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TEMPTATIONS OF POWER:

ISLAMISTS & ILLIBERAL DEMOCRACY IN A NEW MIDDLE EAST

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Welcoming Remarks:

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Featured Speaker:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. WITTES: For us, because we are launching a new book and books are really at the heart of what we do here at Brookings. You know the think tank universe has expanded a lot, just in the dozen years since our center was founded, there are probably six or eight think tanks around town that focus on the Middle East today, whereas when we started there were really only one or two. The media environment's changed; with the web putting a premium on instantaneous reactions to events -- quick hit Op Ed's.

And of course, the region that we study -- the Middle East and North Africa is ongoing such tremendous turmoil and uncertainty. It's enough to make your head spin, trying to keep up with events. And it's in that kind of environment -- that rapid fire dynamic environment that I think the work that we do here at Brookings takes on added value. We focus on in depth research; we examine the issues before us in context, in historical context, in comparative context, and over the longer term, we step back from the headlines to understand why things are the way they are. Not whose policy argument is winning the day today, but why our policy debates are so stuck and how to fix them? Not what will happen tomorrow, but what will happen in a year or two or five or ten. And I can tell you that there are some books that have been published by scholars at the Brookings Institution whose impact was not felt in the year or two or five after they were published. But when the policy environment was ripe, that smart thinking and those policy solutions were ready to go, between two covers. And so at a time when the Middle East future is so uncertain and so anxiety provoking, I find that fixating on instant reactions to every tiny trend doesn't bring us any greater clarity. In fact, it's likely to make us lose sight of the larger trajectory of events. And the larger trajectory of events in the Arab world today is dramatic enough. It's about a rejection of centralized corporatist control of society, of economics, of politics, in favor of empowerment, at the individual level, the local, the community level. And in the process, the people of the

Middle East and North Africa are debating new relationships between citizens and the state, between the state and society, between the state and religious institutions and religious authorities. And one of the biggest debates in the region today -- one of the most heated and controversial, is over the place of religion in public life and of religious movements in politics. And that's why today is a special day for us, because we are launching a new in depth study of Islamist movements in the Arab world by our colleague Shadi Hamid.

Now Shadi began this work, the work that went into the book that I'm holding up now -- "Temptations of Power -- Islamists &Illiberal Democracy in a New Middle East" -- for sale outside. Shadi started this well before the uprisings of 2011. And over the last several years, he's conducted literally hundreds of interviews, with Islamists leaders, rank and file activists, to get a deep understanding of their thinking and of their choices as they confronted the unprecedented opportunities in newly opened political systems, and as they dealt with the challenges that their participation in those systems presented to them. We've had a lot of debates over the last few years in this town and in the region, about whether the Muslim Brotherhood is motivated fundamentally by ideology, but organizational politics or by the quest to power. I think what Shadi's done in this book is to look beyond these sorts of dichotomist arguments and explain how groups like the Brotherhood combine features of political parties, features of religious movements, features of social movements and to understand how these factors shape their actions and their choices.

Now that doesn't offer us an easy diagnosis and it doesn't offer us easy answers. But it does offer us understanding. And it's clear that Islamist movements will be an important factor in the future of Arab politics, whether they are elected, whether they are excluded, or whether they are boycotting and sitting on the sidelines. So understanding who they are, how they behave and how these movements might evolve is very important to our understanding of the region's future. And that's why I'm so proud to

have the chance to present this book.

Now Shadi as you know, as many of you know I think, was the Director of Research at our Brookings Doha Center for four years. He came back in January of this year to Brookings Washington to join our project on U.S. relations with the Islamic world, which is headed by its director Will McCants. Shadi also worked and indeed, helped found the project on Middle East democracy, which is a research and advocacy organization here in town, that was working on these issues, again, well before the Arab spring, and he was Hewlett Fellow at Stanford, in their Center for Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law.

We are really delighted that to join him in conversation about this book and about the issues that it raises, we have with us today Margaret Brennan. Margaret is a good friend and a correspondent, foreign policy correspondent at CBS News. She's been primarily assigned to the State Department and has put in a lot of miles following Secretary Clinton and now Secretary Kerry around the world, covering national security and diplomatic issues. As a result, she has seen the events of the last few years in the Middle East, up close and personal, and has been a witness to the struggles of the U.S. government in adapting to these dynamic changes. And as a veteran of covering breaking news, I can think of no one better to help us explore the insights that are covered in Shadi's book. So with that, let me thank you again for being here, and welcome Shadi up to the stage to give us a sense of the book. Thank you.

MR. HAMID: Hi everyone. Thanks Tamara, for the kind introduction. Thanks to all of you for coming. I'll just start off with some brief introductory remarks to kind of give you some context about the book and some of the key arguments, and then look forward to having conversation with Margaret and then all of you in the question and answer session.

So really this book has been ten years in the making. I started conducting field research on the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan in 2004, 2005. I lived in

Amman for a year, and that's when I really became fascinated with these groups, the kind of internal struggles they were going through, the tensions between these absolute religious ideals and the mundane realities of everyday politics. And I wanted to really understand what animates these groups -- what drives them, and at the end of the day, what do they really want?

And I remember, I was a young naïve grad student at the time and I would just go to the Muslim Brotherhood's headquarters and just spend hours in the archives, looking at documents and articles and they were always a little bit confused. What is this guy doing? Why does he care about us so much? And that was at a time when this topic wasn't that hot, and especially when it came to Jordan, it wasn't very often that a western researcher would spend months and months studying the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan.

What I think is really important, and I kind of just mention this because, we don't have to like Islamist, but I do think we have to understand them. And that's what I've really tried to do in my research, and I've tried to reflect that in my book -- to immerse myself to some extent in their world, to understand their world view. Now let me just start off with a quote from Mohamed Morsi. So the first time I met with ex-President Mohamed Morsi was on May 8th, 2010. And this was at a very difficult time for the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Repression was getting worse. It was intensifying -- the Muslim Brotherhood was getting pushed out of the political process, parliamentary elections were coming up and everyone just assumed that the Brotherhood would go down from 88 seats to something very low. And ultimately, they only won -- well, they won zero seats, in the last election before the Arab uprisings began.

So this was in May, 2010. So Morsi -- we're sitting down and he tells me this. So the context is, he's telling me that he doesn't like it when the Muslim Brotherhood is called an opposition party. So he said, "The word opposition has the connotation of seeking power, but at this moment, we are not seeking power because

that requires preparation, and society is not prepared." And it's just kind of interesting to look back, because that was just seven months before the January 25th revolution and Mubarak's fall. So that kind of gives you the mindset that a lot of Islamists were in before all of this happened. They were very cautious, very gradualist, and they were looking years, if not decades into the future. They knew their moment -- they thought their moment wouldn't come any time soon.

