

BROOKINGS DOHA CENTER

GULF PERSPECTIVES ON THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD

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PARTICIPANTS:

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**Panelists:**

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Businessman and Prominent Columnist

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. SHAIKH: As-salaam alaikum. Good evening, distinguished ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen, friends of the Brookings Doha Center. It's a great pleasure for me, Salman Shaikh, Director of the Center, along with my colleagues, to welcome you to this, what I'm sure you'll agree, is a very special event on Gulf Perspectives towards the Muslim Brotherhood.

I have with me, I'm very, very pleased to say, three absolutely terrific gentlemen to discuss this particular topic. Let me start with Professor Abdulkhaleq Abdulla. He's a Professor of Political Science at the United Arab Emirates University in Al Ain. He's a member of the Dubai Cultural Council, General Coordinator of the Gulf Development Forum, and a recipient of the Cultural Personality of the Year in 2005.

Professor Abdulla, as you know, is a frequent commentator in the media on current Arab and Gulf affairs. His research interests include issues

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of political changes in the Gulf and the Arab world, Gulf security, contemporary issues of Gulf states, and international relations.

Professor Abdulla, it's a real pleasure to have you here.

PROFESSOR ABDULLA: Thank you.

MR. SHAIKH: Thank you. Secondly, to his left, it's a great pleasure to have Dr. Jassim Sultan, who, of course, is a prominent Islamic researcher and strategic thinker. He served as the Director of the Medical Sector in Qatar General Petroleum for 15 years, and he's currently the General Supervisor of the Al-Nahda Renaissance Project, dedicating most of his time to the success of this, what I would say, is a very ambitious and worthwhile project.

The project aims to organize efforts and to find common ground to help the Islamic Ummah return to the true ethics of Islam and to engage in human competition. Dr. Sultan travels in the entire region for the purpose of providing training and spreading awareness about this concept. Dr. Jassim, it's great

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to have you here.

DR. SULTAN: Thank you very much.

MR. SHAIKH: And certainly, not least, but last, to my left is Hussein Shobokshi. As many of you know, he's a businessman and very prominent columnist and commentator in the Arab world. Mr. Shobokshi hosts the weekly current affairs program, *Al Takreer* on Al Arabiya. And in 1995, he was chosen as the one of the Global Leaders for Tomorrow by the World Economic Forum.

It's wonderful to have you here. Thank you for making the trip.

MR. SHOBOKSHI: Thank you.

MR. SHAIKH: Again, it's a heartening testimony to our panel, and I think the topic as well, that we have so many of you here, and very happy to see so many new faces. Let me, before I proceed, particularly welcome some of our Japanese colleagues, who have been visiting us for the day in a separate seminar we were holding with Gulf colleagues on Gulf security and the Japan-Gulf relationship. It's a

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pleasure to have you here, gentlemen. And let me also underscore our visitors from the Gulf, including Jamal Rashashi, who's, I'm very pleased to say, has also joined us, and I'm sure we will be speaking a little bit later as well.

Let me turn to you, gentlemen. How we will do this, if this is the first time you're visiting us, we try to arrange it as a bit of a conversation where I will ask the first set of questions. We'll do this for a little while, and then I'll promise you, I'm sure you will have questions to ask yourselves. We will throw it open to you to engage in the conversation.

Let me start with Dr. Jassim actually. A very general question, but it'll be interesting to get your thoughts. What do you think have been the achievements of the Muslim Brotherhood in this period of extraordinary change and transformation that has been taking place in the Arab world over the last three years? And what have been the failures?

DR. SULTAN: They have reached power, and

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with their arrival to power, they have had to give some choices and options to the people. This will be very useful in reaffirmation about the way countries are run and managed. These Islamic groups, how far could they read the situation in the correct way in this particular historic moment? This is something we have to wait for to see what will happen, how it will be.

But right now, I think one of the biggest advantages or benefits that we can speak of are the ideas were put to the test. They were pushed when they reached power, they arrived to power. And this will, of course, or reformulate the ways people think of this historical moment. If not so, it will be maybe after some time where we'll see the effects of this event.

Briefly, the ideas changed in two ways. One, by thinking, one studies and learns, and second is to be confronted with the reality and the facts. The Muslim Brothers and the Islamists were chased first in the past, but now they came to power, and

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they became part of the state and the government. And this will, of course, have some positive effects if there are any.

Of course, the negative aspects are so many and there are too many, in fact, as we see in the region, not only for the Islamists, but on the whole situation. And many Arab countries have a lot of turmoil and problems, including for the Islamic forces there and other forces. That's why briefly I think that this brief experience in power in some countries will have a good, positive effect in the future to review the big ideas and strategies these Islamic groups have.

MR. SHAIKH: Have you been surprised by the popular backlash against the Morsi government in Egypt? What went wrong here?

DR. SULTAN: No, not really. Actually, in fact, I was in Egypt seven months before the event. I was launching a new book, and then a question was put to me. They're asking me whether the Islamic movements will pass the test of being in power. I

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said no. Most of audience was Islamist. I said no. And so, one of the people there said, why not? So I told him that the system of ideas does not allow it to go into a new stage. Their ideas and thinking about politics and relations with the environment cannot reach another level. This is the highest level they can reach within the system of ideas that the Islamist groups have.

Of course, these are not static groups that cannot change. No. Just like everything in life, they change. But in this very historic moment, they don't have enough of a framework of knowledge to go to the second step or to that second range.

PROFESSOR ABDULLA: First, let me say I'm happy to be here, Salman.

MR. SHAIKH: Please.

PROFESSOR ABDULLA: And I don't know whether I should speak in Arabic or in English.

MR. SHAIKH: Feel free.

PROFESSOR ABDULLA: So let handle me handle the English question English wise, and handle the Arab

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question in Arab, okay? So it's up to you guys in the audience which way you want me to speak. Since you have posed the question in English, so let me respond also.

The MB has been around for the past 80 years, and they are deeply entrenched. And they have incredible organization skills, and they have also constituents, as we have seen. So to say that they are completely knocked out and crushed, et cetera, is probably over reading into their fate. However, they had a chance, once upon a time chance, to govern, and they failed miserably, disastrously. And I think they are not going to be seen as a governing partner for at least in the foreseeable future.

I think if I can brief one year experience in government in Egypt and probably other places, I see more failure than achievement, the question that you have just asked. And I think they have proven to be incompetent when they are in government and when they are in power. And in less than one year, they made a mess of Egypt. They made a mess of their

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relationship with the Gulf. And they really, you know, lost the trust of the people.

They were given all the right ingredients. They were provided with the best of chances. First, they had the confidence of the people. Fifty-one percent of the people voted for them. That's a huge majority. They had the backing, the financial backing, of Qatar and more than \$7, \$8 billion. They had the Turkish model to go by and learn something from Turkey. They had even the American understanding. No one that I know of had all that ingredient, even though they just did not fix and they did not do it right. So I think the Muslim Brotherhood, in terms of being in power, I think they are out probably completely, at least for the next four or five years to come. But as ideas, as a group, et cetera, probably they will make a comeback.

MR. SHAIKH: What do you think that they can focus or should be focusing on to rehabilitate themselves? And also, let me ask you, in the context of the experience in other places -- Tunisia or even

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Morocco -- is there something there that would give us some guidance to the Muslim Brotherhood?

PROFESSOR ABDULLA: Okay. I think they had their chance, and for a while, I don't think the people are going to trust them anywhere, okay? There is so much anti-MB or Muslim Brotherhood attitude in the region -- Egypt, Tunisia, nearly everywhere. They are not just disliked, they are almost hated. There is demonization of them.

So I think the mood is just anti-Muslim, and this mode is going to continue for a while. And they just have to be, you know, incredibly lucky to come back to power again. If they come to power again, however, there are a few things probably they need to do this time around to get it right. And first of all, they need to just get over that clandestine organization that they have formed. These guys are very secretive. People don't trust them anymore. And I think that clandestine mentality, if they don't get over it with the new generation of the Muslim Brotherhood, I think they will make the same mistakes

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all over again.

