monitoring, and opening the processing. President Mubarak, and this is no secret, everybody who has followed the Egyptian news knows, has been, he and the rest of the family, actively working to promote the successor and the successor they are promoting is no different from the president, and actually it is his son. I am not revealing a secret. And when I blew the whistle on that back in 2000, I ended up in prison the same day the article appeared. There are two people who have gotten me in jail. One is that article that I published June 30, 2000, and another article that Jackson Diehl impressed me to write and that was August 2007 for which I got 2 years in absentia. An article published (inaudible) this and that, I'm going to say, well, you know, the "Washington Post" contributed to that. That article was the only

evidence for a charge that I have defamed Egypt's reputation abroad for publishing, expressing my views, about repression in Egypt, violations of human rights, what have you.

But anyhow, so for that next coming election, and her is imaginative conditionality, if President-elect Obama is either to receive Hosni Mubarak or to deliver a speech in a Muslim capital, I think that should be the condition. And actually as much as I love his first visit to a Muslim capital to be in Cairo, I wouldn't do it. I would choose either Jakarta or Istanbul, countries are truly, genuinely emerging democracies and it will be a very clear and loud signal, yes, we are not imposing democracy on anybody, but we will welcome and will cooperate and will dialogue with countries that are seriously, they may not be Westminster democracies yet, but they're emerging democracies, they are real, they have done it, they at least have had two or three elections and have shown their intentions. So Jakarta, Istanbul today, Cairo hopefully in 5 years.

MR. DIEHL: Thank you. Ahmed Younis, I wonder if I could ask you to talk a little bit about the domestic reforms in each country, on each side that need to go on. This report talks a lot about changes that should happen in the United States, whether it's closing Guantanamo, ending torture, speaking more sensitively about Muslims, reaching out to

them more, better education, all of which seems very well taken. I'm sure no would disagree. I saw not very much recommended in the way of domestic reforms on the other side, on the Islamic side, other than an improvement in education. I wondered in particular about the fact that there seems to be nothing in here about greater religious tolerance in Muslim countries and not only in the United States. I think about the way Muslims governments and the state-controlled press continue to talk about Jews. I think about the way religious minorities like Christians in Egypt are treated, the banning of any religion other than Islam in Saudi Arabia. There nothing about that here and I'm just wondering in addition to the reforms that the United States needs to carry out if there's going to be a better engagement between these two worlds don't we need to see something on the other side?

MR. YOUNIS: We absolutely do. It's interesting. This is the first time in my life where I find it fortunate to be of Egyptian heritage -- very much in this conversation. What's interesting, Jackson, is that it's directly related to what's happening here in the United States. There is very much this need for a post-clash paradigm in our vision of Muslims globally and it comes from the conversation we just had. When you ask Muslims around the world what do you admire most about the West they say technological advancement and then they say freedom, democracy,

and participatory government. When you ask Americans the same question they say the same thing but in a different order. When you ask Muslims around the world is the U.S. serious about the establishment of democratic systems of government in your region there's only one country around the world that has a majority Muslim population that has a majority of respondents that say, yes, the U.S. is serious and that's Afghanistan. No other country comes close to a majority.

When you ask them the same question without the word democracy, will the U.S. allow the people of this region to establish their own systems of government, so you're not using the word democracy, but you get the exact same answers from the population. So I think we as Americans need to move to a post-clash paradigm where it isn't about them hating us for our freedoms, but it's about them admiring what it is that defines the core narrative of our society.

But when we group the grievances that Muslims have that they talk to us about in the polling into three buckets, we find that they sit kind of like in a (inaudible) diagram as concentric circles, political domination, a perception that the United States has a role to play in the oppression that Muslims feel in the domestic scene. Number two, acute conflicts, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Iraq, et cetera. And number three, cultural disrespect, and this is the point that Steve was bringing up earlier.