And what I try to do in this book is look at these two distinctive phases in the Islamist experience. So before the Arab uprisings and after, or another way of looking at it, under repression, intensifying repression under the Mubarak regime, and in Jordan we also see a closing of political space as well. That's one phase, and then looking at how Islamists had to adapt very quickly, and try to respond to the democratic openings made possible by the Arab revolt. And you see different sides of the Islamist personality in these different phases.

Now, let's start with under repression. So one of the arguments I make in the book is, contrary to the academic and conventional wisdom, repression, rather than having a radicalizing effect, actually forced mainstream Islamist movements to become more moderate over time. And when I say more moderate, I have several indicators that I focus on, including embracing various tenets of democratic life, alternation of power, popular sovereignty, reaching out to liberal and leftist actors, also evolving on sensitive issues like women's rights and protection of minorities. You see an evolution in Islamist thinking and practice in the 1990's and 2000's.

So -- and I won't go into the causal -- I try to specify in the book what are the causal factors that resulted in repression having this moderating effect on Islamist groups, but essentially as political space closes in countries like Egypt and Jordan, during that same time, the Muslim Brotherhood in both countries doubles down on its democratic discourse, deemphasizes Sharia law, reaches out more than ever to liberal and leftist groups, forms cross ideological coalitions. So that was one of the questions I

was trying to address in the book. This seems counter intuitive. But we do see those two things going together -- repression and a commitment to moderate positions and policies.

Now the flip side of this is what happens when there's a democratic opening? And I would say here that much of the academic literature posits that the more you include Islamists in a democratic process, the more moderate they'll become. Makes sense -- it's intuitive. And actually, it's not just the academic literature, it's reached the highest levels of policy making as well. And George -- when I was writing the book I came across a quote that I'm not sure, some of you might remember it from 2005 -- George W. Bush was responding to a question about Hezbollah and its role in Lebanese politics. So George W. says this, "I like the idea of people running for office. There's a positive effect. Maybe some will run for office and say -- 'Vote for me. I look forward to blowing up America.' But I don't think so. I think people who generally run for office say, 'Vote for me. I'm looking forward to fixing your potholes.'" -- Also known as the pothole theory of democracy.

But what I found in my research was a little bit different. During brief democratic openings in Egypt and Jordan -- so in Egypt in the mid-1980's and Jordan from 1989 until about 1992, we see brief democratic openings, but during that time, Islamists actually put Islamic law and the implementation of Islamic law front and center. They try to pass Islamic legislation parliament. Their discourse is very focused on this. And in some ways you can kind of look at them as a kind of Sharia lobby. They're very focused on the role of religion instead of having a broader national agenda.

Now this kind of also extends to the post Arab Spring period and what we see is democratization in a country like Egypt, again, pushing Islamists further to the right, and there's a number of reasons for that. I'll just mention a couple of them, but I think this is important because sometimes we as Americans, we think that good things go together -- democracy, moderation -- that once you open up these -- open up political space, these political parties are going to change. You're going to move on this linear projection

towards moderation, pluralism and all the things that we like and want to see. But I really want to problematize that notion. And one reason is, under oppression, your base gives you a lot of latitude. It's all about survival, so you don't have to really -- you don't really have to focus as much on Islamic law or be very clear about your ideological vision because you're probably not coming to power any time soon. But when you do -- when there is a political opening and you do have a chance to come to power, your base wants you to deliver. And much of your conservative base voted for you because you're Islamist. So you have to show that you're moving in that direction.

It's also an issue of responding to popular sentiment. These are, at least -- certainly Egypt and many other societies to a lesser extent, are deeply conservative when it comes to how they view the role of religion in public life, and I'll just give you one very quick example of that. There was a Pew poll from 2011 where -- it's really remarkable numbers -- where 80 percent of Egyptian respondents said they believed in stoning for the crime of adultery, 70 percent believed in cutting off the hands of thieves, and 88 percent supported the death penalty for apostasy, i.e. leaving the religion of Islam. So even if we take this poll as an outlier, you cut off 20 percent -- that's still a large section of the population that wants to see more Islam in public life, not less. And if there's a demand for this, then someone has to supply it, right? And that's why Islam has actually come under a lot of pressure to show that they're respecting that kind of Islamic sentiment. And that's why we see -- Morsi's election and afterwards -- a lot more of this Islamist rhetoric and moving towards the Salafi's -- and I'll mention that too, because that's a very important part of this -- that, with the opening of democratic space, it's not just the Muslim Brotherhood, it's not just the mainstream Islamists. You have ultra conservative Salafi's on the right flank. And this leads to a tea party effect, where the far right drags mainstream Islamists further in that direction.

And this isn't unique to the Middle East and that's why I refer to it as a tea party effect. It happens here in this country. We see examples of this in established

democracies in Europe. But this is especially the case when you have deeply polarized societies. So the center doesn't really hold. You have Islamists, you have non-Islamists. They generally don't like each other. And the center, the political center is weak. It has trouble establishing itself. So then, if you're an ideological party, you ask yourself, well what's the point of moving to the center if there's no one there? What's the point of doing that if there aren't any independent voters? Will I be able to convince secular voters to vote for me, when they already have this ideological objection to our program as an Islamist party? And I think we see a little bit of this in a country like Turkey, where over time, Erdogan has moved -- Prime Minister Erdogan has moved further to the right, and in some sense it's worked for him. He's doubled down on his conservative base and he actually -- the ruling party increased its share in local elections, from 39 percent in 2009 to 45 percent just on March 30th, the other week. So rallying the base can actually work in the narrow sense of political victory -- the electoral victories.

Now I'll just close here by -- so, one of the questions I raise in the second half of the book in particular, is -- what if Arabs, or really anyone -- what if Arabs decide that through the democratic process, that they don't want to be liberals? And this is where I get to the tensions between liberalism and democracy. If you have majorities that want to see a stricter implementation of Islamic law, or at least more Islamic law -- whatever that means, then do Arabs, or do Egyptians or do Jordanians -- do they have the right to try out an alternative ideological project? Islamists are not going to become liberals any time soon, perhaps ever -- because they aren't liberal. They're Islamist for a reason. So unlike other illiberal political leaders -- whether it's people like Chavez -- these kinds of populist leaders -- illiberalism, I argue, isn't really intrinsic to their ideology. For them, it's more about consolidation of power. But with Islamists, illiberalism is essential to their ideology. They don't want to be liberal; they're not supposed to be liberal. So I would just kind of end here by posing this question. I think it's something really worth thinking about. What are the limits of democratic politics? How far can these

societies go if Islamists keep on winning elections? Now that won't happen any time soon in a place like Egypt, but at some point we're going to have to revisit this debate of -- if Islamists keep on doing well in elections in a particular country, and Tunisia could be an example of this -- and they pursue more Islamization -- how far is that going to go and obviously there's going to be a lot of opposition to that. Thank you.