They were voted to democratize Egypt because they came after the January 25th revolution, which was all about freedom and democracy. And all they were interested in Islamization, equinization, or Muslim Brotherhoodization of the Egyptians. They forgot democratization, and they went full ahead with Islamization. That was a mistake. And the third mistake is that they overestimated their own power, and they underestimated the power of the civil forces, and the other groups, and the opposition. With that kind of mentality, if they don't learn their lesson, they are not going to get it right the second time.

MR. SHAIKH: Thank you very much. Mr. Hussein, on a similar theme, there's been in the context of Egypt, but also Tunisia, here I turn to there's been much talk about still being politically inclusive, that one can't just do away with the Muslim Brotherhood, one has to still find a way of having them involved in any political process, and that it is important to any stable transition, stable long-term

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future. What would you say to that?

MR. SHOBOKSHI: -- for the most compassionate. Maybe the peace and blessings of God be upon his messenger (Speaking in Arabic) And I'll move to Arabic.

MR. SHOBOKSHI: If people want to buy books on Zakat prior Salat, will find thousands of books, but nothing about political jurisprudence as such. So if they have a bigger problem that a group would present itself as exclusive representative of Islam, and anybody who disagrees with them is outside the realm of Islam. I refer to what Germany has done after World War II when they sort of revised and edited everything in society to do with Nazism from school books to Wagner's classical music, which used to inspire Hitler, so to speak.

So, therefore, we have a very entrenched and a deeper problem than Muhammad Morsi, Arasha Nushi, and the Arab Spring. We have the roots of all terrorist organizations, all Jihadist organizations, especially in my country in Saudi Arabia -- Al-Qaeda,

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Johi Aman, and others who killed no one but Muslims. This is the essence of the problem. We have to uproot this thought.

Any talking about associating Morsi, and Erdogan, and Turkey is misleading because in Turkey, the Ataturk system, which protected the constitution and the army, allowed a system or a party called the Freedom Party or the Freedom and Justice Party, based on respecting the constitution, respecting the freedoms and liberties of others. There was no exclusion, no ex-communication of anybody. On the contrary, there was absolute respect based on proper religious ideas. There was no exclusion, no branding people (inaudible), et cetera.

So, therefore, we have a fundamental question, and we should go back to its roots in order to understand the problem, the essence of the problem. They came to power, and they were faced with this huge rejection at the popular level, the symptoms of which became apparent through killings, terrorizing, bombings. And we hear them on more one occasion,

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whether they stated that openly or explicitly or implicitly. The problem is not new, and we really need to deal with it as a question of thought because we are faced with a very deep question: should we play nice or face what's called an revolutionary evolution. The other party should change, not society, not the other way around. They should change so that society can accept them and not the other way around.

MR. SHAIKH: We have maybe gone much further in answering the second question I was going to ask you, but I'll ask you it anyway. One school of thought is that the Muslim Brotherhood is actually the precursor or the grandfather of the development of Takfiri extremism and gives credence to those in Al-Qaeda and others. Is that what you are saying?

MR. SHOBOKSHI: I'm not making this up. This was mentioned on their announcement. Ayamona Voha did say he was a member of Muslim Brotherhood before he became a part of Al-Qaeda, and so has Shakri Hassam Mustafa, Takfiri Hegira, and so and so forth.

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I don't want to list names here, but, yes, what I've just mentioned now is a proven fact.

MR. SHAIKH: But then, let's go back a little bit to those that would say that, look, these guys came into power through democratic elections, and yet they haven't had the chance in Egypt at this point in time to fight for those elections? And, again, and they may not get that chance. What would you say to them?

MR. SHOBOKSHI: I will just cite the example, Egypt is the second biggest bureaucracy in the world. The Egyptian government employs seven million people. The manner which Morsi and his government were dealing with these seven million and asking them to be changed because they don't trust them, and they wanted to get ali washiriti (phonetic - 00:18:57 - ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN). He was aiming for the people of trust rather than people of qualification.

You're not going to be able to govern Egypt by firing seven million people. You have to be

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inclusive yourself. You can't be a head of a government, a head of a nation, that has 12 million courts and refuse to go and greet them because they are different from your (ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN). It's these kind of messages then you are saying I'm different from the Sufis, I'm different from the Catholics, I'm different from the Copts, I'm different from the Salafis, and so on and so forth. You can't govern this way, and Egypt was just an example. That exercise was repeated elsewhere.

We have a problem. We do have a problem in the Arab world, and it has to be dealt with from an intellectual point of view as well as a security point of view because if this is allowed to mushroom, it's an explosion that will hit every home in every part of the Arab world without exception.

MR. SHAIKH: Thank you. Dr. Jassim, isn't it right that the Muslim Brotherhood, at least in power, adopted the wrong priorities, and that it wasn't focused on the things that people wanted, which was effective governance and an effective state?

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Instead it focused too much on the social and cultural issues, it made minorities feel uncomfortable, women, et cetera, or is this just propaganda?

DR. SULTAN: This is not all propaganda. We are talking about ideas in the Islamic Project itself. The Islamic Project, the system of governing intellectuality depends on the idea of al-khilafah, which thinks that the state is exclusively for Muslims and other non-Muslims. They are called themis. They are subjected to a contract and treated justly, but they are not citizens on equal footing with the rest of the society.

This idea, which appears small at first instance, which is based on differences in the system of belief, is the remnants of the historic empire attitude, which created a certain social contract. Since the 16th century, this has changed. No longer the idea of second class citizens become, well, the norm. Now, everything is based on the idea of the first and second class citizens.

This is not a crisis faced by Muslim

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jurisprudence only because Muslim jurisprudence has not developed to the extent to be aware of the major changes experienced by the world at large, so this is not exclusively a problem of the Muslim Brotherhood. So when they come to power, they still are focusing on the same idea that this is a Muslim society, and we must Islamize our societies. Some people, some groups, want it to be done yesterday. Some want a more gradual phasing in. But the problem remains that the population differs in their system of belief.

The underlying argument for this, which I don't know where it comes from, people seem to be thinking that this can be accepted in this day and age. This epistemological, huge leap requires a renewal in thinking with our legacy and heritage because people still think that if the jurist, says that this goes against the grain of religion, these groups cannot accept anything. If we do not revise our relationship of the jurists with the text and understand the context as well as the text, and reach compromises and settlements over time to get a stage

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of the, what's known as, the civil state.

I was engaged in a dialogue with some Islamists in another country. They keep talking about a concept, which is known as the civil state with an Islamic reference system. I said to them, I'll withdraw from this dialogue because we either accept a civil state or an Islamic state. There is no middle of the road approach because no longer people accept the idea of different levels of citizenship or classes of citizenship. You emigrate to Canada, for example, you are naturalized to become a Canadian citizen. They all belong to the same class.

But we are still lagging behind in this regard, and it's quite unlikely, unless a fundamental change takes places in Islamic jurisprudence, that these political Islamist groups will make the transformation into a more modern current way of thinking because this kind of historical heritage and baggage, which stopped in the 5th century of Hegola, stopped developing, and we have lumbered with this now. So, therefore, the references these groups have

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have still remained. They remained stagnant in history and have not move forward. So what we would hope that this should be revised. Otherwise, we will remain in the bottleneck that we are in at the moment.

MR. SHAIKH: Dr. Jassim, makes an important point that over a period of time, there will be evolution in the Muslim Brotherhood and in political Islam more generally to being the kind of useful political and Islamic force, moderate, over a period of time. And if I could then surmise from that, and I'm trying to chop it off right now, it would actually have a countering effect from this.

PROFESSOR ABDULLA: Well, chop it off. Although you imply that somebody did the chopping off, okay? And what happened here is that the Egyptians themselves who voted them in, kicked them out. Half of Egypt probably voted for them. The other half was not happy with them. And after a year, the power base just receded, and the majority of the Egyptians just, they didn't like what the Muslim Brotherhood have

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done. They thought that these guys are rational enough, moderate enough, reasonable enough, and they found in experience, in day to day in 365 days that this just doesn't fit the image that they have.

So who vote them in? The people probably. Who kicked them out? It's the people. It's not the military. Egypt or Egyptians are still in the revolutionary mood, and I think it was their revolutionary legitimacy that got right of the Muslim Brotherhood. So they kicked them out because they saw the result was not up to their standard.