We as an Americans have an inclination to approach this respect issue as though it sits on the surface or has a certain superficiality to its identity but in much of the conversation between the United States and Muslims globally and especially these governments, symbolism rises to the level of substance very, very quickly and the perception of the individual on the ground that is very aware of the limitations that Dr. Saad talked about and that you identified, a lack of economic development. Do you know that in Arab countries, the 22 Arab states of the Arab League, there must be 100 million jobs created in the next 20 years in order for the unemployment level that exists today to be the same in 20 years? The amount of economic development that's needed, the amount of innovation that's needed, a good friend of mine, Ahmed -- who is a religious figure and engages youth, an Egyptian, always complains and he says when America comes to Egypt they talk about religion, but when America goes to China they talk about jobs and factories and investment. So fortunately or unfortunately the lack of freedoms at the domestic level, the lack of economic development at the domestic level, the lack of the ability of young people to be part and parcel of their societies, is fundamentally linked to a perception of the United States and because Muslim-majority societies view the United States as powerful, as able, the question arises why are you not yielding for me the freedoms that you believe are

inalienable to the people of your society? It must be that you believe that I do not rise to the level of deserving this freedom or you must believe that my very way of life fundamentally contradicts the freedoms that I am telling you I admire most about who you are. So it's that challenge of figuring out how we as the United States of America can rearticulate the core narrative of our society.

I get very worried when American diplomats shy away from talking about the American experience, shy away from talking about the core narrative of America. It is not hegemonic or oppressive to export goodness, to export successful models so long as the application of those models is organic to the societies within which they are being applied and that I think is the paradigm that we must shift to as Americans and unfortunately though it frustrates us as a country even when we talk about what has to happen at the grassroots level of Muslim societies in order for the change to come, we must at the end of the day come back to what is our role in that change that must happen.

MR. DIEHL: I'm going to open it up to questions now. I invite people, there are microphones here, please just raise your hands and let us know who you are before you ask your question.

MR. MAHMOOD: My name is Amin Mahmood. I'm with the Alliance of Egyptians and Americans. I talked to Stephen about



symbolism. I think symbolism is good for the (inaudible) system more than for the Muslim population because the population will see that the United States still has bases. You sign an agreement with Iraq for 3 years but you still have bases in the Gulf. This will not be acceptable. And if you remember 9/11 when they talked to the leader of al Qaeda with the excuse of forces in Saudi Arabia. We have to discuss that to see if that's what we want for the future. The thing we see today is Obama bringing the same old people who used to be with Clinton. The policy will be the same or he will be influencing them to change the policy in the Middle East is not clear. We hope it will be a change really as we proceed. Thank you.

MR. DIEHL: Stephen, is there not a clear enough message of change coming from Washington?

MR. GRAND: I don't think the policies of this administration toward the region are clear yet. Certainly we've elected someone who could be a very effective spokesman for a new kind of American foreign policy to this region, but we don't know yet what that foreign policy will look like.

With regard to bases, I think the real symbolic importance is to signal our intent and to signal that we are looking to provide security in this region and not to establish ourselves permanently. What we do day

to day I don't think is as important. As I said before, not many people in the region would be looking for us to move immediately out of all of our bases in the region.

MR. YOUNIS: Could I just add to that, Jackson? It's so important that we not allow the acute conflicts to overwhelm the rest. When you ask the people, yes, they care about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, yes, they see it as a fulcrum to the relationship with the United States, yes, the Iraq war is very much on their minds, and the majority of Muslims believe that it's led to a worsening of relations with the West and not the opposite. All of that is true. But the people do not put the acute conflicts above political domination and cultural disrespect. At the level of the grassroots when you ask people what they want to see changed, the first thing they talk about is not U.S. foreign policy, it's their livelihood, what they're seeing on a regular basis, what they're engaging on a day-to-day basis. And when we allow the discussion of acute conflicts to overwhelm the disposition of the people and the realities that they live on a daily basis, we're allowing the politicization of much of the help that we can bring and therefore we're excluding a big part of the contribution that we can make to people at the grassroots level.

So when you ask about the role of religion and the role of Islam, the vast majority of Muslims when asked believe that Islam is an

avenue toward democracy and economic development, that it very much is not an impediment to such. The Prophet Mohammed said that (inaudible) speak to the people on the wavelength of their mind. When you poll Muslims, the primary wavelength of their mind is not the acute conflicts that they find themselves in with the United States, it's the daily bread-and-butter issues that the United States can have a catalytic role in changing.

MR. DIEHL: Yes, ma'am?