MS. BRENNAN: Good morning. Hello everyone. Sorry for the delay there. We have technical preparations so you can all hear us. I'm Margaret Brennan from CBS and you just heard Shadi layout some of his thought process and some of his themes from this book, "Temptations of Power". And I've been following Shadi's work for some time now. And actually came to know him quite well -- his work quite well in 2011 during the uprisings. In fact, we were in Tahrir Square together the night that Hosni Mubarak fells, and on another network at the time, but turned to Shadi for analysis of what was this all going to mean? And in thinking back, when I was talking to you the other day, I remembered that while there was all this jubilation -- chanting, fireworks -- this party basically in the streets, and the world watching. You were a little bit of a Debbie Downer. You were like -- this is not over. This is just beginning. And you were talking at that time, that day, about what was going to be coming to the fore with the Muslim Brotherhood and raising concerns. Why did you foresee the importance there? Why did you at that time, when people weren't necessarily sure how things were going to shake out, say, these guys, who no one was voting for, Mohamed Morsi himself, seven months prior said he had no idea they were going to be ruling anything any time soon -- why did you think there was a shot?

MR. HAMID: Yes, well I think so -- we were there, and we were in the square when the announcement was made, and the crowd just buzzed. There was this kind of euphoria. And it was hard not to get caught up in that. And I think all of us were affected by that, and maybe that led us to be more optimistic than we otherwise should have been. But at that time -- well, first of all, democratic transitions are always difficult.

There are always uncertainties, so even in the best case scenario, for a country like Egypt; it was going to be very messy. And I think we kind of lost sight that these are difficult long processes, especially in countries that have lower levels of economic development, considerable ideological polarization, and I think focusing on the role of Islamists was important at the time because historically Islamists have provoked a lot of anti-democratic reactions from an array of actors. So whether it's the Egyptian military, the deep state, secularists, liberals -- even under the Mubarak regime they were cooperating more together but there was this fundamental distrust. They would work together, but liberals would always be suspicious of the Muslim Brotherhood -- what do they really want? Are they just kind of using us? And vice versa -- the Muslim Brotherhood would be very critical of liberals at that time, saying, well, they support Mubarak. They're not doing enough to oppose Mubarak. Why aren't they being more forthright, their support of democracy? So in some ways, repression brought them closer together, but once you remove that, then they have to contend with each other. And you had this brief moment of unity in Tahrir Square, and what was so amazing about it, was you had liberals, leftists, young revolutionaries, Muslim Brotherhood. The Muslim Brotherhood had a real presence in Tahrir Square after January 28th. But you also had a lot of Salafi's and I wondered at the time, why aren't people focusing on that part of it? Because I remember being in Tahrir Square towards the end there. There were a lot of Salafi's. But the great thing about it at the time was, they put all the ideological disagreements aside, and they said, we have one goal. It's to bring down Mubarak, and that's what we're going to do. But once Mubarak fell, then they started to turn against each other. There was an early -- there was a brief moment, for the three or four months after Mubarak fell where there was a lot of talk about a grand coalition, national unity and all of that, but as the process went forward, liberals and Islamists in particular, started to realize that they really do disagree on fundamental issues. It's not just about power and politics. It's also about a different vision for their country -- how they view the state, the

identity of the state, the role of religion in public life. And these are very raw, existential issues understandably.

MS. BRENNAN: So you -- what you described in terms of the pothole theory, from the Bush years, really didn't expire with the Bush years. In many ways, that was the working thesis for the U.S. government, which was the mundane act of governing will make people moderate, because it's hard to get to people to collect the trash in the streets and have trains run on time and be more than a party in opposition -- have something more than just an ideology. Did the Muslim Brotherhood walk away from this coup that just happened, where they had their shot in power and now, then jailed, and arguably some would say more than just pushed to the side. Morsi hasn't really been seen publicly since he was removed from office. Have they learned a lesson? And has there been a lesson projected out to some of the other Islamist parties about -- we need to be more than an ideology?

MR. HAMID: Yes, so -- I think there's a lot of internal discussions within the Muslim Brotherhood about tactics. Could they have done certain things differently at certain times? And I think one of the major sentiments I hear from Brotherhood contacts now is, we should have been more revolutionary. When Morsi came to power in August, 2012, we should have moved more aggressively, not less, against the deep state, against the military. But in terms of a more fundamental ideological revision, I don't think we're seeing that. We'll have to wait and see.

MS. BRENNAN: But could they have actually done that? Looking back, did they have any ability to be revolutionary? You're saying Morsi, seven months prior, was basically saying hey, we're an idea.

MR. HAMID: They couldn't have been revolutionary, because that's not the nature of mainstream Islamist organizations. They're fundamentally gradualist. They see things in a very long term time horizon. They don't want to do things right away. They're slow and steady. And this is why Morsi's approach was in some ways about

accommodating -- trying to accommodate the deep state, trying to accommodate the military. That's what the Brotherhood does best. It kind of cuts deals and makes compromises when it comes to the give and take of political power, but for a variety of reasons, that approach didn't work. They didn't do a very good job of it and by focusing so much on the military and trying to neutralize the military, they forgot about their revolutionary allies, and the liberals who supported them, when Morsi was in the second round of elections against Ahmed Shafiq. So they can't -- and I don' think -- this is going to be one of the key tensions I think in the organization now. You have this younger rank and file in Egypt that is protesting every day, every week. And they have this attitude of; we need to destroy the state. It's not just the military. It's not just Sisi -- it's the whole state structure. But then you have the Brotherhood in exile, mostly based in Doha, Istanbul and London, and they're still speaking in the language of political processes, reinstating Morsi, reinstating the constitution, electoral legitimacy. So you're seeing a kind of disconnect between the Brotherhood leadership and the rank and file, who are saying, you old leaders -- you're not in the spirit of the revolution, and they are very paranoid that the leadership abroad is going to sell them out and cut some deal in a couple years with whoever happens to be in power. So I think we're going to see that tension.

MS. BRENNAN: Well now in Egypt, because you are seeing a lot of tension -- with how the Muslim Brotherhood is being treated, there's either, if you believe one party, you think they're going to be turned into an insurgency. You've said maybe, maybe not. You're talking about your contact getting more revolutionary, at least in what they're saying out loud, or you think, maybe you're making them more moderate once again.

MR. HAMID: Yes.

MS. BRENNAN: How do you think Egypt now is going to play out in terms of your theories and your themes?