And I think this is, you know, their own fault. Nobody has chopped them off. It's not America's fault. There's no conspiracy against them. It's not the UAE or Gulf or Saudi Arabia who did engineer all this thing. The people in Egypt, majority of them, came out and said enough is enough. We had enough of you. Thank you very much. We're not going to tolerate you anymore.

I think, you know, most of it is their own fault. I'm not going to go and, you know, go and

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repeat the thing. It is their own fault not knowing how to handle their once upon a time opportunities that they were given in power.

MR. SHAIKH: Do you think in that case the international community completely overestimated the strength of the Muslim Brotherhood, not just in Egypt, but across the region where change was taking place? There was a sense in Washington and other capitals that perhaps the center of gravity, at least for now, in these transitions was political Islam.

PROFESSOR ABDULLA: This applies to America as it applies to everybody else, meaning that a lot of people probably thought that, you know, these are the moderate guys and people have voted for them, so let's stay with them. But I think the Americans were naïve and so were everybody else having that kind of understanding or having that kind of deal with them.

From records, the Islamists when they came to power, the Muslim Brotherhood, they antagonized the media. They antagonized the judges. They antagonized the army. They antagonized almost everybody around

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them. I think they overplayed their power, and they just thought that they had a mandate, and, in fact, they didn't have that mandate. And they acted that they had the mandate of the people, and there was no mandate.

They would've been, if they were wise enough, they would have formed a coalition, a unity government of a sort, but they thought, no, this is a mandate, and let's run it all by ourselves. They just did not read the signs correctly. And I think in that sense, I think half of Egyptians voted their heart, they did not vote their mind, in the initial election. And they voted for these God-fearing people (inaudible - 00:29:46 - ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN). It was like, you know, these are good guys, and they pray, and they're God's men, and let's just give them a chance, and that's why they voted their heart. They really didn't vote their mind.

This time around when there is an election, I think people will be voting their mind, and they will be looking at all the alternatives. And there's

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no way they would vote for any Islamist again.

MR. SHAIKH: Thank you very much. And let me just say at this point this is a public event. We have at the back Al Jazeera and Mubasha, who is also taping the event. It's a pleasure to have them and viewers there. And this is also, I believe, somewhere being live tweeted by my colleagues, and if anyone else wants to use social media in expressing themselves or relaying the conversation, please feel free.

With that, Hussein, last Wednesday, a Saudi newspaper, al-Watan, published a report claiming that members of the Muslim Brotherhood had tried to assassinate the head of the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice. Is there truth in this report? Does this signal that there will be a crackdown on the activities of the Brotherhood?

MR. SHOBOKSHI: I don't know if there is truth to that report or not. I'm not going to comment on that. But is there truth in the escalation of

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threats, escalation of the language, the negativity?  
Yes. There is bitterness in the dialogue or the monologue even among the Muslim Brotherhood supporters and sympathizers in Saudi Arabia.

There is a very sour tone in what they're saying. It's understandable. Obviously it's a shattered dream syndrome that they're passing through now. However, I would would like to comment on something that was said regarding (ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN), that there is a lack of enough opinions to support the inclusiveness of non-Muslims. I beg to differ. It is just we have been choosing the wrong menu. The buffet is there, but we have chosen the plat d'jour. It's just the same plate of the day every day. There is a (ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN). It is part of the (ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN). And they use it in North Africa, and it has fantastic opinions that address these issues during the Andalusian times when they had Jews, and Christians, and Europeans, and Arabs, and it was forward thinking and taken into consideration by the (ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN). Yet we

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have chosen to abandon this and picked a more extremist opinions, so it's our fault. It's not the lack of Islamic Ishtihad. We have it, but we chose another menu to deal with.

In Saudi Arabia, the challenge is going to be there because there are sympathizers. After all, the influx of Muslim Brotherhood in schools, universities --

MR. SHAIKH: And I'm sorry to interrupt you. Some would say that there is a very large number of sympathizers in Saudi Arabia.

MR. SHOBOKSHI: Effective and influential. I don't know about large, but effective and influential and loud. They are in media, they are in academia, schools, charity organizations, judicial system. They are in various important places.

I saw what they did to the schooling system in Saudi Arabia. I saw what they did to charity organizations. They played an important role in deteriorating the effectiveness and the credibility of the education system. We suffer from that today, and

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we are trying to revamp it, improve it, develop it.

The focus was on ideology, their ideology exclusively. They had a very strange interpretation of Jihad. They had a very strange explanation of the Ummah. There was an attempt to discredit the nation-state idea. There was an attempt always to warn from any feeling of affection towards your country, towards your government. It was always dealt with a lot of suspicion and, thus, explaining the lack of belonging, this lack of sense of nationalism and pride, and slowly, slowly turning into hatred.

You see a lot of youth in the Arab world, who are influenced by Muslim Brotherhood educational curriculum hating, their country. Hating their country. That is a really serious question that needs to be addressed, 40 years of slowly feeding a poisonous pill.

MR. SHAIKH: Okay, thank you. Dr. Jassim, well, one obvious question I have for you is, how is that the Muslim Brotherhood can show it can play a useful role within the Gulf, whether it's through its

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activities and charities or anything else, or is it something that is going to be looked upon suspiciously?

And in relation to that, you, of course, played a leading role with regards to the establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood until 1999 in Qatar itself until its dissolution. Can you tell us about the decision to dissolve the organization here, and do you think it was useful during its time in Qatar?

DR. SULTAN: I think the question of Islam is groups in the Arab Gulf states is an exaggeration really. In the Arab Gulf countries, there are no basic elements for the establishment of such organizations apart from doing something for the public good, some charitable work, because there's no abject poverty. There is no problems. The societies are harmonious more or less on the basis of tribalism and family, and kin, and kids.

So apart from charitable work and some moral guidance, there is not much room for them to occupy

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and play. This is important nonetheless, but the fundamental problem remains that the ideology these Islamists draw from is much bigger and wider than that. They draw from the late ((ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN)) have talked about. They propose a complete and comprehensive system of thought, and these were imported wholesale from one environment to another without any sort of refinement.

The Islamist groups in the Gulf area, most of their work is of a charitable nature and serving the public good. The discourse employed is the same, all traditional (ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN) discourse and language. So, therefore, they suffer, too, from this excess baggage, and the historical moment when the Ikhwan or Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt is undergoing such pressure.

The groups in the Gulf area have also been subjected, in turn, to these kind of pressures because we in Qatar, we did not have an organization in the strict sense of the word. There are some groupings who are all affiliating themselves to certain Islamist

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thought. The Muslim Brotherhood were more or less affiliating themselves to (ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN). There are notable scholars, like (inaudible) and others. But there is at the same time debate that is this suitable for other societies? Do we add value to social life in Qatar or not?

And that particular historical moment, we decided that we are not adding anything. We are not benefitting society apart from raising some problematic issues. So they decided to remove the whole thing from the scene of public life.

But going back to what we started, as far as I know, in the Gulf area, the space in which the Islamists groups operated in the Gulf area did not go beyond the morale and charitable organization. But, of course, there was general sympathy with other areas outside the Gulf, like, for example, Afghanistan, the Palestinian cause, and other Arab and Muslim causes.

But they also are burdened with the same burden, and that is not revising and reviewing, revisiting these ideas to see whether they are

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suitable or not. So, therefore, it did not happen in the Gulf area that there was any collision between the Muslim Brotherhood. Like, for example, in Oman, there was an armed struggle against armed rebellion against the government by a political grouping, but this did not happen in the Gulf with any Islamists. And the Islamists by and large in the Gulf region were part and parcel of the governing, ruling system. They operated within, focusing on moral and charitable issues and not going beyond.

So, therefore, in my estimation, this will also lead to some revision and to examine this legacy, historical legacy, from 1928 with all what it entails of struggles and burdens, and to deal with it as if these are a natural extension of what's been going on in other countries. This will be rather unfair.

I think we can contain and absorb the youth in the area through dialogue and understanding.