MS. BRANCAFORTE: My name is Stephanie Brancaforte. I work with IDP Action that focuses on internal displacement. One thing that interested me in this discussion about human rights is that although many Muslim countries have signed many international human-rights documents, many criticisms of human-rights situations in the Muslim world usually are batted away as indications of imperialism so there seems to be this ongoing contradiction. Frankly, the Muslim world responds on Darfur and formerly in Aceh and other massive humanitarian and human-rights crises has been fairly shameful. How would you recommend getting the foreign policy of many Muslim countries to step up to the level of where it would need to be in order for them to play a really constructive role in these issues?

MR. DIEHL: Dr. Saad, do you have a response?

MR. IBRAHIM: One of the things that the report repeatedly brings about as far as grievances of Muslims or Muslim citizens is double-standards. I think America would be more eloquent, more effective, in expressing its misgivings on what's going on in Darfur if it had started with its own human-rights record, if it had signed all that (inaudible) but it has not. Do you know that the United States has not signed the Rights of the Child Accord and 180 countries signed it? Kyoto. So people who are trying to get (inaudible) always point out to Guantanamo, to torture, all the kinds of things -- so part of the spirit of the report as I read it, as I signed it, is to bring the United States back to its own values and that's actually one of the first very recommendations, to live up to its own values before it can speak morally to the rest of the world. Therefore I fully agree with you. I am very distressed by what's happening not only in Darfur but in Somalia and Iraq and Palestine and elsewhere. We had massive violations. I am a victim of that violation of human rights in my own country so I can speak more passionately about that. But I say what weakened the United States in being a champion of human rights in the Muslim world is its own record and therefore once it corrects its own, and that's why I suggested in my opening statement about a commission of truth and reconciliation in this country. And I think once that happens, America can restore its position,

the moral high ground and can be a champion again of human rights and in that case I think we'll all applaud the United States.

SPEAKER: (inaudible) can't always wait for the United States (inaudible)

MR. YOUNIS: I think that's a great point. Before I joined Gallup I was the national director of the Muslim Public Affairs Council. My job was to speak on behalf of Islam and Muslims, and that's not my job anymore, but this is a very important issue that should be addressed. Muslim-majority societies, clerics, people who are trained in a classical understanding of Islam, do not have a responsibility to engage in the issues that you're mentioning because it is akin to modernity and getting your act together and being more like the guy who's succeeding. They should do it because a classical understanding of Islam, the tradition of the Prophet and what the Koran says renders them with no other choice but to address atrocities in Darfur, but to address inequities amongst different components of their populations, but to ensure that there's religious freedom for non-Muslims in Muslim-majority societies. When I go to a man and say you shouldn't be teaching these kids to blow themselves up or you shouldn't be beating your wife, my approach is not look, bro, you need to get with the act. This is like 1,400 years ago. You need to embrace modernity. My approach is look, brother, this is what the Prophet

said and did and this is what the Koran says our role on this earth is to do. So there is a role for Islam in approaching extremism. It's when we approach it the other way that we find Islam is no longer a tool for good but is an obstacle to our vision of how these people are supposed to be functioning and engaging public square.

So absolutely there is a role for that. But many times I as an American Muslim used to look at European Muslim societies and say those guys are ghettoized. They're totally different than us. We are integrated and they're ghettoized. The reality is that European Muslims are most akin to minority communities in the United States and that are not Muslim. I'm from Los Angeles. Come to the prisons and look at the disproportionate number of minority communities that are in the prisons, young black and Latino men. Come to the schools and look at how there are no textbooks for us to take home. When we were in elementary school we had to share them. Come to the places where there is health care. Health care does not equally fall upon minorities as it does upon the rest of society.

There is a literacy that is a prerequisite to global movements of change whether it's led by our dear president, his ambassador to the United Nations or any other component of American society. That literacy is two-pronged. We must know ourselves and know the core narrative of

our society and know the deficiencies that have been germane to that narrative, and we must know the other and know the other society and way of life, and it's only when those two axes are relating to each other as Dr. Saad just said are we able to engage in an honest discourse that respects the other and brings and bolsters them to the level of an equal. Then we can start changing and we can start approaching the problems that face all of us.

MR. DIEHL: I saw lots of hands us which is great. Yes, sir?