MR. HAMID: Yes, so I make a distinction in the book between different levels of repression. Not all repression is the same. And under the Mubarak regime, there was growing repression but there was never an attempt to eradicate the Muslim Brotherhood all together. There was a closing of space in Jordan, and Islamists were increasingly marginalized, but King Abdullah never tried -- never wanted to, I should say -- destroy the Muslim Brotherhood there either. What I think is fundamentally different about the situation in Egypt today, is there is a concerted effort to not just limit or marginalize the Muslim Brotherhood, but to eradicate it altogether. And that's a different level of repression. So extreme levels of repression are bound to have some radicalizing effect, and I make that distinction in the book. And we see an example of that for example, in Algeria, where you have extreme levels of repression in the 1990s and you do see elements of the mainstream opposition turning to violence. Now the Brotherhood is different as an organization, so I don't think there's going to be that much radicalization as there was in say Algeria, because the organization has had a long commitment to non-violence. And any Muslim Brotherhood member grows up in the organization, goes through an educational curriculum where it's all about slow gradual change. Violence is not the answer, it hasn't worked in the past, and that's something every Muslim Brotherhood member is immersed in. And there's also this aspect of deference to leadership. It's a hierarchical organization, so if the murshid or the general guide or other top leaders say, stick to non-violence, they would really have to go against the leadership in a way that isn't very common within the Muslim Brotherhood. That said, we are already seeing a minority of Muslim Brotherhood members who are turning to some degree of violence, and it could even be low levels of violence in this case -- Molotov cocktails, burning police cars, attacking police officers -- this more kind of anarchic approach to violence. So you are going to see a minority moving in that direction. But I don't think you're going to see any kind of mass organization shift to violence. That said, even if you have a minority in an organization of hundreds of thousands of people that

can still have an incredibly destabilizing effect. So two percent of a five hundred thousand strong organization is still a significant number of people who can really cause instability in Egypt.

MS. BRENNAN: Today the State Department sanctioned Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis. They said that this organization is a terrorist group and they've staged attacks on tourists and on Israel. But in Egypt, they haven't done that yet. They haven't called them terrorists yet, officially. That decision's supposed to be coming. But there has been, at least in conversation, talk about linking the two. Do you see groups that the United States would consider terror groups, having legitimate ties to the Muslim Brotherhood as some have alleged, in Egypt right now?

MR. HAMID: Yes, that's really the narrative that you hear from the Egyptian government and certainly the Egyptian media.

MS. BRENNAN: Been?

MR. HAMID: Well yes, it's been, I mean there's no evidence. And this is the question we pose sometimes to Egyptian friends and colleagues. We're open to considering that if there is evidence, but up until now there has been no evidence that the Muslim Brotherhood is joining Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis or is part of the low level insurgency in the Sinai or that it was responsible, as some in the Egyptian government alleged, for the Mansoura bombing the other month. There just simply isn't evidence of that. But it is working as delegitimizing the Brotherhood in Egypt, so people are very sensitive about terrorism. They're having unprecedented insecurity in major cities. To have it extending from the Sinai into major urban centers -- that's something Egyptians haven't seen in quite some time. So the government knows that people are very concerned about their security, and they want to tie the Brotherhood to that to further keep this popular sentiment against them.

MS. BRENNAN: Will it work?

MR. HAMID: Will it work? Well, in some ways it has already worked.

And I think if you look at previous periods of repression, you had Gamal Abdel Nasser in the 1950's and 60's. The Brotherhood was pretty much wiped out from the public political sphere. But there was a real difference there. There wasn't a kind of popular sentiment that was turning against the Brotherhood, where you had millions of Egyptians saying, Nasser we want you to kill the Brotherhood. There might have been some of that, but not to the extent that we're seeing today. And that's what I think is so frightening about the direction that Egypt is going. It's not just a dictator who's killing people. He has real popular support from ordinary Egyptians. We don't know how big that section of the population is.

MS. BRENNAN: You're talking about Sisi.

MR. HAMID: Yes, support for Sisi, support for the military, support for a very hard line against the Muslim Brotherhood. So whatever that segment of the population is, we can say safely, we're talking about many millions of Egyptians who passionately support the new order and want to see the Muslim Brotherhood destroyed. So that's going to make it, I think, more challenging for the Brotherhood to recover or recover as quickly this time, because there are a lot of Egyptians, for a variety of reasons, who very much dislike or even hate the Brotherhood. And I saw this first hand when I was in Egypt right before the Rabbah massacre of August 14th. I was there a couple days before. And it's just amazing to talk to your friends -- people that you care about, people that you respect, who are liberal or western educated, and they're telling you, straight to your face -- we want the military -- why isn't the military being more brutal against the Brotherhood? We want to see them wiped out. We want -- you know, people calling openly and publicly for a massacre. That's remarkable and that's what I think is very troubling. Because usually when you want to kill people you feel kind of like shameful about it -- I shouldn't be too straight up about it usually.

MS. BRENNAN: Usually.

MR. HAMID: But I think what's frightening is that people were saying this

openly without shame.

MS. BRENNAN: Were you trying out your theories on them -- saying no, no, it will make them stronger if you repress them? How does that go over?

MR. HAMID: Well, so that's the thing -- the Brotherhood has been able to bounce back historically from periods of repression, but I think what some would argue, is we have to get it right this time. Repression has to be more intense than it ever was before, because this is the chance to deliver the Brother, the final decisive blow. And I think this is an illusion. Because even if you look at places where you have that full spectrum eradication -- so in Syria for example, in the 1980's, where the Muslim Brotherhood -- membership in the Muslim Brotherhood was made punishable by death -- so even being just a member could get you a death sentence. And the Brotherhood disappeared from the Syrian public sphere. So there was the illusion that the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood had been eradicated, but once you see a political opening -- so in 2011, you see the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood bouncing back rather quickly. They might not be the strongest political force in the country, but they're certainly one of the strongest and most influential political forces in the country. So I think that tells us something. We always have these obituaries of political Islam every five or ten years, but political Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood specifically -- it's not just an organization. It's also an idea. And it's very difficult to kill ideas.

MS. BRENNAN: And that may be one of the reasons why the policy prescriptions are so challenging, particularly in places like the Pentagon, like the State Department right now, and they're trying to figure out how to respond and how to handle this. I remember being in almost a year after I guess, you and I were in Tahrir -- we were in Alexandria. I was there with then Secretary Clinton, and the press corps and the motorcade were all quite surprised to have all sorts of food and water and things thrown at us. The protestors in the streets very upset that she was there to meet Mohamed Morsi -- the first high ranking official to do so. There was anger about the U.S. response,

and that was not really what anyone expected within policy circles, at least on that trip. Do you think that the U.S. has a better sense now of what's happening on the ground, and how the public is reacting to the now governing body?