MR. SHAIKH: We have the situation in the Emirates. The Emirati government reports they have arrested at least maybe over 100 Emirati citizens and

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at least 11 Egyptian citizens over the past year for their ties to Islah affiliate, which charges that this group aims to topple the government. In fact, as you know, the Dubai police chief, Dhahi Khalfan, has dubbed the Muslim Brotherhood a security to the Gulf, which is "no less dangerous than Iran."

Why is the United States taking the lead in this crackdown? And I ask this particularly --

SPEAKER: You mean the UAE.

MR. SHAIKH: Sorry, the UAE, I beg your pardon. Why is the UAE taking the lead in this crackdown? And I ask this, of course, with the understanding that internal security in all of the Gulf states is very strong. And do these groups really pose that kind of a threat to the government of the Emirates? And if you could sort of enlighten us more on the subject.

PROFESSOR ABDULLA: I don't think they constitute when there is a threat to the stability and to the government and to the legitimacy of the political system. And I think the case of the UAE is

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very clear in that here is the Muslim Brotherhood, which is purely a political organization. When you, you know, weigh everything else, the Muslim Brotherhood is not a religious organization. It is almost 80, 90, maybe 100 percent a political organization. They use Islam, they use religion, for political ends. And in the UAE and throughout the Arab Gulf states, especially the UAE -- let me speak for the UAE -- political organization of any sort is not allowed. It's just by law and by the constitution illegal.

And here we are a bunch of us, 90, 100, whatever, we're engaged in political organization of a sort. And this was deemed purely illegal. So when the case came, they tried to dialogue with them. They tried to argue with them. They tried to convince them to disband this political organization, which was part of a bigger Al Islah group, group. But this was a fringe, a small group, within the Al Islah who had their own on the side political meetings and political organization.

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When the dialogue did not reach anywhere, when the talk did not, you know, lead to anything, the security and the government had no choice but to say, this is an illegal activity. And that's what the case. The case was not that they are going to topple the government or whatever, but here's a group of us engaged in illegal activity. And to me, I think this was a pure legal case, not a political case. That is case number one.

Case number two, it's also, you know, become very clear that after the Arab Spring, that the younger generation of the Muslim Brotherhood within the UAE were energized, were inspired, and were saying, hey, look, this is maybe our moment. And they were just going crazy and wild, like they did go in other places. This is our moment, and if we don't do something now, we are missing our choice. And some of them were just taken away by, you know, the moment of it. And there was no choice but to deal with them in this way to calm them down. This is not the way to deal with the situation like in the UAE.

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And a third, the UAE all of a sudden found itself, as a result of the, you know, the rise of the Islamists, found itself under an unbelievable campaign of lies and rumors against the UAE. The UAE was attacked right and left unfairly by the Muslim Brotherhood. They thought, you know, that they wanted to interfere in our order. We're dealing with our Muslim Brotherhood, and that is none of your business, Egypt or Morsi government or whatever.

So the campaign against the UAE was beyond belief for the past one year. And we felt it, and it was really not nice. I mean, the UAE was, you know, demonized. The UAE was projected as being anti-Islam, and anti-Muslim, and anti this, and anti that, and it was really a horrendous campaign, and the UAE did not like it a whole lot.

Having said all of this, the strategic thinking in the UAE was this. Here is the rise of the political Islam throughout the region. Half of Egyptians may be and half of the Arab people did not like this. And the UAE thought that it wants to be

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with this half of the population more or less, okay, who are opposing to this rise, okay? And they have done everything possible to support it politically, financially, whatever, which is all, you know, done in a very transparent and a very political and a very legal way to support all these civil forces that were, again, as the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamists coming to power. This was something that is done, you know, in the most decent way possible and part of democracy and part of a legal thing. And I think this has just brought the wrath of the Muslim Brotherhood. That's where the clash came.

So coming back to your question, I think the 91 or 94 people was a purely legal case from UAE's perspective, and the UAE was doing something that any other country would do when you see a few of its own people breaking the law, and they have to be dealt with.

MR. SHAIKH: Thank you. I'm going to throw it open in just one minute, but I have one more question for Hussein. It's a sensitive question. Do

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you think that Qatar is now being unfairly accused of supporting one particular group over another when it comes to Egypt, for example, particularly with regards to its perception of the charge that it is supporting the Muslim Brotherhood rather than the Egyptians?

MR. SHOBOKSHI: Sensitive answer. Yes, I think there is that kind of sentiment. You can't in all honesty and sincerity call the military coup that took place in 1952 with a few officers numbering 30, plus or minus, a revolution, and millions of people go out in the street for six days and the army backs them up and call that a coup d'etat. We have a problem with the vocabulary. The sentiment of the people spoke. Qatar has a choice. We respect that.

However, I would like just to go a step back if we want to speak about Islam and politics. Nelson Mandela spent 29 years in a cell. Twenty-nine years. When he was freed, he would've been given the right to assassinate, kill, murder, bombard every white man in front of him. Yet he chose -- he chose -- to pick the man who jailed him, de Clerk, as his vice president.

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That's inclusiveness.

(ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN ). That's Islam. That was never applied. Ahmad Zhefig was asked basically the next day to be summoned to court, and he escaped. Saudi and Emirati businessmen -- I am on the Saudi-Egyptian Business Council -- we were blackmailed. We were blackmailed, and some of us were blacklisted on the (ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN). And Emirati businessmen were suffocated. Why? In the name of Islam? I know my Islam. This is not Islam.

So Qatar has the option to choose the party it chooses be it because they were persecuted, because they were innocent. That's a Qatari decision. But there is a problem with that perception, that the story is incomplete. You need to ask the Egyptians and have their opinions on the table as well.

You can't honestly believe that there are more people supporting Morsi outside Egypt than there are inside Egypt. I have a problem with that notion. You can't get support for Morsi from Egypt than you are getting it from inside. That is a position that

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needs to be reviewed.

MR. SHAIKH: Thank you. Well, this is your chance. If you think I've been doing a terrible job, this is your chance really to ask the questions. I'll take a series of questions at a time. I'm sure many of you will want to speak. I just ask for you to please tell us your name and any particular affiliation as you ask the question. That would be helpful to me, and it would be helpful to our esteemed guests here as well. Start to the right, please. Thank you.

SPEAKER: (ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN).

SPEAKERS: (ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN).

SPEAKER: I'm Adbin Sulemafei from Qatar.

My question, I understood from what the gentleman said regardless of the Ikhwan or no Ikhwan, that what you understand that the Islamic society, especially in the revolution countries, are still backward or not mature enough societies. One cannot put the different colors -- red, yellow. This is a minor nation. They should only have to choose two colors only, not more. They

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are not adult enough, just like you're dealing with children.

So my question is, will the society in Egypt have the right to have all the choices, all the options, not only has to choose between two. That was the first question. I don't think that the answer or to the position about authority of some countries in the Gulf is that some countries prove that there should be specific choices for the peoples of the countries, and some countries, like Qatar, think that all the choices should be put forward to the people. So Qatar has not been neither against the secular parties or the others. Just as the Brotherhood reached power by elections, Qatar thinks that they should be evicted by elections, not by tanks.

So had this change been taken place in a non-Islamic country, would the West understand that, or will only the West now understand the gentleman here, and explain to the West how the Muslim society is, so they need to change our doctrine or beliefs.

SPEAKER: As-salaam (ARABIC LANGUAGE)  
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SPOKEN). Thank you for this invaluable presentation.

I have a question. Mr. Salman, I expect that you'll probably raise a question to the gentlemen about the effects of the media on this crisis that we are witnessing. The media has played a big role. So I'm asking Dr. Jassim about what he thinks about this. Is really what Al Jazeera is doing now, is it encouraging this crisis and making it worse, or does he think that what Al Jazeera is doing is something that they believe in, or are there other parties, others who are defining the policies or the approach of Al Jazeera?

I think what Al Jazeera is doing professionally is good, but adopting one point of view might make it lose its credibility. This is one thing.

Second question --

MR. SHAIKH: The Egyptian situation?

SPEAKER: Yes, exactly. Yes, because what I see now day and night, that Al Jazeera is adopting this Egyptian issue. So I want to know, what's your

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opinion? If it were an Egyptian channel, we'd understand that. But in the Gulf states, they actually have different opinions.