MR. LANE: I'm Michael Lane (ph) and unaffiliated. I'd just like to ask you to comment on the nature of Islam. We talk about it in the West as if it were a religion, but it seems to me that Islam has always been much more than a religion. This booklet talks about political Islam as a modern phenomenon, but it seems to me that Islam has been political from the days of Mohammad. Then you talk in here about hijacking and that is the term that is recommended to be used about why there is Islamic fundamentalists or Muslim fundamentalists, I'm not quite sure why one is better than the other on that, but because the bad guys hijack this peace-loving religion. But then that's to make it sound like a religion rather than an internal debate about a way of life and a community and is there a one true Islam which this booklet talks about or are there

different strains within whatever this is, this international global community that is fighting for the heart and future of Islam?

MR. DIEHL: Dr. Saad, you've spent a lot of time in prison I know dialoguing with Islamic leaders who were there about how they fit in to the modern political system. Tell us a little bit about that.

MR. IBRAHIM: Gladly in 2 or 3 hours. Prison stories are very engaging stories. But I think you raise a very important question. There are many Islams as there are many Christianities. Every sect, every group, every community can have its own interpretation of that religion. Therefore, you approach the subject of Islam like you approach the subject of any religion. We are fundamentalists. We learned even the word from Christianity. We never had that word in Arabic, by the way. I learned it here about fundamentalism in the South, fundamentalists in the American South.

Anyhow, the question is using Islam as a political agenda, as a slogan to attain other political ends and that is when somebody uses political Islam I think that is what they have in mind, is using Islam as a slogan to get around the table to get the place to share power, to take power, to dominate, to resist. All of these meanings have been subsumed under the use of Islam and political Islam. So if you are a resistance figure in Palestine, Hamas (inaudible) Islam. If you are demanding



participation in politics equitably than that is (inaudible) development in Turkey and Morocco or in Indonesia. So in every country where political space did not allow the natural political discourse that you use too in Western democracy, people have resorted to Islam as a legitimizing banner, slogan, whatever.

And of course in prison I have encountered Islamists both as a student, as a researcher some 30 years ago and then as a human-rights defender 20 years ago and then as a fellow inmate with them when I was arrested and put in prison and I found many of the people studied over the years are in prison. So for them it was like a homecoming. They welcomed in prison if could be welcomed in prison by people who have known me over the year as a researcher. And the first question was why has the West raised so much fuss about you (inaudible) and not about -- even though more of them were killed under torture, were there longer than I ever was, and yet the West did not raise a finger? Is that another example of a double-standard they asked me. I said yes, partly yes. And partly they stood by me because they perceived rightly or wrongly as sharing a core value with Western democrats.

What are these core values? I mention all the kinds of things that the report mentions. Democracy, freedom, gender equality, tolerance and so on. I said but we share that. Since when? Have you

guys forgotten that they (inaudible) you 30 years ago and you did not? Said, yes, we did not 30 years ago, but today we do which was very intriguing. And when 9/11 happened I was still in prison, it shook them up more than I thought because they had been revising many of their thoughts and practices and came 9/11 and it seemed to have set them back 20 years or 30 years. So they are evolving all the time, but that is political Islam, one version. It's not the only version. One version.

MR. YOUNIS: May I just add a quick data point? The Prophet said Islam is like a body of water. It takes the color of the bed within which it flows. That goes to Dr. Saad's point of the great diversity of Islam. But I'm not much concerned about Islam. I'm concerned with how Islam articulates to Muslims their actions in this world. When we asked Muslims around the world whether 9/11 was completely justified, 7 percent of Muslims say yes. When we asked that 7 percent in a fill-in-the-blank question why, we do not get a single answer that is sourced in religion, religiosity, or concepts that come from the Koran or the Prophet or anything. Everything is about policy and politics and it's germane to what I used to study as a kid in Los Angeles and studying U.S.-Latin American relations. It's all about economic inequities, it's about what you did in my neighborhood, et cetera.

When we asked the other people, the 93 percent who said 9/11 is completely unjustified why, fill in the blank, all of the answers are sourced in religion and religiosity to the extent that we have questionnaires where people have written by hand versus from the Koran, the killing of an innocent life is like the killing of all of humanity, in the action questionnaire as the reason why they believe 9/11 was completely unjustified.

MR. DIEHL: Yes, sir?