MR. HAMID: Yes, so that Clinton trip was interesting because that's where you really start to see more of these conspiracy theories about the U.S. working with the Muslim Brotherhood and this grand conspiracy to destabilize Egypt, that Secretary Clinton and her colleagues were trying to push the election in Morsi's favor, even though Ahmed Shafiq really won. And you were hearing this from people that we would have thought would be more -- people who are at least a little bit more pro-American than say, Islamists are -- the liberals of Egypt. So liberals started to really see this so-called Muslim Brotherhood American alliance. The problem is now, if you look at the Egyptian public discourse, liberals still think that, and that the U.S. is still sympathetic to the Brotherhood. Maybe they want to help the Brotherhood get back into the political process somehow, but then you hear on the other side, the Muslim Brotherhood, for I think understandable reasons, feels betrayed by the U.S. From their perspective they feel that the U.S. could have stopped the coup or at least after the coup, could have taken a stronger stand and put more pressure on Sisi and other military officials, so we've managed to alienate both sides of the Egyptian divide almost equally. In a sense, they both have a very strong dislike for the U.S. because of what they see as American support for whoever their opponent is. So you know, that's going to take a very long time to rebuild trust, whether it's Islamist, liberals -- it's going to take a long time, and we have to rethink our strategy. Part of the problem was American policy was never clear. We never explained -- there was this, I think, tendency to try to split the middle, that we don't want to go too much in this direction, too much in that, and that led to a lot of confusion about what U.S. policy really was. And this was a question that I would get not just in Egypt, but across the region when I was living in the gulf, people would say, oh, we hate American -- we strongly dislike American policy, but then they would ask me in the same

breath -- what exactly is American policy? So it's kind of funny that they had a very strong dislike for a policy they didn't truly understand or they didn't know what Obama really wanted and there was always that kind of confusion.

MS. BRENNAN: You talk a little bit in the book about the need to have opposition to the U.S. and sort of the west more broadly in some way. Can you explain that?

MR. HAMID: Well, sure. If you're running in an election, anti-Americanism can be an effective mobilizing tool and this has been used time and time again, not just by Islamists, but also liberals and leftists. Anti-Americanism is one of the very few things that unites everyone in the Egyptian political spectrum. It's the one thing they can agree on, is that for whatever reason -- we don't like the U.S., and so on. But I think this gets us to a bigger problem, when you have democratic openings, when you have an electoral process, if you're having trouble delivering on basic things, if you don't have a clear way to fix the potholes, then fixing the potholes in a place like Egypt would be a very challenging venture. So it's easier than to fall back on things that you know are going to have appeal with the broader population, so you resort to religion, ideology, anti-Americanism, xenophobia, nationalism, whatever it happens to be and we're seeing something similar now where you have this rise of hyper-nationalism among the supporters of Field Marshal Sisi. It's a very kind of aggressive nationalism. And that's a way to get people mobilized -- and that's the kind of dark side, or let's say one of the darker undercurrents of democratization, and especially in countries where you don't have a clear economic -- no one has a clear economic program and I think this is important. Everyone kind of says the same thing on the economy -- that the free market is good when it does good things, and social protections are good when they protect people -- so very vague sloganeering that they -- a mixture of free markets and social protections. And there isn't a lot of variation when you look at the political program -- the economic programs of these different parties. Talking about the economy isn't going to

sell because everyone is saying essentially the same thing. We want to fight poverty. We want to combat unemployment. So the only way to really distinguish yourself from your competitors in the electoral process is to find out what makes you different. So for Islamists, they're different because they're Islamists. For Salafi's, it's because they're more Islamist than the mainstream Islamists. For liberals, it's because they feel that Islamists are a fundamental existential threat to the country and they want to mobilize people around a kind of fear of opposition to the rise of Islamists. So unfortunately, the way these political systems have evolved, not just in Egypt, but in many countries in the region, the left and right is very much based on religion and ideology and not so much on economic programs.

MS. BRENNAN: You mentioned in your remarks a little bit about Turkey, but more broadly, do you think that this still working theory on liberal democracy applies outside the Arab world, to the Muslim world, but not necessarily specific to Arab society?

MR. HAMID: Yes, certainly. I think Turkey is a really interesting example of this.

MS. BRENNAN: There's not a cultural component necessarily.

MR. HAMID: No, no, not necessarily. I think in some ways that polarization is more challenging to address in the Arab world for a variety of reasons. In east Turkey, everyone is still agreeing to participate within the political process. You don't have people calling, for the most part -- calling for military coups anymore. So as polarized as Turkey is getting there are still rules of the game. And that's why it's still possible to be somewhat optimistic about Turkey in the longer run that as long as they keep the process somewhat intact. But even if you go further afield, in a place like Malaysia, which, while it's not a democracy, you do have a certain level of democratic competition. What's really interesting is that the ruling party is ostensibly secular -- UMNO. And the ruling secular party is becoming more Islamized in its rhetoric. And it's trying to outbid the major opposition -- the major Islamist opposition party passed. And

they're competing to see who can be more Islamist? Who can use the most aggressively Islamic rhetoric?

MS. BRENNAN: Why is that?

MR. HAMID: Well because if you have a conservative society, and while Malaysia is 60 percent Muslim, but among that 60 percent you have a lot of religious conservatism and people respond to appeals to religion. So the ruling party feels that it can peel off voters from the Islamists if they use that same kind of language. And again, it's a way to rally support, because even if you support a secular party, you can still be religious. You still might identify with the religious rhetoric. So these parties have found creative ways to use that to their advantage, instrumental zing rhetoric for their electoral operation.

MS. BRENNAN: Well what you're talking about in terms of demographics isn't necessarily new. What's the common catalyst? Is there one?

MR. HAMID: Common catalyst?

MS. BRENNAN: To act on your religious conviction. Why the drive -- why the trigger in Malaysia and elsewhere?

MR. HAMID: Well I would just say more generally on this, is part of what I want to do in this book is to bring ideology back into the conversation. It's not just about responding to your conservative base. It's not just about voter mobilization. Islamists actually do believe what they say they believe. And we have to take it seriously because it's something honestly felt. Again, we don't have to like it, but we have to take it seriously in the realm of ideas. Islamists actually do have a different way of looking at the world than many non-Islamists do, and certainly than secularists do. And it comes to very -- as I mentioned earlier, these very basic things -- the identity of the Egyptian state, the meaning of the nation state, and there isn't consensus around those basic things. And Islamists want to take things in a different direction. And there's a number of examples and we hypothesize, if Morsi stayed in power for five years or ten years, we

can think about what are the kinds of measures that he'd likely pursue after he was able to secure himself in power? And so it's not just about instrumentalization. People say, well the Brotherhood is always using religion for political ends. But they're also using politics for religious ends. It goes both ways.

MS. BRENNAN: So when you're through with all this research and perhaps sitting back in a few months when you've recovered from writing this, is there a policy prescription that comes out of it? Or is this just -- you need to understand it, digest it, and that's it? If you're saying just accept it as part of the reality, are you basically saying that any Islamist party is going to view democracy as a one way ticket to power, that's the end of the story?

MR. HAMID: Well I'm not quite saying they see democracy as a one way ticket to power. I do think that there is a legitimate commitment among most mainstream Islamists groups to the democratic process. I don't buy this one person, one vote, one-time thing. And there's actually never been a real instance where Islamist parties come to power through democratic elections and cancel elections altogether. I don't -- unless I'm missing one, it hasn't happened. Now part of that is because they haven't actually -- you could argue -- they haven't actually had a lot of chances to govern, but we're still stuck in this speculative argument about what would Islamists do, and at some point, they're going to have to govern for a period of time, so we can put this to rest. Otherwise, we'll be in endless conflict in these countries where Islamists are always blocked from political power and you have this cycle of conflict, violence and polarization.