SPEAKER: As Salaam Alaikum. (Inaudible) Salaam translator in Qatar. Dr. Jassim, you said that there must be a radical change. You said a radical change, in the Islamic jurisprudence about how they look into the political Islam and the civil state. Can you please explain to us how it can have this radical change? Who should do it? What are the obstacles that might hinder this?

MR. SHAIKH: Please.

SPEAKER: Dr. Haldeeb. I would like to extend my thanks to all the speakers for the clarity of their ideas. In fact, I will speak just as clearly as they did, especially Mr. Hassan. I think the conflict in Egypt is not a conflict of a presidency or a political party. It's a conflict over the identify of Egypt, the conflict on the role of Islam in formulating the economic, political, and the moral values.

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In fact, this conflict in Egypt, which is the heart of the Islamic and Arabic countries and the heart of the interests of the West and Israel, I think any victory would be at the expense of the other party. That's why I think the conflict is between the secular parties and the Islamists and maybe Egypt as the last bastion or last place in which one tries to prove one's identity concerning the secular approach or policies.

MR. SHAIKH: Can we have one? Is that possible, just because we have so many questions.

SPEAKER: Okay, no problem, one for Hussein. I'm from Saudi Arabia. If we go in the past, you know, we can see that the Saudi government, okay, they've been teaching their students Muslim Brother Book, okay, in their education. When the Saudi regime wasn't have any conflict -- sorry, at that time they had no conflict with government.

So when they don't have now, you know, conflict, okay, and the regime in Egypt is good, you know, they change it, you know, and they show other

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face. And you said, you know, that most of the, like, Wahabi and the other, you know, they came from Muslim Brother, but Osama bin Laden, he didn't come, you know, from Muslim Brother.

And you said, you know, that they're saying, you know, they are the Islam, and the other they are not Muslim, okay? Everybody have his own view. Even in Saudi Arabia they have their view because we know in the Saudi Arabia, most of them, they are Wahabi, okay? So they said also we are Muslim, and the other maybe they are not Muslim. So everybody have his own opinion, okay, to another. And I don't think, you know, for one year, okay, we can judge, okay, and we can say, no, they are failure. I don't think so, you know.

And I don't think so, you know, that we say now it's not failure, you know, like what Dr. Abdulla he said, you know, that they came, you know, by election. We saw that there is a tank in the street. We saw that there is army. We saw there is, like, 6,000 people that have been killed, okay, which didn't

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happen most of the time. And if we want to talk with the people, we have to talk what they know now, okay? We are Saudi. We are not such one that don't understand. And Dr. Abdulla, he said also one --

MR. SHAIKH: I think it's become one and a half already, if you don't mind. I'll give one question in this round to Shadi Hamid just because of the license of the Center.

MR. HAMID: Yeah, hi. Shadi Hamid. Yeah, so, I mean, over the last, you know, few years, let's say, or even longer, the counterterrorism community in the West has largely moved away from the conveyor belt theory of radicalization, the notion that you start in the Brotherhood, then you move on to more radical groups. And if you actually look at Ayman Zawahiri, for example, he left the Brotherhood because he became disillusioned with the relative moderation and nonviolence. And he actually wrote a book, as I'm sure all of you know, called *The Muslim Brotherhood's Bitter Harvest in 60 Years*, where he pretty much spends the whole book attacking the Brotherhood for

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being sell-outs and moderates and all of this.

But that kind of leads me to the bigger question here. Isn't there a risk that if the Brotherhood is suppressed in the Middle East that you're going to see a strengthening of the radical Islamist narrative because angry, frustrated youth who are Islamically inclined are not going to have the Brotherhood as an option, who are instead going to join Salafi groups, extremist groups, or even terrorist groups. And we're already seeing some initial signs of that in Egypt, and we've seen previous signs of that in Algeria.

So I'm just curious what your thoughts are on the ceding of the Islamist space to Salafis. Granted, Salafis are probably less of a threat to the Gulf regional order, but I think it would be hard to argue that Salafis are more moderate than the Brotherhood. Do you see the rise of Salafis as a potential problem?

MR. SHAIKH: Thank you. Well, we have plenty of questions we'll come back to, I promise you.

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Otherwise, I'll buy you dinner, so I'll remember.

Let's start from that end, please, and you don't have to answer all the questions, but the ones that were most focused.

MR. SHOBOKSHI: I'll make it quick. There are several questions that I will answer as much as I can and in a fast way.

As for the army and to take away that what happened to Egypt is a coup because the military fought, this is a unique case, no. If you read history, if we learn from history, you wouldn't say such things, because in Thailand, in Chile, in Argentina, and Brazil, the army went to the street to protect the democracy, and even Philippines, and the West adopted the support of them. So it's not the only case that the army goes into the street to protect the democracy, and the West supported that.

Secondly, I think what was said about the conflict between the seculars and Islamists, I have a problem that I refuse that Ikhwan must be the only party that claims that they have the property or they

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own Islam. There is something called (ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN) that is 104,000 years old that should be respected, and has published the most important political document in the history of political Islam, and the Brotherhood refused this document and talked about (inaudible), co-existence, recognition of the evolution of the constitution. And the Muslim Brotherhood refused that because they think they are different from others.

As for the books on Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia is a Salafist country, not an Wahadist. And the books that were textbooks that were written by teachers and scholars from Ikhwan, the Brotherhood. There's a book called *Jihadist Islam*. (Inaudible) all leaders of Ikhwan. They had written these ideas in the books. And by the way, Osama bin Laden was arrested with Jihamin and the Haromen, the Mecca. And Jihamin was the result of these ideas. That's why this applies to Osama bin Laden also.

And Egypt, Egypt is an Islamic country and they are important Muslims, and thinkers, and

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scholars. So we can't say they only have the Ikhwan ideas, just as (ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN - 1:04:33) went to study in America, and also another scholar said that (inaudible) Islam without Muslims. So both of them have their own experience, and this proves that Islam is bigger than that. That cannot be restricted to one person or to one group.

I think there were two questions that were represented to me, and there were two other general questions.

The question about Al Jazeera, this depends on their theory approach and their policies, which I don't know. I personally, I watch several channels so that I can know what reality is and the truth is, some of the truth.

Today to say that the media is innocent and that we are, too, for spreading the truth, I think this is not real. Media is one of the tools in the hands of the countries and societies that could be used consequently not to know what goes into their policies unless it's something that's close to them.

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But if you look onto the Arabic scene in general, we find that there's a sort of balance. We find that one channel is supporting that trend of politics and the other channel is serving the other trend of politics. And consequently, this needs a lot of statistics to judge.

As for the radical change affecting Islamic jurisprudence, I must say that I was asked what do you think about the Islamic state. I said that I would like Ali al Jaber had said, which is one of the more (inaudible - 1:06:36) at this time. He had said that the Islamic state is where I can practice my religion and say my opinion without fear. That's to say, to practice one's religion, to pray, to fast, and to speak of his religion without any fear. This is the state of Islam, but this not the mainstream.

So if we look to the main trend in jurisprudence of (inaudible - 1:07:03) in general, we find that there are some historically important opinions that have been neglected. I think that inside the mainstream Islam, there are some efforts

made, big efforts made, and some approaches. There are three big approaches in this context, and if they are successful and they get enough financial support from the government because they require a lot of financial effort. There is the school of Makasud (phonetic - 1:07:31) prime objectives of Islam, prime objectives of Makasud. This is a big school. And there's the school of achieving results or achieving goals, which is something, a very big project, that will lead to essential changes if this project succeeds and continues.

And there also efforts deployed to rethink and to revisit the new sciences, science of Islam. And these projects are adopted at the level of countries and governments. We can change the pace of relationship between people and the scholars. The scholar (inaudible - 1:08:29) what is interpretation, and the relationship between the two is the approach, the program, which requires a lot of efforts that are being deployed now, but very slowly because they don't have enough finance. If there are governments who are

aware of the importance of the big need to change qualitatively our programs and the curriculum, that would lead to the first development and improvement of the Islamic society.

There is also a big question; that is, the crisis, which is how does Islam face modernism. There are two projects: Islamization project and another one that's secularization, which is going out of the region, whereas the real impetus should be to ask ourselves, we can it better Islamic societies that can be used for all?