MR. MEE: My name is Josh Mee (ph). I'm an intern with the New America Foundation and also with the Saban Center at Brookings. I have a two-part question. The first one is geopolitical and the second one just deals with the practicality of implementing democracy in the region. The compact itself of course discusses the importance of dialogue and the importance of removing military bases but it doesn't really hit on the reason why some of those bases are there. In terms of oil imports, the U.S. maybe takes 15 or 16 percent of oil out of the region but Europe and China -- Europe of course consumes more oil from the region than the U.S. and China perhaps will consume more oil from the region than the U.S., and then the question is who is going to fill in the blank to maybe have some kind of military presence there with oil being a basis of the

economy. So I'm curious as to how the compact deals with an issue like that.

Second, in terms of the effectiveness or the practicality of implementing democracy, it's important of course to allow people to express how they feel, but as someone who recently returned from Jordan and Egypt, I really question whether some of those grievances upon being expressed can then destabilize areas. Of course, when the intifada broke out you had Jordan actually quashing it militarily and you have serious issues of instability, and then you had bread riots in Egypt recently and if people could then express that in a political sense, what would that actually mean?

Then perhaps even in a broader sense, there is of course a water scarcity issue which looms large but within the political economy of a democracy you can't express it in the same way. We don't have water. What are we going to do? Of course an authoritarian state by comparison, let's say you're China, you can then argue we're going to build a dam, we're going to have necessary amounts of a new type of management. We're going to have to conserve in a different way. Not to say that I necessarily agree with these questions that I'm espousing, but I do think that they are the objections that are brought up in the region and

perhaps by the people who would actually implement this kind of policy.

Thank you.

MR. DIEHL: We're back to the question of military bases and if there were no American military presence in the Middle East who would ensure the security of the sea lanes?

MR. GRAND: Again I've somehow ended up being the military expert here, but the symbolism I think is really the key here. No one is talking about us pulling out of the Persian Gulf at this moment. If we can create stability in the region, then that is a long-term possibility. But we change the dynamic in the region if we signal that our intent is not to be there forever.

On the other question, I gather the question really is asking if we were to open up this region to political expression and democratic action immediately, what about the voices that we might not want to hear and what about the extreme views that are often voiced? Shouldn't we be afraid of what this might lead to? I guess the question I'd ask is what if we don't? We and leaders in the region have tamped down dissent for too long and the result is a lot of the more extreme movements that we see.

MR. DIEHL: Yes, sir?

SPEAKER: I'm from Egypt and so I would like to talk about Egypt first and then ask a question. My country is a country that you can

find in a novel of George Orwell, a very despotic regime, and of course we have heard quite a lot about it so there is no need to talk in more detail. But my question is related to the issue that is at hand now, like how Arabs and Muslims would look at the United States and why.

There are all these reasons that were already told of course, but I would like to put more focus on two reasons, very important two reasons. One is how the United States is the ally of the enemy of the people, our dictator. The United States gives him the cover for all the crimes against humanity that this regime does against the people. This is a very important point so that there is total lack of confidence about what the United States may want or say because how can they talk about democracy while Mubarak is murdering and putting in mass graves people as just happened one month ago? These crimes happen all the time. This is a very important issue.

Then there is another important issue about how Hosni Mubarak bluffs his own people. He all the time tries to demonize the United States saying the United States is the enemy as totally the force that could like destroy Egypt completely by an occupation like that that happened in Iraq and the wisdom of Hosni Mubarak is the only thing that saves the Egyptians the same fate of the Iraqis. So this is another reason that we have to keep in mind.

Now the question is how can we make people here in Washington, D.C., understand the necessity of democracy in Egypt which will bring democracy all over the Middle East since Egypt is always the role model for the Middle East? If there is democracy in Egypt, there will be a ripple effect all over the Middle East and you can see democracy and justice in the Middle East. How can we convince them that democracy is good, dictatorship is bad? How can we convince them that if we can have democracy in Egypt it will not be a threat to the United States because it will build bridges of confidence? And people do not want war like Mr. Ahmed Younis just said. People do not have like a religious motive to be anti-Western or anti-American. People just want peace. People want to have a life where they can live like a human being, where they don't have to be afraid of the huge machine of the security that involves 1.7 million individuals in the payroll of the Egyptian Ministry of the Interior.