MS. BRENNAN: But in your projection of the what if -- if Morsi had stayed in power, can you see that playing out in terms of elections, regularly scheduled, actually being acted and having transitions to new democratically elected leaders?

MR. HAMID: Well I think in this sense, you would have a kind of classic case of illiberal democracy, where Morsi or the Muslim Brotherhood would put the focus primarily on procedures and election, and the opposition would still have a chance to

contest elections and push the Brotherhood out of power. But I think we already saw some of it in his one year in power. These initial efforts to limit dissent or to put pressure on his opponents, so -- and we see that in Turkey right now, with Erdogan -- again, treating his opponents not as adversaries but as enemies. So I think that's always a risk in these kinds of early transitional phases. Now to get to your question about the policy prescription -- I think that the U.S. has to think more creatively and seriously about how they want to engage Islamist parties. And it's not just about the coming months in Egypt, but also thinking long term. Because if we accept that political Islam is not going to die and disappear, then it's fair to assume that maybe five years, ten years, fifteen years down the road in a place like Egypt, there will be at least some kind of political opening and Islamists and the Muslim Brotherhood in particular will return to the political arena. Do we really want to start from scratch each time and not learn from the lessons of the past? So I think for policy makers to develop a more effective strategy, they have to first at least understand Islamism. That's where I think a book like this can be useful -- is who are they, what are they about. That's step one. But also, in terms of more specific policy prescriptions -- I think one of the problems is that the U.S. did not engage with Islamist parties in a really meaningful way, especially in Egypt, before the Arab spring. So we were kind of caught off guard and we had to build a lot of those relationships from scratch after Mubarak fell. And that's why, I think, when Morsi was in power, there was a lot of miscommunication, a lot of misunderstanding between the two sides, because they didn't trust each other, they didn't understand each other, and certain things that the American side would do, would be perceived in a very different way by the Muslim Brotherhood, which is historically quite paranoid. And they were very paranoid during Morsi's one year in power, so if we're thinking ten years down the road, or even if we look at an Islamist party that will likely be in power soon, again, in Tunisia. The main Islamist party there, Ennahda -- when they come to power, we should think about how we can build a better relationship with them so we help support the transition process in that country, and part

of that is based on dialog and trust and building that over time.

MS. BRENNAN: I want to get to some of the questions in the audience, so if you would just raise your hand, we'll bring a microphone to you, and just say your name, your organization.

MS. BRENNAN: Let's start right there in the back.

MR. PORTEOUS: Thanks very much. I'm Tom Porteous from Human Rights Watch, and congratulations on your book. You've been talking about two key players in this whole political process -- the regime on the one hand and the Islamists on the other -- the Muslim Brotherhood in particular and Egypt, but there's obviously a third very important player which is actually the player that created the opening in the first place -- the young activists who went into Tahrir Square, the pro-human rights groups -- whatever you want to call them. I wouldn't call them necessarily secular liberals but nonetheless, that's just sort of a convenient label. What about them? They have been the targets of probably as much repression as the Muslim Brotherhood in recent months. The repression started obviously in July with a focus very much on the Brotherhood, but then it's kind of broadened out, and you've got a really appalling situation with the Egyptian media, with NGO's and human rights groups -- people feeling very much under pressure. How can that group be nurtured, be helped in order sometime in the future to be part of the solution?

MR. HAMID: Sure -- it's actually a little bit ironic that many of these young activists actually supported the military coup on July 3rd, and then many of them now have -- not recanted by have revised their opinion somewhat and they realize now that it didn't quite work out the way they want it to, and some of you may have seen the documentary "The Square", where you see some of these young activists who kind of drew equivalence between Mubarak and Morsi and saw unseating Morsi by any means necessary, even a military coup, as part -- as a continuation of the revolutionary spirit, if you will. Now, so some of them are actually still supporting this new order, but yes,

many of them are kind of stuck in the middle and they're trying to find their face politically now. It's very hard to devise political strategy when you're focusing on trying to get your friends out of prison. So for them, there isn't this kind of grand approach of how to bring down the regime. It's really just about survival. It's about trying bit by bit to get certain people released, to speak out about the most prominent arrests of Ahmed Maher, Ala Abilfatah, these other people. I think one of the key questions going forward is to what extent -- I mean, historically, it's very difficult to fight against repression, or to unseat an authoritarian regime, if the opposition is divided. And now the opposition is very much divided in Egypt. You have Islamists on one hand and you have the non-Islamists. And they're not cooperating because there still is very much this distrust and also the Muslim Brotherhood is toxic. If you get accused of cooperating with the Muslim Brotherhood, you'll probably get more jail time than you otherwise would. So going forward, the key challenge for the opposition is, can they actually get their act together and start cooperating like they did in the final years of the Mubarak regime. But that will probably take time.

MS. BRENNAN: Right here, with the pink jacket, cinnamon jacket.

QUESTIONER: Thanks Shadi, that was very interesting. I'm wondering about if you could just give us some insight, perhaps on the preview on your book, but I'm sure you've come across this -- the relationship between the Brotherhood and the Salafi's or the newer party, and specifically, and I hope you don't refer to just the sort of the regional politics as an explanation, but really how do the Salafists really view what happened to the Brotherhood and how did the Brotherhood view the role of the Salafists when they were in government. I'd really love your insight into how it was on the inside. Thank you.

MR. HAMID: So everyone was caught a little bit by surprise at least when the Salafite coalition, in the parliamentary elections after Mubarak fell -- they won 28 percent of the popular vote. I mean, just think about that for a second. These are

groups that weren't generally politically active under Mubarak, or not in a very serious way, and very quickly they were able to build popular support and do very very well. And I remember in the lead up to those elections, the Brotherhood always talked about Salafi's like the younger little brother that messes up the room and then mom has to come it -- that sort of thing. Those Salafi's -- they say the wrong thing, they embarrass us; they give political Islam a bad name. Some of you might recall when the Brotherhood speaker of parliament had to essentially shout down a Salafi member of parliament who was trying to do the call to prayer in parliament and it was a kind of funny, amusing and somewhat depressing exchange, but that kind of showed you the tension, because ultimately, they were competing for many of the same voters. And even in the last months of Morsi's one year in power, and I remember I had some very interesting conversations with brotherhood leaders in April -- so two months before the coup. And they were so dismissive of liberals and leftists -- oh, they don't have any constituency, these people are nothing -- but they were concerned about Salafi's. And they would say, our main opposition are the Salafi's, not the liberals. And essentially the message they were trying to send is be careful what you wish for because the alternative to us aren't nice fluffy liberals, but actually more conservative Islamists. So there was this real sense of competition, and that's continued until the present day, where some Salafi's, including the newer party, the largest Salafi party, supported the coup and have still been supporting the regime, and supporting Sisi to some extent. So there's a real sense on the part of the Brotherhood, that the newer party has betrayed the Islamic cause and some of the worst language they use -- it's reserved for the Salafi's because it's one thing -- they don't have high expectations on secularists and kind of look down on them anyway, but Salafi's are supposed to be men of religion. They claim to believe in the Islamic project but here they are being hypocrites essentially. And hypocrites is a very kind of negative idea in Islamic tradition -- people who claim one thing but actually do another. That's going to be very interesting to watch. That said, there are Salafi's who

have joined the Muslim Brotherhood as part of the anti-coup alliance, so it's not just the Brotherhood that -- and this goes for also Doha and Istanbul -- you have Brotherhood leaders, but you also have Salafi's who are based out of exile there as well.