If we speak about contradictions as it does now in Islamic studies, the conflict in Egypt is a conflict between Islam and the secularism, and, consequently, Islam's confrontation with modernism. And I think the movement of history is stronger than the movement of abstract ideas. I think at this historical moment, we had a very important fatwa banning photography. How long did that continue? In our country there was banning of women education, but that did not continue because the movement of history

and the trend of history is stronger than this. That's why the connection of Islamic societies with the others outside is not banned by Islam, but only this mentality that puts Islamic confrontation with development and with (inaudible). This requires some movement inside the religious circles and to go into new spaces from which we launch ourselves. Otherwise, the problem will continue.

As for the choices and options, I think society should be treated as mature adult societies and be given all choices. In Egypt, since the 1930s we see two projects struggling and counteracting each other: the Islamist project, which hasn't been updated and still carries the same historical legacy, and at the same time the militarization of ruling societies with a big stick, and this is the remnants of Nazism. We still have not moved to the current questions that we should ask.

When we speak, we use one of two languages: either exclusion or resorting to tanks and weapons to impose ideas. And neither of them is right.

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MR. SHAIKH: -- an unusual one. If your car plate number is 28039 -- 28039 --

SPEAKER: Toyota Camry.

MR. SHAIKH: It's a Toyota Camry. You may lose it in the next two minutes, because our neighbor is very upset and wants to move. So if you could please kindly move your car before somebody takes a sledgehammer to it, it would be great. So if that is your car, please. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Professor Abdulkhaleq?

PROFESSOR ABDULLA: Let me assure you that's not my car.

(Laughter.)

SPEAKER: That's the toughest question of the evening.

(Laughter.)

PROFESSOR ABDULLA: On the questions that I've been hearing, first of all, I don't think at this particular juncture that what's happening in Egypt is a struggle over identity of Egypt, a struggle between what is religious and what is secularist. I don't

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think this is the essence of the struggle.

What's happening in Egypt now in total clarity, everybody has a problem with the Muslim Brotherhood and their methodology, and this is not confined to liberals and secularists, but even Islamist forces. The biggest force, which is antagonizing the Muslim Brotherhood are the Salafis, who are standing against them.

Yesterday we heard Ali Jamar (phonetic - 1:13:19), the former Mufti, who said things about the Muslim Brotherhood that non-liberalists, non-secularists can say that. He ex-communicated them. He called for their death and killing because they pose a security threat to Egypt.

The biggest political force which is standing against the Muslim Brotherhood is the Azhal (phonetic - 1:13:45). So, therefore, it's wrong, therefore, to characterize the struggle in this day and age in Egypt in October 2013 as a religious struggle. Now, there is a very big crisis, and that is the crisis of al-Ikhwan, who want to come back to

ruling the country and their lack of admission that what happened on the 30th of June was a revolution. And people think this is placing Egypt on the brink of disaster and oblivion, and may be disintegrating the country. And this places the Muslim Brotherhood face to face on a collision course with the rest of society, and even other religious forces, which is even more serious than their struggle against liberals and secularists.

Second, the struggle that I see, the political struggle, is between two legitimacies. I call it a clash of legitimacies. What is happening in Egypt is a clash of legitimacies. We have one legitimacy which brought Morsi through elections and they want to defend it. This is legitimacy of elections at the ballot box. And the others are saying this was momentary, and the bigger legitimacy is there was revolutionary legitimacy versus election legitimacy. This is the essence of the struggle in Egypt, and the forces would say that in Egypt we are still in a state of revolution, and revolution is what

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calls the shots. And the Muslim Brotherhood has lost completely their way, and the revolutionary legitimacy is what should prevail.

Finally, I think that the Muslim Brotherhood can feed and exacerbate extremism, but they will be the losers. In fact, they are the losers from now. If their stance now leads to extremism, then the remainder of the Egyptian society will turn against them. If their ambition is if we don't come back to rule we turn Egypt into another Algeria, if this is their tactic, if this is their strategy, I think they'll bring upon themselves more wroth and more anger from their society. And this is (ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN - 1:17:02).

The last elections where in Germany when Merkel was asked, how did you win, this is the second time ran, one of the most important opponents of Angela Merkel said, she can rule, but she cannot lead because she doesn't have the mandate. She can govern, but she cannot lead. (ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN - 01:17:35.) The mandate of 75 percent, Morsi didn't

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have the mandate to do what he wanted to do to ex-communicate people and label them as traitors. He had the ability to govern, but not the ability to lead. And, therefore, this is not clear to us that the legitimacy which gives us the ability to lead.

So, therefore, this needs grounding in Sharia. (Inaudible - 1:18:08) said when he left the Ikhwan, said that when people cannot manage the affairs of the state, then he loses legitimacy. And, therefore, the scholars of Al Azhar said that about him, and said that he lost his legitimacy (ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN).

MR. SHAIKH: Yes, exactly. We have many hands, and what I will just ask you because I want to hear as many of you as possible, if you can be as brief. First, we start with the lady, please. And if we can be as brief as possible. I'll try and get as many of you as we can, please.

SPEAKER: (Off audio.)

MR. SHAIKH: We can't hear you. Is it on?

No?

SPEAKER: It's a conspiracy. Can we --

PROFESSOR ABDULLA: Anti-feminist  
microphone.

MR. SHAIKH: Okay. Yes.

SPEAKER: (Inaudible - 1:19:08) newspaper.  
I just want to ask you, after the coup d'etat, which  
some may not call it a coup d'etat, after what  
happened and the consequences that took place  
afterwards as a result of ousting Morsi, we've seen  
many getting killed, murdered, many, like, as young as  
17 years old and maybe younger.

It wasn't just an overthrow or a coup d'etat  
or people's will, if you want to say so. It wasn't  
sugar coated afterwards. The brutality and excessive  
use of force afterwards were not justified by any way,  
shape, or form.

I just want to know where do you stand on  
this, because it seems like many were okay with the  
killing that took place. Many didn't say anything.  
Many questioned the liberals in Egypt even and said,  
why are you so silent about the killings, you know.

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It's okay, I guess, to have different views on politics and different ideologies. But to just the killings and, you know, make it sound legitimate?

I just want to know what's your views.

Anyone.

MR. SHAIKH: Please. Stand up and give us your name.

SPEAKER: My name is Nayim Shamiri (phonetic - 1:20:26). I will ask in Arabic. First of all, I want to register my objection to the nature of the panelists. There is no differences. All the speakers more or less seem to be focusing or heading in one direction. This is unfair. You should've brought people representing the other perspective. So, therefore, I will try and put forward the ideas of the other side. And then, in the second tier of the question, I'll ask a question.

And, first of all, about the failure of the Muslim Brotherhood to manage the affairs of the state, no speaker spoke about the role of the Gulf countries to purposefully make it a failure. They tried to give

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the impression that the Ikhwan were left alone to run the affairs of the state, and suddenly they failed, as if to give the impression that other Arab rulers are very competent. This is unfair.

And I ask Dr. Abdulkhaleq, there was support from the Ethiopian then from the Gulf. As soon as Morsi was deposed, the Gulf support stopped. Did the Gulf states want to end the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood? I think you represented the facts rather in a disjointed way.

The Gulf countries since the 50s stand against any political movement. They stood against Abdi Nassib. They stood against Iraq, Syria, and even when the Iranian people in '79 rebelled against the Shah, they stood by the Shah. Don't try to misguide and mislead people. This is not a question of the Muslim Brotherhood's wanting to impose their will, because the political, historical context proves that this is bigger than Ikhwan.

People who rebelled in Iran were not Ikhwan. In Yemen, they were not Ikhwan. In Egypt, they were

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not Ikhwan. The fact of the matter is the Gulf countries do not want to see any legitimate government because this will threaten their own, like Max Weber said, the type of legitimacy.

Dr. Abdulkhaleq talked about a new revolutionary legitimacy. This is something new. The Saudi Arabian guest talked about fascism and associated Morsi with Nazism, fascism or Nazism, or whatever he said. And now, the Brotherhood are labeled as fascists or Nazis. Fascism is to adopt violence to create political change.