We need that some people here start to understand this, start talking about this so that we can end up with a true nonhypocritical foreign policy from the United States that can build bridges of confidence between the Muslim and the Arab worlds and between the United States. Thank you.

MR. DIEHL: Thank you. I think there's an interesting point here that I was thinking about as you were speaking, Ahmed, which is

people in the Middle East as you say perceive the United States as being the source of the repression they're suffering. They perceive the United States as being the blockade toward them having greater freedom because we are backing their regimes. How do we get out of the box where we stop being perceived as the obstacle and source of repression in the Middle East without becoming "heavy-handed" in our promotion of democracy?

MR. YOUNIS: I think there are two levels. I'll speak to the one that I know very well and I'll yield the second one to Dr. Saad, the level of the people and the level of government. There is so much that can be done by the American people and institutions like Brookings to bolster the ability of not just activists on the ground by the people to yield to themselves more freedoms, more development, et cetera. So that there is a great series of campaigns that we as the America people -- there's Christian Lord (ph) and human development, there is so much that we can study and invest in in Muslim-majority societies specifically amongst young people and even specifically in the Arab world that are not necessarily connected to the foreign policies of the United States of America so that that deals with the other two concentric circles that we're talking about.



In terms of a heavy-handed or not heavy-handed approach at regime change, and here is where I think we will find disagreement, my allegiance as a thinker, as an individual who lived in the Muslim and Arab world but was raised primarily in the United States is primarily to the situation of the people today. It is not to the ideals of democracy, and I know that that is offensive to some. I believe in democracy. I am an American lawyer. I went to the school that was founded by the leader of the Confederate Army, Robert E. Lee, and I am very much enamored and embrace strongly the narrative of the Founders, but I do not believe that it is the primary paradigm with which we need to be engaged in this part of the world. Yes, democracy must come to Muslim-majority societies. Democracy must come to Arab countries that are led by dictatorships. That democracy must be organic to the people. The people of the United States have a catalytic role to play and the government of the United States with its influence, power, and leverage can encourage strongly dictatorial governments and regimes to bring about the change that is needed.

But for me as an American and as a Muslim and as an Egyptian, my beef on a day-to-day basis is about schools, jobs, being part and parcel of society, human development, education. To me that's what the people are most in search of and democracy is a component of what is

needed to get to the ultimate experience of those things, but it is one of many avenues that we must engage as an American people. Maybe Dr. Saad disagrees with me.

MR. IBRAHIM: No, I don't disagree with you. I think this is quite on the dot. The question is have dictators, especially friendly tyrants of the United States, manage to (inaudible) because they have always used tradeoffs. Democracy will bring in Islamists a tradeoff so (inaudible) is it economic development or democracy of course? Then I say of course economic development. Is it democracy or peace with Israel? It's always engaging that skillful tradeoff and they don't deliver on any of them. It is just rhetoric.

I'll give you examples. When Mubarak says economic development first, he has been in power for 28 years. How many more years does he need to bring about economic development? Here who is been in power the third longest ruler in the history of Egypt after Ramses II, 43 years, and Mohammad Ali, 41 years, and he is 28. When he says no peace with Israel (inaudible) has he even visited Israel once? No, he has not moved peace one inch beyond what the late President Sadat did and yet he is trading with that card all the time and there are many people in Washington and in London and in Paris and in Brussels who believe it. He has not. So this is politics of fear. This is hostage taking, taking --

hijacking peace, hijacking Islam, hijacking. So we are really living into a period, an era in a region which everybody is trying to hijack some of these values and use it politically to get back to your question.

So, no, I think the United States should be principled and it should pursue values, the principles that it believes in and it is (inaudible) and the United States is always at its best when it (inaudible) back off and wait for people to say I need your protection, I need your help, I need your universities, and America's best commodity so far for the last 100 years has been education. The American University in Beirut, the American University in Cairo, two of them for 100 years were producing and graduating the best of our people (inaudible) believe it or not, since 9/11 from two American universities (inaudible) can you believe that? In the last 7 years when America began to restrict the access of Arabs and Muslims to the United States after 9/11 (inaudible) if the mountain doesn't go to Mohammad, Mohammad goes to the mountain. So they began to invite American universities from Cornell to Stanford to Georgetown, you name it, all the leading American universities, to open branches in the Arab world and they did. And they demand an American education. Demand American (inaudible) so the idea which the report starts with why do (inaudible) hate us, it is (inaudible) question -- misstated question the truth of the matter is the majority of people do not hate America, they have

American foreign policy, but they don't hate America, they don't hate American lifestyle or American education or American business or American entertainment or American fast-food. You find it all over the Arab countries. And there is always what I call the embassy test. Go around Arab capitals or Muslim capitals. Find where the longest line to get visas. Of all the embassies is invariably the American embassy in every Muslim-majority country's capital.