MS. BRENNAN: Up here in front.

MR. ALTMAN: Hi, I'm Brett Altman, and I'm wondering, what is the potential for economic development in Egypt and the other countries, and what effect is that likely to have on the political process?

MR. HAMID: The state of economic development right now?

MR. ALTMAN: What do you project are the chances of economic development?

MR. HAMID: I think one of the lessons over the last couple years is that you can't separate the political from the economic. If there isn't political stability, the economy is never going to recover to the extent that it should. And it's tough for the economy to get back on track, where you have daily or weekly protests, especially outside the urban centers on a very regular basis. You have a significant portion of the Egyptian population which doesn't recognize legitimacy of the state. They're totally pushed out of the entire political process. So I think it's an illusion to think that you can ever have political stability as long as 20 or 30 percent of the population is totally cut out. And I think the problem is the Muslim Brotherhood has no incentive now to play a constructive role. And effectively -- they wouldn't say this explicitly, but essentially what they're counting on right now, is making Egypt as ungovernable as possible -- a kind of indirect economic sabotage, that if they can protest, continue to cause difficulties for the new military regime, that will push people to oppose the regime more, and people will start to realize, oh -- maybe the Muslim Brotherhood wasn't so bad after all, because our economic situation isn't getting better. Our security situation isn't getting better. And under Sisi -- Sisi claims to be the kind of purveyor of stability, but actually he's presided over one of the most unstable periods in Egyptian history.

MS. BRENNAN: Why don't we do these two questions here? Sorry, the mike's getting jogged up to you right now. Give a sec.

MS. DAVIS-PACKARD: Hi Shadi. Thank you. Kent Davis-Packard, Council on Foreign Relations and Visiting Fellow at the Saban Center. I just got back from Egypt as you know, and when I spoke with the Islamists there, they said something very interesting, which is -- no Shariah law is actually much broader then just hand cutting and things like FGM. The conservative women Salafi's in parliament had advocated for that, but in fact, I was told by Islamists this is not even a party of Shariah law. So I'm wondering -- this broader concept of Shariah law, which they defined as even being democratic and an end to dictatorship, an end to corruption -- is that something new to their rhetoric, post June 30th, in Egypt? Thank you.

MR. HAMID: So that's definitely something you saw much more of in the 1990's and 2000's, broadening the conception of Shariah where it's not just about specific Islamic laws, but Shariah could mean anything that's good -- counts as Shariah. That was a way also to kind of reassure people that Shariah isn't so scary. Everyone can support Shariah. And I think it's also fair -- I shouldn't have given the impression earlier that it's just about cutting off of hands and the specific hudud punishments, but I think that is a part. We can debate how big that part is in Islamic law, but there's no doubting that it's part of the conversation. Now I raised the example of that poll for a reason. The Brotherhood to this day and either before or after the Arab Spring, has pretty much never publicly advocated for the implementation of the hudud punishments. Now, there are a number of reasons for that, but generally it hasn't been part of their political program. But that's interesting because in some ways, the Brotherhood is to the left of many Egyptians, when it comes to the implementation of these punishments. So if we say that 80 percent or even 60 percent theoretically believe in the cutting off of the hands of thieves, the Brotherhood isn't even advocating that. So that shows you -- we're not just talking about conservative sentiment, we're talking about ideas that are more closely associated with

Salafi's. But Salafi's too have also developed their rhetoric where they're trying to talk about Shariah and their political vision as more inclusive -- that it includes anti-corruption and all of these things. The one thing I talk about in the book is this idea of the politics of stages, and it kind of feeds into this idea of the double discourse if you will of Islamist groups. Now that's a kind of a big discussion on its own, but I think it's fair to say that there is to some extent, this notion of politics of stages, and you even hear sometimes, Muslim Brotherhood officials, when they're not very careful, expressing this to some extent -- that there's a time for everything. When we're in the opposition, there are certain things that we focus on. If there's a political opening, then we have to focus on solidifying our power or our position in government and maybe 20 or 30 years, when society is ready, and people are interested in the implementation of Islamic law, and prepared for it, then we can start talking about that more seriously, right? And there's a real internal debate in Islamist organizations, about the sequencing. And even in the so-called most moderate Islamist party in Tunisia, there is a conservative wing of the Ennahda party which does believe in the implementation of Shariah law. They're a minority, but they believe that over time, things will move in their direction. And this kind of feeds into, I think, a conception that a lot of Islamists have. They kind of see freedom and Islamization going hand in hand because they have this idea of fitrah, or human nature, in English, that if people are free to do whatever they want; they're naturally going to gravitate towards Islam or towards Islamism even. And I think that leads to some problems in how they approach politics, but there very much is that sense. So whether in Tunisia or Egypt, this is one thing I heard time and time again -- that once we open up the political space, there will be a natural move in this direction. We don't have to impose it, because the people will demand it.

MS. CAGRI: Ilhan Cagri, from the Muslim Public Affairs Council. I was just wondering -- do you think that Salafism is making inroads within the government of Turkey, and second to that, you had mentioned that in Egypt what was going on was that

the liberal parties really didn't have an agenda. They were basically against anything that was Islamic based. And that, I think, happened in Turkey and a lot of people are saying the reason Abdullah's party did as well as it did was because there was no opposition -- that they didn't really offer any alternative. So why do you think that is? Why do you think there's such a void in the message of the "liberals" of these countries?