Yesterday, Dr. Abdulkhaleq said the former Mufti of Egypt calls for the killing and the death of Muslim Brotherhood to (inaudible - 1:23:49) Egyptian nationality. And on the other hand, Basirim (inaudible - 1:24:03) use of the TV presenter just because Morsi wanted to ask a few questions. And now Basirim went back to studying medicine. Cici used to speak ill of Morsi's wife. Now under the current regime, nobody dares to say one word against Cici and his junta. The Gulf people always accuse Islamists

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because they call for the overthrow of regimes and they want to come to power illegitimately. (ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN - 01:24:37.)

MR. SHAIKH: You see all these other people want to make --

SPEAKER: -- question.

MR. SHAIKH: What was the first question?

SPEAKER: Now, they accuse Islamists that they want to reach power. But what you saw that the Islamists reached power only by democratic way, whereas in the Gulf we found that (inaudible - 1:25:09) said that that Brother Ahoni wanted to create problems in the Gulf, whereas Morsi said that this is a red line. And, in fact, we find that Cici has alliterated threats against all the Gulf states. Nevertheless they have good relations with him.

MR. SHAIKH: I will fire myself if I don't get you all to be very brief now, please. Thank you.

SPEAKER: I would like thank Brookings Center for this event. I want to comment on the (inaudible - 1:25:51) speaks about the Egyptian people

as if he knows it very well, and this is an academic problem between the Ikhwan and the military.

I have just come back from Egypt and I assure that the people in the streets are not all Ikhwan. And saying that this isn't a conflict of (inaudible - 1:26:20). We as a people we find that all the media, all the channels, the channels were closed, all the mosques were closed. And so, people asked questions. They wanted answers. The government says that there should be no religious parties but in the constitution. But what does the (inaudible - 1:26:37) religious parties.

So we need a better diagnosis of the situation in Egypt and what is in the streets now are not only the Ikhwan. And I think those who are now in prison are young leaders of the young movement. And if the specific and peaceful way stops, it will lead to a lot of violence, not by the Muslim Ikhwan. I live in a village where there are people who are not Ikhwan, but are violent against the government.

(ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN - 01:27:19.)

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MR. SHAIKH: First the gentleman behind, and then the gentleman in front. Okay. Go ahead.

SPEAKER: Thank you very much. (Inaudible - 1:27:40), a journalist. In fact, I must refer to a point that has been neglected often by the Arab right, those who work in media, which is the Sudanese experience. They are the first Ikhwan to reach power 25 years ago, and their experience the most bitterest experience in Sudan, and it was them that led to the division of Sudan.

I think the Ikhwan counted on one thing, that is that their purses were built on two pillars: one, exclusion of others and enabling of others. And this led to the division of Sudan, and now it's leading to the division of Egypt, and that's the very reason they were evicted from power. I think the Ikhwan are facing an important problem, and they need to rethink about their calculations and their position so they can join the society.

SPEAKER: (Inaudible - 1:28:56). I am Egyptian. I'll ask two questions. I'd like to thank

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(ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN). The first question, we have Mr. Shobokshi and the other gentleman who represents Saudi Arabia. We have seen that (inaudible - 1:29:18) and Saudi Arabia are the first to help the coup, or call it whatever you want to, or what happened in Egypt. They are helping them.

Do you think we should have helped Cici and his people, or shouldn't they have tried to put Cici onto trial because they have created the problem, and they have pushed people to the streets? For example, I have two brothers. Right from the beginning, I was supporting Morsi and my brothers used to support others. My two brothers never went to the streets since the 25th of January. My brother now is in the streets and he was shot at thanks to the money sent by someone we know. So if my brothers die, who will bear the responsibility?

So I think the Ikhwan should send acknowledgment and thanks, a telegraph or letter, to Cici because he has rehabilitated them after the fact that people are going to lose trust in them. But what

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Cici did, rehabilitated and changed the position of people in such a way that people went to the streets in support of Ikhwan and Morsi.

And now, there is a group called Christians Against Morsi. Mr. Shoboskhi said that Ikhwan are against the Christians, but the one who's ruling and is the head of the Justice and Freedom Party now is a Christian person.

So do you know that the people in Egypt now is going towards being out of control and that Saudi Arabia and Emirates are betting on the wrong horse because they are not betting on the people. They are betting on the new regime, which is going down.

MR. SHAIKH: Mr. Kashoski (phonetic - 1:31:27).

SPEAKER: Jamal Khashoggi, Director for the Arab channel. Question, Dr. Jassim. Since you know the Islamist movement and spent some time in Egypt, is the leadership of Ikhwan at the present capable of reevaluating the situation and adopt a new policy? I know they are in prison, but what's the solution? The

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street is not reading it, but if you can send a message to them, what would you advise them? How could they change their approach or stay on their present approach?

SPEAKER: My question is to Dr. Jassim. It seems there is an ongoing struggle and serious conflict between three generations within the Ikhwan. Do you think it's all about ideology or reform or just transformation from activism to institutional framework? Thank you.

MR. SHAIKH: The lady at the back there. Sorry. There's a very tall gentleman in front of you, so I couldn't see you.

SPEAKER: It's okay.

MR. SHAIKH: There we go.

SPEAKER: Thank you. My question is, given the judicial and political restrictions on the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, do you ever see the movement relocate itself somewhere else, and the ideological and political leadership move somewhere else in the future?

And the second one is, what do you make of the Turkish government, one of the most outspoken supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the Morsi regime? What is your opinion about their stance? Thank you.

MR. SHAIKH: The gentleman there.

SPEAKER: Thank you. After listening to the distinguished gentlemen and the debate, the following thing that one would do is to file an application to the nearest embassy for immigration. So basically what hope do you leave for the youth and for the next generation if, let's say, you are demonizing the Muslim Brotherhood from the beginning, and let's assume that, okay, they're finished. What's next? So who would lead or who would be the alternative to lead a reform in the Arab world? Who would be the precursor of the development and remove the, you know, the Arab countries from this very meager GDP that they are suffering from to the post of emerging countries and so forth? What is the alternative?

Okay. We heard you. What is the

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alternative? Thank you.

MR. SHAIKH: Thank you. I'll just take one more here, please.

SPEAKER: As-Salaam Alaikum. I will ask in Arabic. My question is a direct one. People who listen to you think that we live under a beautiful regime and the Muslim Brotherhood are there to destroy everything. This is a direct question. Are the Gulf state countries, I am not saying they're ideal, but are they even good or good enough so that we can feel any threat from another experience, like the Muslim Brotherhood, for example?

MR. SHAIKH: A mixed set of questions. We could be here for much longer, but I would ask if you could each of you be quite brief in picking the questions. We'll start with Hussein.

MR. SHOBOKSHI: I'll start and make it quickly. (ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN - :01:35:35) Morsi. Saudi Arabia did not choose (ARABIC LANGUAGE SPOKEN - 1:36:47) when he was chosen first, and then the reserve player, Muhammad Morsi, was chosen at the last

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minute. Muhammad Morsi and the General Guard, they chose a person who was not able to run the country, and that is a sham and deal, the prime minister, because he is not competent. He is just someone they trust. Is this the doing of the Emirates and Saudi Arabia?

What happened in Egypt has nothing to do with Saudi Arabia and the Emirate because they cannot deal. The bullets which hit the Egyptians is not financed by Saudi Arabia. The bullets, it can come from other countries, which financed Egypt before the Saudis and the Emirates. And if you go back to the facts and figures, you will see what I mean.

I think it's no secret that Saudi Arabia favors the current situation in Egypt now, but they did not cut off aid during the Morsi era. It's very important for us to refute the argument of what happened in Egypt under the guidance of Muslim Brotherhood. I'm not saying they are better or worse than others. Just compare what happened in Egypt and evaluate it and analyze it and see. Nobody said the

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Gulf governments are ideal. There are attempts at reform, and people can openly criticize our governments. But I find it rather difficult to emigrate because the Ikhwan failed to run the country.

So are we saying that it's either the Muslim Brotherhood or no one else? This is a problem then. So can we not think beyond the Muslim Brotherhood? Then we are in real trouble if that is the case.

MR. SHAIKH: I'll give you the last word.