So these are the (inaudible) facts. Therefore it is just a matter of trying to adjust or reshuffle things in order to create a better atmosphere for a more constructive relationship between peoples and not just to the regimes. So I think and the report was very, very pointed when using the word citizen several times, not regime. The need to have good relations with citizens of the Muslim world. My definition of citizen from political science 101 is somebody who has rights and who has obligations and therefore if you are dealing with sovereign individuals, insist on that and have conditionality for people and engage every actor in the Muslim world who is willing to be engaged including Islamists, including the Muslim Brothers. And here I'm making a radical statement and I'm responsible for everything I say.

America cannot afford to ignore any actor. Engage them. State your conditions. Deal with them equitably. Deal with them with

dignity and with respect as the report repeatedly points out. And let them if they want to continue to deal with you, fine, if not, fine. You have nothing to lose.

MR. DIEHL: Thank you. We've got time for one more question. Yes, sir?

MR. HUSSEIN: Good morning. Thank you. I'm Abraham Hussein (ph). I live here in Washington, D.C. I would like to start by saying to Jackson you've got a terrific column today. I am a follower of your columns in the "Washington Post."

MR. DIEHL: Thank you.

SPEAKER: God bless you. My question here is the Obama administration is now receiving a lot of comments, lots of input, a lot of ideas. You said that this is one of them. How could I or we as a citizen help get this message or give support to your great report to the Obama campaign? I think it's important for me as an individual or us as a group.

MR. DIEHL: Any ideas?

MR. YOUNIS: I would encourage you to do two things, but first I'll refer to another report that very much matches this report and encourages that type of engagement. It's called "Changing Course." It was written by a group of people who were gathered by Search for Common Ground and their website is [usmuslimengagement.org](http://usmuslimengagement.org). What I

think should happen with both of these reports is two-pronged. Number one, each of us can engage in letter writing that supports the core framework and ideals of the report that are presented to the fora or arena within which these conversations are had amongst the people, the newspapers and your blogs and what have you.

The second thing is to take these reports to your place of worship, to your place of community, to your place of study, to the place where you sit and drink tea and smoke hookahs with your friends, and engage them on the framework of this report. We are at a moment in American history where Barack Obama and all of the power and might of the American government is insufficient for the success that we as a nation need to see in our engagement with Muslims globally. This is the right moment in history for their leadership but it's only if the American people fold into the conversation with all of their networks and all of their communities and all of their hearts in thinking about these things and writing about them and speaking about them. That's the only moment where the greatness of history and the greatness of our country will come together to create change.

It has never been more important than now to go to your mosque or your synagogue or your church or the YMCA or what have you

and engage on these points because that is a prerequisite to the success that the whole world is expecting us to lead right now.

MR. GRAND: Jackson, if I could.

MR. DIEHL: Yes.

MR. GRAND: The report at one point calls for a great engagement between the United States and the Muslim world. By this if you look at how it's phrased, it's not really about engagement between governments, it's about engagement between societies, that this is a moment in history when there's great benefit to be had from people coming out of the Muslim world being able to be exposed to other cultures, other peoples, and seeing other patterns of behavior, other alternatives to living under often authoritarian regimes where you're just told what to do, seeing how we relate to authority here within our own country, how a teacher relates to his students, how a boss relates to his employees and so on and so forth. For the United States there's great benefit to this engagement as well because we know far too little about Muslims and the Muslim world and that is about half the problem.

MR. DIEHL: On that note thank you very much to all of our panelists. It was a great discussion, and thanks to all of you for coming.

\* \* \* \* \*

## CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

/s/Carleton J. Anderson, III

Notary Public # 351998  
in and for the  
Commonwealth of Virginia  
My Commission Expires:  
November 30, 2008