MR. HAMID: Yes, that's a very big and important question. Yes, it's not just in the Arab world. It's in a place like Turkey. So you would think that with Erdogan's overreaching and overstepping, that that would really provide an opportunity for the secular opposition, but they haven't been able to take advantage of that thus far. You know I think part of the problem is liberalism as an ideology if you will, isn't very well defined, certainly in the Arab world. And now we can even debate whether liberals in Turkey are liberal. I think it's better to call them secularists, because their tradition with Otto-Turk, starting six or seven decades ago was fundamentally illiberal. Restricting personal freedoms, restricting the role of religion in public life, people couldn't wear the head scarves, so I think calling them liberal might not be the best thing. But yes, I think there is that challenge -- what does it mean to have a secular program or a liberal program. What does liberalism mean, to Egyptians, and also to Egyptian voters? And I think early on, after Mubarak fell, it was very hard, and I actually talked to the founder -- I remember one conversation and I cite this in the book -- one conversation with the founder of one of these new liberal parties -- Mustafa al-Nagar, the founder of the Justice Party. He's a real liberal -- I would consider him a real liberal. He does really believe in pluralism and basic freedoms for all. But he told me, Shadi, when we're campaigning out in the rural areas, I'm never going to use the word liberal, because liberal has an association with lack of religion or atheism, so we have to find a different say to convey our ideas when we're talking to these more conservative rural voters. This is going to be a long term generational project though, to define more clearly, what liberals stand for in the Arab world, and in places like Egypt in particular, and so far they haven't. But that

takes time -- that takes time. And you hope that there will be a process of learning. And I think they all -- but at the same time there is this temptation I think, to make it all about anti-Islamism, and that's where the polarization doesn't help. Because as long as you have the Islamist enemy, that's a much easier message for people, for your supporters in particular.

MS. BRENNAN: There was also another part of the question about Salafi's in Turkey.

MR. HAMID: Salafi's aren't a major force in Turkey, and generally haven't been. That's actually one thing Turkey has going for it that you don't have as much of this kind of tea party effect. But yes -- because Turkey has had a secular state system for so long, it's never been a hospitable environment for people with ultra-conservative interpretations of Islamic law.

MS. BRENNAN: One more question? Up here in front please.

QUESTIONER: Hi. I'm a graduate student in George Washington University. I'd just like to know your take on the Gulf countries -- Saudi Arabia and Emirates -- they moved their ambassador, blaming Qatar for supporting Muslim Brotherhood and demanded to end the support for Muslim Brotherhood. I just want to know, how do you see the relationships getting mended again and how do you see the future for them?

MR. HAMID: The relationship between Qatar and Saudi Arabia?

QUESTIONER: Between GCC.

MR. HAMID: Yes, a big point of contention is the Muslim Brotherhood and Qatar is allowing many Islamist opposition leaders to essentially set up shop and to operate outside of their territory. And as we've seen increasingly, Saudi Arabia sees the Muslim Brotherhood not just as a threat in Egypt, but as a threat regionally. And that's why there was just that terrorist designation last month, which was unprecedented, so now supporting the Brotherhood or even expressing sympathy for them, even in Saudi

Arabia, is grounds for detention. So I don't see how this gets resolved, because it's very difficult now for Qatar to say, well, we changed our mind, and we're going to expel all the Islamist opposition leaders we just allowed in like five months ago, and let's be honest too. Qatar has lost a lot of its popularity in the region, and especially liberals and secularists and non-Islamists in general, seek Qatar as supporting the people they don't like -- the Muslim Brotherhood. But if they kind of push the Muslim Brotherhood out too, then pretty much everyone will dislike them. The one thing that Qataris have going for them, is that Islamists still see Qatar as one of the last supporters they have in the region. It's pretty much Qatar and Turkey.

MS. BRENNAN: In back, here, second row.

QUESTIONER: You said something really interesting earlier about the interpretation or how Islamists and secularists interpret American involvement, however the conversation here revolves around American involvement and how it can be involved. It if has such a detrimental effect and it feeds into conspiracy theories, how do you think the U.S. can be involved to help the relationship and push the country towards democracy rather than just feed conspiracy theories?

MR. HAMID: Well, the kind of irony of this is, the U.S. has actually been trying to disengage from Egypt. So despite that, let's say reduction in involvement, the conspiracy theories are actually growing. So there doesn't seem to be a real correlation between disengagement and people liking you more, right? Which I think is one of the important lessons of the last -- there's a lot of examples of this, where we thought, for example, we'd wind down the war in Iraq, anti-American sentiment would decrease -- it doesn't quite work out that way. So one thing I would suggest is clarity in policy. So the fact that the U.S. kind of -- they didn't want to call it a coup, but they were acting as if it was a coup in some ways, and this back and forth and splitting the middle -- I think that's really problematic, especially when we have clear legal provisions, which say that if there is a military coup against a democratically elected government, we are legally required to

suspend assistance. And when we won't even live up to our own law, I think that sends a detrimental message, not just to the Egyptians, but to many others, in terms of -- well we live up to our own stated commitments. What I would have liked to have seen, and it's probably too late now, is calling it a coup in clear terms, because it was -- and then acting accordingly in terms of putting pressure on Sisi and the Egyptian military. Not to become democrats overnight -- that wasn't going to happen, but to at least be less repressive. And I think there was a moment early on -- July, August, even September, where we could have pushed in a more positive direction, if they felt we were serious. If they felt there was a real possibility that aid, and not just symbolically, that aid would be suspended for a sustained period of time, that might have helped them, or pushed them to reconsider some of their repressive measures. And I think the longer we wait, the more limited our options are. So we're nine months, ten months into it, and I think, and I was hoping, and it's something I called for in an article I wrote a couple weeks ago, when you had the mass death sentence against 529 Muslim Brotherhood supporters, and Sisi then announcing this candidacy for President -- we should have taken that as an opportunity to step back and say, this is not going in the right direction. It's not getting less repressive. Let's try to do the right thing. It might be nine months late, but let's try to put some serious pressure, to show the Egyptian military that there are going to be consequences if this kind of thing continues. But we never sent that clear message.

MS. BRENNAN: One of the messages sent was that the military was restoring democracy.

MR. HAMID: Yes, that's a whole -- looking back at that statement, it was very unfortunate, and it also turned out to be even more wrong than we would have thought. I mean, not only -- well, first of all, not only did they not restore democracy, but they actually -- they've actually been more oppressive than even I would have expected. I argued right when the coup happened -- this is going to be pretty bad, because we know historically how coups work out. But I have to say, in some respects, I've been

surprised at the sheer scale of repression.

MS. BRENNAN: I think we have time for about one more question, up here?

MS. KOLB: My name is Sandy Kolb. You haven't said anything about the other Islamist power in the region -- Iran. Is there a difference in terms of the political situation there and the role of the Islamicist?

MR. HAMID: So I think there are a couple major distinctions. One is that Islamists came to power in Iran not through a democratic process, but through a revolution. And that changes things fundamentally. Revolutionary actors or revolutionary regimes tend to be more radical. They're more aggressive, and we saw that in the early years of Iranian revolution in terms of trying to eradicate their opponents in a very brutal way. So that's why I've never felt the Iran example is the most useful one, because for me, the democratic process part is key. The Muslim Brotherhood didn't come to power in Egypt through a revolution in the kind of traditional way of seizing power -- in a very kind of surgical way. No, they came to power through a series of elections. So another thing of course, is that their Shia not Sunni and I think we have to be careful not to draw too many parallels for that reason as well.

MS. BRENNAN: The book is "Temptations of Power". Shadi, thank you for telling us everything you've learned.

MR. HAMID: Thank you for having me.

MS. BRENNAN: And there are copies out for sale, when you walk out the door.

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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.

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