SPEAKER: First of all, I don't trust the way the Brotherhood run their affairs and their approach. Very clearly I say that. And I absolutely, categorically do not like their exploitation of religion and Islam to come to power. And I also do not like or appreciate and don't feel comfortable about the clandestine nature and the underground nature of their structure. I think this is totally against democracy and democratic activity.

And personally, I think their social or political programs, I don't like, I do not favor. And on top of that, when they were given a chance to rule,

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they proved beyond any doubt that they want everything exclusively to them. And they do not want to include anybody else.

So, therefore, I want to be clear. This is my stance and my position against them. It's not only me. This is the opinion of millions of people. I am not saying I'll demonize them or hate them. I do not use such vocabulary. But from a personal and objective point of view, I think this is a group of losers, of absolute failures. They should not be trusted with ruling any country.

I think the Brotherhood members and whoever affiliates himself with them are very clever in presenting themselves as victims. This mentality, victim mentality, and we haven't been given a chance, and there's nobody who's more clever than them in the last 80 years, not just now, to present themselves as the victims of a conspiracy. They are very good at that, and this is something which I don't find convincing at all.

Secondly, the discourse over the last 80

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years or more, they always say there's a conspiracy against us. Their discourse is based on the conspiracy theory, and this is not worthy and becoming of people with mature thinking and mature ideology. I think these are very important points.

And having said that, I totally agree with what Mr. Hussein has said. To say that the Gulf countries -- the Saudis and the Emirates -- have manufactured this coup against Ikhwan is ridiculous, and it's oversimplifying what happened. When tomorrow the rebellion movement came up with a petition of 10 million people, then 30 million people went out on the street. This has nothing with Gulf countries. This is the Egyptian people wanted to get rid of the Ikhwan, so blowing the role of the Gulf countries out of all proportion is ridiculous, to say the least.

The Gulf countries, the days of Nasserite ideology and Pan-Arabism in the 50s and 60s, and during the Iranian revolution, they felt threatened. There is lack of instability. And we worry about our stability. We worry about our achievements. These

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are gains for us. We are not prepared to enter into an experience like Egypt, or Tunisia, or Yemen with uncalculated risks. So, therefore, the Gulf countries were always in a position of defending themselves, and we never go on the offensive.

The Muslim Brotherhood twists the facts. The Emirates, in particular, and the Saudis also were among the first who recognized Muhammad Morsi, and the Emirates foreign affairs minister went to Egypt, said if the Egyptian people want Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood, we welcome that. This is a fact. The Emirates invited Muhammad Morsi to visit them. They said come as visitors. This is a popular choice. But within one year, the Muslim Brotherhood moved closer to Iran. They antagonized the Emirates, and rallied support against Emirates. So the mistake was not from the Emiratis. It came from the Brotherhood.

So after that, now you want to cry wolf. This is illogical. This is something which is totally rejected. And instead of admitting to the serious mistakes when the Brotherhood proved incapable, want

to blame it on us, on the Americans, I think this is not logical and it's not convincing at all.

(Applause.)

MR. SHAIKH: If not, the Muslim Brotherhood, what are the alternatives, as was asked?

PROFESSOR ABDULLA: I think during revolutionary period, Salman, during the revolutionary period, there has be a unity government, okay? During transition period all over, whether it's in Indonesia all the way to the end of the world, there is no way that one party, no matter how strong it is, can rule all by itself. And that was the fundamental mistake.

So I think what Egypt needs and what Tunisia needs and all the others need, for all to chip in, to stay in, consideration here to bring stability back, and go through a very tough period with everybody involved, not excluding everybody. So to me, it is very clear cut that during the transition, we need harmony. We need more people to sit together and work things out, and not for one party to take over and claim a mandate, which there was not.

MR. SHAIKH: Thank you. Thank you. I'll give the final word to Dr. Jassim.

DR. SULTAN: I will pick two questions, which I think are related directly to the theme of this debate. What is the future for the Muslim Brotherhood? Of course, just to speak now in this general debate is much easier than speaking to people who are being subjected to oppression, imprisonment. And as you know, now the question is existential for the Muslim Brotherhood.

If I was allowed to pass an opinion, I'll say the biggest problem they face is in the historical moment. The Muslim Brotherhood when were chosen by the Egyptian people, they could not convince all the Egyptians, but there was a good enough agreement to agree on them. And the shield they should've used to protect them against any intervention by the army was this popular support which surrounded them, which changed the equation.

The Muslim Brotherhood in the historical moment did not understand this equation. They

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understood the equation all to do with the ballot box and the election. And they said, I said that to look at the popular support block as a problem only, then this was a mistake by the Morsi regime and the current regime. They think of the other opponent as a small group of people who will dissolve and disappear from the face of the earth.

If I'm able to say anything, I can call for launching a national initiative. First of all, we should agree on a concept for democratization and majority because we as winners of elections cannot say we are the majority; therefore, we have everything and the minority have nothing. But speak easily in this comfortable atmosphere is no problem. But, in fact, in real situations of oppression, it's a totally different situation.

As for the ideology of reform, we really need radical reform. Now I'm working on a book about issues at the surface and in depth issues, in which I try to tackle issues in Islamic thought and created the current scene is not all Islamic. Dismantling

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this current structure to keep Islam within this current wave of thinking is a very big and tremendous task. Now we seem to think of people's sentiments and we see things in black and white. When Islamists win, they say the seculars should pack up and go. When the secularists win, they say there's no longer a thing called Islam, and if there is any remaining, they should leave the country and depart. This is the kind of poisoned atmosphere.

How we can restore balance for a new perception for our societies, which on the one hand can combine the spirituality and religiosity of Islam and the good governance of modernity? This is a major task which has not started yet, so, therefore, to think of development in our society and look at the current fluid situation, we really need a window of opportunity to save the Arab or Muslim thinking. We cannot lead any objective dialogue with this current way of rallying support. We can produce markers, but we cannot produce factories to build the country, and our awareness has not risen to the challenges. And we

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are still saying either Muslim Brotherhood or nothing, if the Muslim Brotherhood disappears, then the problems of the world will change. And this kind of dichotomy is either demonizing the Muslim Brotherhood or presenting them as angels.

We really need more enlightenment, more horizons, that all of us are societies and to move forward. We cannot go forward in Egypt with a few millions being imprisoned and pulled backwards. This secular violence against the Muslim Brotherhood took place in the 50s and 60s, and it produced even worse reality than the previous reality. Even when all of us as military, as security forces, as Islamist movement, other political trends. We should think that what we did in the past needs revision, and we should really work harder for a better future for us and our future generations.

We really need radical reforms, not just reforms, in our thinking, and this does not, by the way, exclude the radical secularists because we have secularists who are more extremists than Islamist

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extremist. This is restoring the balance. We really need a new common sense approach, a new approach for the future rather than keep looking backwards. The culture and the ideology of the 30s and 40s will not create a better future for us.

MR. SHAIKH: Thank you very much. We had billed this as a discussion on Gulf Perspectives on the Muslim Brotherhood. I think it's fair to say we certainly heard that very clearly, very frankly, and all different types of views. I would say from my own observation, it was notable that as we heard these views, the search for a middle ground seemed to prove quite elusive, and yet the opportunity is still there.

One thing I would stress, and I think towards the end of our conversation, we started actually to hear some of those ideas, whether it's about a national unity government or rejecting majoritarianism because winning elections is not good enough, about building new perceptions in society.

I think someone's trying to shoot me, so I won't continue.

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PROFESSOR ABDULLA: It's not me.

MR. SHAIKH: No. And talking about a window of opportunity that exists. I hope that is still the case.

Certainly one thing we did achieve, I think, is a very healthy debate and dialogue. And in that, I thank you. I thank you for your civility, and I thank you for your questions. But most of all, I'd like to thank our esteemed panelists here. Thank you very much for making the trip, either short or a longer one.

Professor Abdulkhaleq, thank you very much. Dr. Jassim Sultan, thank you very much. And, of course, Hussein Shobokshi. Thank you very much. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did. I certainly learned a lot, and we hope to see you again soon.

We have some refreshments outside, but before that if we could give a round of applause of appreciation.

(Applause.)

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